

1991

# The 'bildungsgedicht' As Garden In Nineteenth- And Twentieth Century Canadian Long Poems

Wanda Ruth Campbell

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The Bildungsgedicht as Garden  
in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century  
Canadian Long Poems

by

Wanda Campbell

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Submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario  
February 1991

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ISBN 0-315-64283-1

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## ABSTRACT

Much of the recent interest in the Canadian long poem has centered on poems that have been written in the last two decades. This thesis links the contemporary Canadian long poem with earlier developments by examining one kind of long poem that appears throughout Canada's literary history: the Bildungsgedicht or "formation poem" in which the creation of community parallels the creation of character. Like the Bildungsroman, these poems deal with "the formative years or spiritual education" (OED) of characters, but within the context of the growth and development of communities, often using the topos of the garden with its varied implications of planting, progress, and paradise.

In the pre-Confederation period, several poems including John Richardson's Tecumseh (1828, 1842) and Adam Kidd's The Huron Chief (1830) treat Indian heroes as Adamic figures inhabiting a passing paradise. Adam Hood Burwell gives this Adamic role to the settler in Talbot Road: A Poem (1818) anticipating the pattern of Oliver Goldsmith's Rising Village (1825, 1834). In Acadia (1832-1833), Joseph Howe attempts to incorporate both positions with awkward, but engaging, results. In the Confederation period, the Eve figure comes into her own in the title character of Isabella Valancy Crawford's Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story (1884). Crawford attempts a new definition

of the garden and a woman's role in it, as does Archibald Lampman in The Story of an Affinity (1892). In the Modern period, Anne Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy (1937) explores the duality of the Canadian garden as both Eden and Gethsemane as does E.J. Pratt's Brébeuf and His Brethren (1940) with its biblical symbolism of the buried seed bearing fruit. James Reaney's Twelve Letters to a Small Town (1962) is both different from and similar to Robert Kroetsch's Seed Catalogue (1977), a post-modern poem that is self-reflexive and fragmentary, playfully employing and subverting poetic conventions in a context of continuing structure and perpetual growth.

Throughout the thesis, the garden and its inhabitants are studied against a background of changing perceptions and poetics. Both historical context and current theoretical perspectives are used to illuminate structure and theme, intertextuality and subtext, the transplanted and the indigenous.

to my mother

who first taught me to read and write  
and continued to teach the kinds of lessons  
that brought me to this day

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the final stages of his education, Richard, the hero of Lampman's The Story of An Affinity, encounters a man who "opened his full heart, / Spreading before him with unstinting hand / His stores of joy and knowledge..."

(II.527-29). My advisor, Prof. D.M.R. Bentley, has proven to be such a man. My second reader, Prof. J.M. Zezulka, has also been generous with his scholarship and encouragement. I am also grateful to the Department of English at the University of Western Ontario, and to my husband, Sandy, who stood with me all the way.

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## INTRODUCTION

Canada supposedly sparked the idea for Imagism but it is really not the country for the haiku. After the perfect lines about the frog or cricket or eclipse we turn around and have to come to terms with the vastness of our place or our vast unspoken history.

These words appear in Michael Ondaatje's Introduction to The Long Poem Anthology. The publication of this anthology in 1979 and the Long-liners Conference held at York University in 1984 are evidence of the strong, recent interest in the Canadian long poem. To date, this interest has centered on the contemporary period, despite earlier efforts by Northrop Frye in "The Narrative Tradition in English-Canadian Poetry" (1946) and Dorothy Livesay in "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre" (1969) to establish a historical continuum from the 1820s up to the present. This thesis links the contemporary long poem with earlier developments by examining one variety of long poem that appears throughout Canada's literary history: the "formation poem" or Bildungsgedicht. This term, coined from a combination of the German words bildung meaning "formation" or "education" and gedicht meaning "poem," is used to describe long poems in which the creation of

character parallels the creation of community. Like the Bildungsroman, these poems deal with "the formative years or spiritual education" (OED) of one or more characters, and do so, partly, in a reflection of the growth and development of their particular community, which in the case of the poems in this study is a particular part of Canada. The poets often, if not always, use the topos of the garden with its varied implications of planting, progress, and paradise.

The "garden" in imaginative literature is an enormously "fertile" area for study because of the many analogies it suggests, analogies between gardening and the transplantation of literary forms, between cultivation and the process of Bildung both personal and communal, between historical reality and a long and varied tradition of "Edenic" literature. As Michael Waters points out in The Garden in Victorian Literature, the notion of "garden" opens a very wide and promising gate into critical enquiry:

Indeed, so various are the forms and functions of "garden," that a merely informal and abbreviated inventory turns out to be strikingly catholic: cultivated plot, aesthetic composition, aesthetic analogue, social image, humanized landscape, symbolic landscape, representational text, therapeutic environment, domestic sanctuary, domestic prison, recreational space, community playground, social setting, civilizing agency, socializing institution, and locus of cultural values. (304)

To examine the Canadian Bildungsgedicht as garden is not to subside into paraphrase, but to place particular

Canadian texts within a larger world context, while considering how specific structural and thematic elements have been adapted to a new environment.

In his essay on the narrative tradition in Canada, Frye draws a comparison between the writer of the Canadian long poem and the creator of Beowulf, implying that both find the epic theme of "the defeat of a monster of darkness by a hero of immense strength and endurance" powerfully appealing (604). In her "Epi(pro)logue" to the Long-liners Issue of Open Letter, Barbara Godard writes: "Surely Paradise Lost is closer to the Canadian long poem, than is Beowulf" (314). Indeed, it is in gardens imagined and real that many Canadian poets find analogies for humbler trials and triumphs. Paradise Lost is the quintessential garden poem in which the gardeners, though driven from Eden, carry the paradisaical vision always within them. It is also the quintessential Bildungsgedicht, carrying its characters from creation to coming of age and beyond, and laying special emphasis on the education they acquire from a variety of sources.

According to D.M.R. Bentley: "The one poem whose impact on Canada's early writing probably surpasses that of [Goldsmith's] The Traveller is Paradise Lost, and for obvious reasons" (The Gayl Grey Moose 214). Bentley goes on to explain that many pioneer poets envisaged Canada in terms of one or other of the locales in

Paradise Lost, either Hell or Eden. They also found the notion of "naming" a new world into existence appropriate to their own situation. Since the time of the earliest explorers, the New World has been compared to Eden, and by the eighteenth century, "the convention was well established" (Marx 76). Depending on the ideological stance of the writer, the New World is seen either as a garden waiting to be discovered or one waiting to be planted. The latter process was described by Thomas H. Huxley in 1894:

The process of colonization presents analogies to the formation of a garden which are highly instructive. Suppose a shipload of English colonists [was] sent to form a settlement.... They clear away the native vegetation, extirpate or drive out the animal population, so far as may be necessary, and take measure to defend themselves from the re-immigration of either. In their place, they introduce English grain and fruit trees; English dogs, sheep, cattle, horses; and English men; in fact, they set up a new Flora and Fauna and a new variety of mankind, within the old state of nature. (Evolution and Ethics 16)

In Canada, several pre-Confederation poems, including John Richardson's Tecumseh (1828, 1842) and Adam Kidd's The Huron Chief (1830), treat Indian heroes as Adamic figures inhabiting a passing paradise. Adam Hood Burwell gives the Adamic role to the settler in Talbot Road: A Poem (1818), anticipating the pattern of Oliver Goldsmith's The Rising Village (1825, 1834) where the settlers are intent on carving out an Eden from Chaos, and planting gardens which contain "enough for fancy and enough for use" (Burwell 614). Joseph Howe's Acadia

(c.1832-33) incorporates both positions in such a way that it is difficult to discern where Howe's sympathies ultimately lie, with the Indians, the settlers, or, perhaps, with the land itself. Regardless of point of view, all of these poems from the pre-Confederation period present an essentially masculine vision in which what Annette Kolodny refers to as "the psychosexual dynamic of a virginal paradise" (3) predominates.

In her study of the literature of the American frontier, The Land Before Her, Kolodny suggests that "having so long been barred from the fantasy garden," women focused instead on "the spaces that were truly and unequivocally theirs: the home and the small cultivated gardens of their own making" (6). In the Confederation period, the Eve figure comes into her own in the title character of Isabella Valancy Crawford's Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story (1884). Crawford attempts a new definition of the garden and a woman's role in it, as does Archibald Lampman in The Story of an Affinity (1892). The heroines of the two poems, Katie and Margaret, are considered in relation to the natural world and the men with whom they share it. The question of women's rights, for which Lampman argued so cogently in his column in The Globe, is explored in opposition to the "Queen of the Garden" role celebrated by Ruskin and other Victorians.

According to Frye, "a narrative tradition begotten

in the nineteenth century" (608) reaches its culmination in E.J. Pratt's Brébeuf and His Brethren (1940). Pratt's poem about the Jesuit martyrs, with its biblical symbolism of the buried seed bearing fruit, and Anne Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy (1937), a depiction of Saskatchewan in the "Dirty Thirties," explore the duality of the Canadian garden as both Eden and Gethsemane. No garden, it seems, is safe from the serpent. Because the garden is "based on a systematic intervention in the natural order" (Jackson 27), the forces originally modified to allow it to be created can again assert themselves. Drawing upon the techniques of Modernism, both Pratt and Marriott interpret the struggle against those forces, whether it be wind or hostile Indians, as a spiritual as well as a physical struggle. They are thus able to invest actual moments in Canadian history with enduring significance.

The poet's struggle to come to terms with "the home place" (Seed Catalogue I.55) becomes increasingly important as a theme in the contemporary long poem, as does a growing concern for language as process and play. According to Frank Davey: "Place has been substituted for sequential narrative in recent Canadian long poems to such an extent that it promises to become as much a convention as what it replaced" (184). Though bearing the marks of Modernism and the mythopoeic tradition, James Reaney's Twelve Letters to a Small Town (1962) has much in common

with Robert Kroetsch's Seed Catalogue (1977), a post-modern poem that is self-reflexive and fragmentary, playfully employing and subverting poetic convention in a context of continuing structure and perpetual growth. Kroetsch's question "How do you grow a poet?" is addressed in both poems, and in both poems gardens play an important role, for as Kroetsch writes: "We have an experience of a particular garden here. There are certain kinds of things we can grow and certain things we can't grow. The garden gives us shape" (MacKinnon 15).

For reasons of time and space, a limited number of long poems which demonstrate the characteristics of the Bildungsgedicht have been selected from four different periods in Canadian literary history, but numerous other works could well have been included: Cornwall Bayley's Canada (1806), Archibald McLachlan's The Emigrant (1861), Charles Mair's Tecumseh (1886), Patrick Anderson's Poem on Canada (1946), Earle Birney's Trial of a City (1948), Dorothy Livesay's Roots (1967), Louis Dudek's Atlantis (1967), Ralph Gustafson's Gradations of Grandeur (1979), and Daphne Marlatt's How Hug a Stone (1983). The poems that were selected reveal how the particular concerns of this study further illuminate some texts that have already received considerable critical attention, and redeem some that have been hitherto dismissed.

Throughout the thesis, the garden and its inhabitants are explored against a background of changing perceptions



and poetics. Both historical context and current theoretical perspectives are used to illuminate structure and theme, intertextuality and subtext, language and "local pride." Perhaps the topos of the garden is one of the most pervasive in literature because it is so intimately connected with the development of the human community and the human imagination. Certainly, it reveals itself in the Canadian long poem in a variety of guises which provide fresh insights into the process of Bildung that this country, its people, and its poets, have undergone and will continue to undergo. In The Necessity for Ruins, John Brinckerhoff Jackson writes:

We can in fact say that precisely because it is an archetype the garden must be subject to constant reinterpretation; there are as many kinds of gardens as there are concepts of art and work and community, and of relationships to the natural world. Even within a given culture there are many versions of the garden. Yet we somehow recognize them all. (20)

Canadians have sometimes been interpreted as a people garrisoned against hostile nature and hungry for roots. In Butterfly on Rock, D.G. Jones suggests that Canadian literature is filled with lost gardens and exiled gardeners. A study of the Bildungsgedicht reveals that many Canadian poets have, in fact, found a fertile and friendly corner where they can cultivate both transplanted and indigenous poetic traditions. To the attentive reader and critic, their poems offer a harvest of insight and surprise, a gate into both language and locus.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Adam Alone:

#### The Pre-Confederation Period

The Pre-Confederation poets, like the explorers before them, used the topos of the garden to describe the New World, but the image was developed differently depending on the ideological stance of the poet. The more conservative poets such as Adam Hood Burwell and Oliver Goldsmith perceived the New World as a garden on the rise with the Adamic settler at its creative centre, whereas poets on the periphery of official culture such as John Richardson and Adam Kidd perceived the New World as a fallen garden from which the Adamic Indian was being driven. Both sides relied on the language and imagery of Paradise Lost but used its patterns for different ends.

The historical philosophy informing the first point of view is the "four stages theory" of history, in which man progresses from the hunting-gathering stage, through the pastoral, to the agricultural, and finally to the commercial stage. Elsewhere, D.M.R. Bentley has shown how the four stages theory illuminates The Rising Village,<sup>1</sup> so I will point out only how the theory is relevant to a discussion of the Bildungsgedicht as garden. First, the fact that it is a

theory in which "the key factor in the process of development was the mode of subsistence" (Meek 2), helps to explain why these early poems lay such emphasis on agriculture, particularly in relation to culture. Only with the arrival of the agricultural stage could sufficient leisure be found to cultivate the more sophisticated activities of science and art. Secondly, certain of the theorists, including William Blackstone through whom Oliver Goldsmith was exposed to these ideas, found support for their theory both in Genesis and in the New World; to them "America was a kind of living model of the first state of mankind" (Meek 17). (Not surprisingly, New-World poets deeply grounded in scripture found this triangle of reference a fertile one.) Thirdly, later theorists brought a moralistic bent to the theory, warning that the luxuries of the commercial stage brought with them decadence and vice (Meek 155), or, as the English Goldsmith writes in The Traveller, "And honour sinks where commerce long prevails" (92). A tension is thus established between the rising of a village according to a stadial theory of upward progress, and the decline of human nature exposed to evil, a duality that is imaged in the plant that grows simultaneously in two directions. The solution of the poets and the pioneers they celebrated was to create a garden of balance with "enough for fancy and enough for use" (Burwell, Talbot Road 614).

The poets who believed the true threat to the New World garden was not a moral one from within but, rather, a

physical one from without in the form of the usurping White Man, accepted Rousseau's notions of the Noble Savage rather than the four stages theory with its insistence on an upward progression from "rude" to "polished" (Meek 141). These theoretical differences are reflected not only in content, but also in form. Burwell and Goldsmith write in old-fashioned and orderly heroic couplets, while Richardson and Kidd experiment with other forms. The description of Joseph Howe's Acadia as "a document of a divided sensibility" (Gingell-Beckmann 18) implies that he incorporates both points of view, but his choice of heroic couplets, his adherence to the four stages theory, and his celebratory pro-British tone ultimately ally him with Burwell and Goldsmith. In the end, whether the poet chooses the settler or the Indian as his Adamic hero, the true Adam is the poet himself, who creatively orders his world through naming, and who tends "with judicious hand" (Burwell 306) the garden of his verse.

Despite the differences between these five poems, Talbot Road (1818), The Rising Village (1825, 1834), Tecumseh (1828, 1842), The Huron Chief (1830), and Acadia (1832-33), they all present an essentially masculine vision. Whether the Indian or the settler is given the role of Adam, his first love is always the land which is invariably portrayed as female. In "Binding and Dressing Nature's Loose Tresses: The Ideology of Augustan Landscape Design," Carole Fabricant reveals the sexual politics that governed

the attitudes of eighteenth-century gardeners toward the landscape. All four aspects of the patriarchal relationship to "the garden as the repository of female mysteries" described by Fabricant (109), man to woman, artist to model, spectator to spectacle, and possessor to possession, will be examined in the poems under discussion. Related to these attitudes is the depiction of "Nature as a maiden in need of the sartorial assistance of her overseers" (Fabricant 126), a motif which allows Howe to find a balance between the two poles in the form of a garden where "together Art and Nature reign" (Acadia 813). Howe apparently believed that if the Canadian garden is truly to provide "enough for fancy and enough for use" that both her wild and cultivated beauties must be honoured and preserved. In Northern Spring, George Woodcock mourns the lack of ecological sensitivity in these early poets (198). In fact, a careful reading reveals an ecological awareness that, though tentative and patriarchal, was ahead of its time.

#### I.

In Talbot Road: A Poem Adam Hood Burwell introduces his readers to a land "created for delight" (85), but one that nevertheless requires a "master hand" (11) to bring it from "geographic night" into the "light" (93-94). This "great scheme" (24) to "transform the rugged wilds / To fruitful fields, and bid tam'd nature smile" (89-90) is both conceived and initiated by Colonel Thomas Talbot whose deeds

the poem was written to celebrate. Both Michael Williams and Bentley point out various echoes of Paradise Lost and examples of Miltonic diction; however, the tripartite structure of "'Paradise found,' 'Paradise lost,' and 'Paradise regained'" suggested by Williams (19) is not so apparent as a stadiial progression from barrenness to bounty interrupted only by a test of the settler's love for the land. The settler as Adam replicates God's task of transforming chaos into order, ground into garden. Significantly, Burwell describes "one solitary man /...unaided and alone" (112-13). Eve is nowhere to be found in this masculine world of "Herculean labors" (271); she appears only as an afterthought in the male promise to fetch "our goods, our cattle, wives, and little ones" (148), sadly wedged between domestic animals and infants. The only female to elicit Adam's gaze is Flora herself. As the title of Annette Kolodny's The Lay of the Land suggests, an eroticized relationship with the land was everywhere evident in the literature of the new continent, expressed especially in the desire of the American Adam to "rape" the land. Burwell twice refers to Talbot "piercing" the woods of his new home (92, 117). The woodsman's axe fells the trees until "the shivered timbers lie" (220). This possessive violence towards a fertile land is also evident in the passage about the "wand'ring bird" who "Espies what Ceres' golden treasures yield" (151-52). He "comes" with "the feather'd squadron" to "Invest the harvest, and consume it

all" (158). "Invest" in the military context suggested by the passage means "to enclose or hem in with a hostile force, to lay siege to; to attack" (OED), but it also means "to cover or surround as with a garment" (OED). Bentley suggests that the adjective "swarming" to describe the settlers that "left no vacant ground" (442) undermines a heroic portrayal, but, in fact, Burwell suggests it will require great industry to cover the land with "a richer, variegated vest" (104).

This latter meaning introduces the notion of "dressing" nature that permeates the poem. Adam the gardener and Adam Hood Burwell the poet unite in the role of "uninterrupted" voyeur, watching as fair Flora "sports" upon the "charming plain" (67). Though they have "beheld her pristine form display'd" (472), they are glad that man has prepared "[a] robe, more pleasing, for herself to wear" (474). The "[w]ide wasting conflagration" that "quickly bares the bosom of the ground" can be justified as a necessary step in this sartorial transformation (269-70). Now, "[a] beauteous zone shall guide the stranger's eye" (108). Williams glosses "zone" as "a geographical zone" but in contemporary usage it also refers to a woman's belt or girdle (OED).

The land may now be well dressed, but not with armour; no sooner is the garden established, but invasion threatens its "defenceless breast" (350). As Bentley points out, the echo of Milton's "from succor far" (PL IX.643) in Burwell's "[s]uccour far off" (359) reinforces the image of the land

as Eve, vulnerable to "[a] quick and easy conquest" (360). The Miltonic echoes climax in "all / Its high-built hopes of greatness seem'd to fall" (363-64), but Burwell's clever use of the Miltonic "seem'd" foreshadows a happy rather than tragic ending for the settlement. Meanwhile, however, the land is abandoned. "Their implements of husbandry thrown by" (390), the men of Talbot settlement go off to war and the "half-clear'd field /...lies a common wild" (393-94). Unlike Goldsmith and Howe, Burwell does not stress Indian savagery, but gives the role of the "midnight prowler" to the Americans (371). This detail is, of course, historically accurate to the War of 1812 which these passages describe, but also implies a greater sensitivity on Burwell's part to the uprooted and the marginal, as reflected in his poem "The Negro's Soliloquy" (Poems 48-51). He, nonetheless, chooses to celebrate Brock instead of Tecumseh. Despite the efforts of Brock, the "dauntless spirit," the abandoned land is raped and pillaged by "a hostile band" of Americans and only the return of the men restores her to life. Burwell's description of that resuscitation--"Swift thro' its palsied energies life ran" (431)--foreshadows Goldsmith's description of life returning to the abandoned Flora.

After the War of 1812, appropriation and enclosure are again the order of the day in Talbot Road: the immigrants who, like Caesar, "Sought out, and took the unlocated lands" (436) demand a survey. The land literally becomes "the



surveyed female" which John Berger describes in Ways of Seeing (47). As aesthetic or scenic "prospects" become economic "prospects," Talbot Road intersects the meandering valleys and "beauteous vales" of a feminine landscape. The straight line of the road and the poem that represents it "as on a single sheet" (485) carry the reader safely through the labyrinth of the land. The poet like Adam is given the task of ordering his world. The most significant of the Adamic tasks is the naming that occurs throughout the poem as the land is surveyed and described. Although names such as "Catfish Creek" jar against the formal elegance of the heroic couplets that confine them in "a curious jostling between Burwell's matter and manner" (Bentley 5), they reveal a touching fidelity to place which makes this poem attractive to modern readers. Burwell's pseudonym "Erieus" reveals this same duality. At once Latinate and local, it is a tribute to the land Burwell loved; in "Farewell to the Shores of Erie" he writes: "Nursed by thy wilds and solitudes, my youth / Grew like the plants that flourish on thy soil" (Poems 72).

Burwell realized that the world he loved was not particularly accommodating to the muse and that fate could "blast the bud of genius e'er the hand / Of fostering care [could] teach it to expand" (535-36), but he makes one last effort to "summon dark futurity to light" in a creative act that matches Talbot's own. This vision of the future in which "[t]he Town, the Village shall be seen to rise" (574)

is a brief statement of the four stages theory that Goldsmith will later use as a foundation for The Rising Village. The "thousand rural charms" (608) which Burwell describes recall the idyllic images of village life in The Deserted Village. Burwell delights in a vision of "meadows," "orchards" and "well stor'd gardens, that, with care, produce / Enough for fancy and enough for use" (610-14). A garden that contains both the functional and the fanciful is a symbol of a settlement that has moved beyond the stage of harsh necessity into one of leisure sufficient to allow for cultivation of the finer arts. Nor did this prophecy turn out to be a fantasy. In Summer Rambles, Anna Jameson describes her visit to Talbot Settlement in 1836. The gardens of the settlers were "planted with Indian corn and pumpkins, and sometimes a few cabbages and potatoes" (159), but Colonel Talbot possessed:

a garden of more than two acres, very neatly laid out and enclosed, and in which he evidently took exceeding pride and pleasure; it was the first thing he showed me after my arrival. It abounds in roses of different kinds, the cuttings of which he had brought himself from England in the few visits he had made there. Of these he gathered the most beautiful buds, and presented them to me.... (Jameson 171-72)

In Burwell's description, the landscape and gardens are arranged around a central focal point which is the "stately mansion" where "oft, the farmer contemplates alone, / The little Eden that he calls his own" (616-18). According to Jameson, Talbot felt solitude was a small price to pay for Eden: "I was resolved to get to paradise by hook or by

crook, and so I came here" (172). This is Adam alone in the garden in that "brief moment in human time when man had Paradise all to himself so that his mastery over the created world was absolute" (Fabricant 130), or as Marvell puts it: "Two paradises 'twere in one / To live in paradise alone" ("The Garden" 63-64). The paradisaic is everywhere evident in Burwell's description, even in Talbot Road itself where the "shady trees" guard from "from noon-day heat" (624). Bentley argues that the sensual description of the countryside, with its "rich, green velvet spread / In grassy carpets, or the tufted bed" (625-26), provides a solitary Adam and a solitary poet with a landscape "completely domesticated and perpetually innocent...Eve before and after the fall" (26).

The double function of the garden, for fancy and for use, is reiterated in the "Apostrophe to Hope and Anticipation" which gives the poem its structural symmetry. Hope is useful in its role as "a leading star" that guides and conducts the soul (322). Burwell describes its function in the baldest of economic terms (Bentley 17). Anticipation, on the other hand, "strews our path with many a sweet wild flower, / Cull'd from the choicest shrubs of fancy's bower" (333-34). The mind of the well equipped pioneer, like his garden, should contain "enough for fancy and enough for use." This is also a statement of poetics. "With judicious hand" (306) Burwell has planted the garden of his verse with both the practical and the imaginative.

In the closing verse paragraph, he assures his readers that "some favor'd poet's song, / To nature tun'd" can portray a fanciful vision of the "violet cover'd hill" and the other haunts of "melancholy love" (648); or, if need be, the future poet can also turn his pen to the useful task of rousing his listener to readiness in case "patriot virtue or his country calls" (652).

## II.

To some degree, this double agenda of the fanciful and the functional also informs Oliver Goldsmith's Rising Village. Goldsmith offers a vision of a bright new society, but he also warns against the discontents that may accompany the coming of civilization. The opening dedication to the poet's brother Henry, "partner of all [his] boyish hopes and fears" (2), inscribes a duality that lays a foundation for the tensions throughout the poem and also allies it to the poetry of his namesake, the English Goldsmith, who begins The Traveller with a dedication to his brother Henry. Kenneth Hughes and others have down-played the relationship between the Canadian and the English Goldsmith in an effort to elevate the indigenous status of the former, but as W.J. Keith, Gerald Lynch, and Bentley have shown, the connection between The Deserted Village and The Rising Village is unavoidable and should perhaps be celebrated as an early example of a New-World poet's attempt to respond creatively to a specific Old-World text.

Keith suggests that "The Rising Village begins where the earlier poem left off" (2), but this is only partly true. The Deserted Village ends with the residents of Auburn being banished from the garden that they once called home. The Canadian Goldsmith's intention is not to describe the fallen world of exile, but rather to show a new world in the making. Accordingly, he prepares for the process of creation "beyond the western main" (DV 368) with an idyllic vision of Britannia. Envisaged as a civilized garden, Britain provides a prototype for the new creation, as heaven provides a model for Eden. In contrast, Acadia appears "lone and drear" (RV 43), but this condition is only temporary. The dual task that awaits the settler is to end the rule of chaos and transform the wilderness into a garden, a process described by Raphael in Paradise Lost:

the bare Earth, till then  
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,  
Brought forth the tender Grass, whose verdure  
clad [t/o]  
Her Universal Face with pleasant green....  
(VII.313-16)

Raphael completes his description with "last / Rose as in Dance the stately Trees" (VII.323-24). Here Goldsmith's vision diverges from Milton's; for European eyes accustomed to "bright...varied and...boundless" prospect: (RV 30), the trees themselves were a part of the chaos to be conquered. In The Deserted Village, the forests of the new world are described as "those matted woods where birds forget to sing" (349). In The Rising Village, Acadia's "wilderness of trees" also resembles the "highest Woods impenetrable / To

Star or Sun-light" where Adam seeks to "live savage" and hidden from God after the Fall (PL IX.1085-87). The silence of the forest is disturbed by the "loud misrule / Of Chaos" (PL VII.271-72) represented by "wandering savages, and beasts of prey" (RV 45). The presentation of the Indians in The Rising Village owes much to views of the ignoble savage as envisioned by poets such as Pope and Thomson, and by the four stage theorists. In addition, there are parallels between Goldsmith's portrayal of the Indians and Milton's portrayal of Chaos which shed new light on this portion of the poem. Milton describes a world in the process of creation:

where eldest Night  
 And Chaos, Ancer'ors of Nature, hold  
 Eternal Anarchy amidst the noise  
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.  
 (PL II.894-97)

Like the Indians who "oft in sternest mood maintain, / Their right to rule the mountain and the plain" (RV 87-88), "Disparted Chaos over-built exclaim'd, / And with rebounding surge the bars assail'd, / That scorn'd his indignation" (PL X.416-18). Ultimately, it is the "first approach of day" that drives the Indian away (100), just as it is God's fiat, "Let there be light," that purges His creation of "The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs / Adverse to life" (PL VII.238-39).

Keith notes that "the Indians here find themselves in precisely the same position as the dispossessed countrymen in The Deserted Village" (7), but clearly, this is not the

Canadian Goldsmith's concern. In order for the "golden corn" to be "triumphant," the land must be reclaimed from chaos. The arrival of an agricultural stage depends on the disappearance of the nomadic hunters. Victory over both the Indians and their forest home is a necessary step in a transformation so complete that it suggests "alchemical transmutation" (Lynch 37). Despite overwhelming obstacles, the settler "still retains possession of the soil" (104). As Bentley points out, this commitment to one's land is a central tenet of the Four Stages theory, and is the factor that elevates the farmer above the nomadic Indian:

Had not therefore a separate property in lands, as well as moveables, been vested in some individuals, the world must have continued a forest, and men have been mere animals of prey. (Blackstone II.8)

With the arrival of the agricultural stage, Acadia begins to resemble the description of Britannia that opens the poem, a resemblance that extends even to the "rich luxuriance" of the crops. (In The Deserted Village, the "pois'nous fields" of the New World are crowned with "rank luxuriance" [351]). As Goldsmith expresses it elsewhere:

The Indian's home and refuge of the deer,  
The trackless fields of Canada appear.  
But mark the fruitful realms that intervene,  
And like a garden variegate the scene....  
("New Year's Address 1828" 145-48)

Indeed, the "Earth now / Seem'd like to Heav'n, a seat where Gods might dwell..." (PL VII.328-30). In keeping with the four stages theory, the "fair prospects" (113) that now present themselves in The Rising Village are both

topographical and economic (Hughes 39).

The description of the buildings and personages of the rising village that follows echoes the description of Auburn before the enclosures in The Deserted Village, though in less idyllic tones. The various careers described not only parallel Goldsmith's own experiences as described in his autobiography (Bentley, "Oliver Goldsmith and The Rising Village" 23), but they also prepare for the central story of Flora and Albert through the use of horticultural metaphors and allusions to Paradise Lost. The "ceaseless idle curiosity / Which over all the Western world prevails" is "by indulgence, so o'erpowering grown, / It seeks to know all business but its own" (151-52 emphasis added). Goldsmith's description of the news-hungry citizens of the rising village is reminiscent of Eve's description of the garden which "One night or two with wanton growth derides / Tending to wild" (PL IX.211-12). The church alone provides solace and sobriety--its "unadorned array" (167) provides spiritual sustenance for a community at work in fields that "nature's vernal bloom adorns" (37). Now "the Rising Village claims a name" (197). Though apparently a positive step towards an identity, the possible allusion to the builders of Babel who "get themselves a name, lest far disperst / In foreign Lands thir memory be lost" (PL XII.45-46) raises the troubling spectre of pride and defiance. Next, the wandering Pedlar who is himself a microcosm of the four stages theory in his progress from "wandering" to



"settled," establishes his store in a passage which many consider to be the poem's finest. This store with merchandise ranging from "nails" to "silks" can be compared to Burwell's "well-stored garden" because its shelves hold "enough for fancy and enough for use." However, hope is accompanied by fear, and "the envenomed dart" of the "half-bred Doctor" is a reminder that death has entered into the garden. In his incompetence this doctor resembles the "quack" in George Crabbe's The Village (1783) which was written to refute the English Goldsmith's idyllic portrait of village life.

Lynch has astutely pointed out the significance of the school-house passage as a preparation for the Flora and Albert episode with its various gardening metaphors and echoes of Paradise Lost. The school master is "unequal to the task" of leading "the opening blossoms into day" (232). The fact that he is described as "some poor wanderer" and not "refined," and, moreover, submits the children to "all the terrors of his lawful sway" (243), associates him with the savages of the earlier passage and thus to the earlier period of the four stages theory, which the village is attempting to transcend. Not surprisingly, "the rugged urchins spurn at all control" (245). In Paradise Lost, Eve complains about the unruly garden she must tend:

what we by day  
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,  
One night or two with wanton growth derides  
Tending to wild. (IX. 209-212)

In the passage that follows the description of the school

children, the "incremental repetition" (Hughes 38) of the word "charms" creates an incantatory quality that carries the meaning beyond a description of a beautiful landscape into the realm of enchantment. The idea of a magic spell is reinforced by the charmed circle of the "festive dances" (263) that will soon be broken as bewitching romantic pleasures lead, as they do in Othello, to tragedy for "one poor maid who loved--and loved too well" (308). This description of "sportive pleasures" recalls the rural charms of The Deserted Village. C.C. Barfoot suggests that the English Goldsmith intended a connection between "pastime" and "past time" (Barfoot 113), a connection that is also appropriate to The Rising Village. The image of the "spreading tree" recalls past generations:

For in this context the tree is not simply to be regarded as an apt inspirer of immemorial thoughts, but also as an appropriately traditional reminder of the family tree that joins the members of the extended village family together in the past as well as in the present. (Barfoot 113)

The Canadian Goldsmith's use of the adjectives "spreading" and "expanded," imply that the tree is mimetic of the growth of the village itself. And, of course, the tree also suggests the central trees of Eden, the "goodly" tree of life (PL IX.576) and the "fatal" tree of knowledge (PL IV.514), for under its shade Albert makes his false vows.

As in Paradise Lost, the natural world reflects changes in the moral climate. Goldsmith suggests that the "gambols and freaks" (274) of the village youth extend throughout the yearly cycle, even beyond the traditional seasons of romance

and festivity. The young "their simple sports renew" (265) even when "Summer's bloomy charms are fled" (a phrase that echoes the desolation of Auburn [DV 128]), when "Autumn's fallen leaves around are spread" (a phrase that recalls Milton's metaphor for the fallen angels who "lay intrans't / Thick as Autumnal leaves [PL I.301-302]), and when "Winter rules the sad inverted year" (269). Lynch traces Goldsmith's use of the word "inverted" to James Thomson's Winter (43), but the adjective is also significant to the directional dialectic that marks the developing pattern of horticultural metaphors; in this upside-down world the bloom that was rising is now buried. The poem abandons the upward movement of hope to descend into the realm of fears. The residents of the Rising Village may be able to surmount the physical hardships of winter, but the cold and "baneful arts" of Vice "sink, debase, and overwhelm the soul" (294). Through a subtle pattern of allusions to Othello and Paradise Lost Goldsmith describes the insidious process by which the charmed circle is broken. The word "honest" takes on the foreboding ambiguity of Shakespeare's usage (Othello I.iii.400), and the word "seemed" resonates with Milton's particular emphasis (Satan "seem'd / A Pillar of State" [II.301-302]; Sin "seem'd Woman to the waist" [II.650]). The stage is set for the entrance of the handsome and energetic Albert, whose "heart seem'd generous, noble, kind, and free" (313; the word is italicized in the 1825 version).

Building on the efforts of Hughes and Keith, Lynch has succeeded in demonstrating that the story of Flora and Albert is not mere "soap opera" (Fetherling 123) but rather an integral and thematically significant portion of the poem. Lynch argues persuasively that this episode reinforces the poem's themes of control, governance both in nature as wilderness and human nature. Flora is at once the village girl abandoned by a wayward lover, and Acadia herself, subject to the whims of the harsh Canadian seasons. Flora's burgeoning sexuality, reinforced by the sensual language of the footnote that associates her with the Mayflower, makes her particularly vulnerable. What Pacey dismisses as cliché ("Goldsmith never gets beyond such stock comparisons as that of a girl to a flower" [32]), becomes significant in the context of Paradise Lost; Flora, like Eve, is the "fairest unsupported Flow'r" (PL IX.432) ripe for seduction. Despite a hesitation reminiscent of Eve's "sweet reluctant amorous delay" (PL IV.311), Flora, "at length," succumbs to Albert's passion.

The "hauntingly particularized picture of an Acadian winter" (Lynch 42) that follows reminds us that the world is once again upside down. Like Desdemona, Flora anxiously awaits her groom, only to be rewarded by the news that Albert has abandoned his love and his land. Lynch notes that Goldsmith may have been warning against the failure of civilization, and the reassertion of the nomadic (43). In the minds of the four stages theorists, such an

event would signal a frightening backward step. Locke's Two Treatises of Government, to which Blackstone refers, condemns this failure to possess the land:

Whatsoever he tilled and reaped, laid up and made use of before it spoiled, that was his peculiar right...but if the fruit of his planting perished without gathering and laying up, this part of the earth, not withstanding his enclosure, was still to be looked on as waste. (Locke 141)

Flora has been abandoned and her fertility has been wasted: "Exhausted nature could no further go" (397). She, like the angels, is "[e]xhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n" (PL VI.852). Though she is brought back from death through the "anxious care" of peasants, just as the land is in spring, she will never again be the same. In Eden, Love "reigns...and revels" (PL VI. 765), but in this abandoned garden, only pain "floats and revels" over Flora's "maddened brain" (422), though like Desdemona she "forbears to blame" the name of her beloved. The rising village once claimed a name, but now Albert threatens that upward progress by insisting that even his own name be forgotten.

Though several of the poems that appear with The Rising Village in its Canadian edition deal with seduction and betrayal (for example, "From Myra," "To Rosina," and "Air"), Goldsmith here insists that "not oft" do "such tales of real woe / Degrade the land, and round the village flow" (427-28). He now turns the focus away from the abandoned Flora to a smiling land that shows evidence of continued attention and care. Goldsmith's ideal vision, like Burwell's, is of nature suitably adorned by man, of "gardens bounded by some

fence of green" (458). Enclosure becomes a sign that one has indeed taken possession of the land:

During the eighteenth century, fences--along with, in another but related way, social institutions like marriage and moral prescription governing female chastity and fidelity--became increasingly necessary to ensure those supreme capitalist values, ownership and privacy, both of which entail the exclusion of "outsiders" and protect against external invasions of all sorts.  
(Fabricant 118)

The presence of the cemetery is, however, a reminder that hope and fear go hand in hand. Land abandoned by its people becomes at once "a garden and a grave" (DV 302). Recently, it has been argued that The Deserted Village concerns the removal in 1761 of the village of Nuneham Courtney to make a "seat of pleasure" for the Earl of Harcourt. Lord Harcourt, made wealthy by the exploitation of the colonies to which he was exiling his own people, actually turned the village cemetery into a flower garden (Batey 66). Though the Canadian Goldsmith insists that Acadia is a garden, he must acknowledge that there are graves amid the flowers. Yet, "the grass-clod hillocks of the sacred dead" (464) now inspire a sense of heritage and history rather than a sense of dread, just as remnants of wilderness now inspire delight instead of terror because they are contained within a cultivated landscape "humanized by agrarian development" (Bentley, "Oliver Goldsmith" 44).

The historical cycle that has allowed "Happy Acadia" to become like "Happy Britannia" is reflected in the seasonal cycle. The "rude tempests" of Winter resemble the reign of

"savage tribes" and the "loud misrule" of Chaos. The coming of Summer signals the agricultural stage, and the establishment of Eden. The coming of Autumn is described in the language of commerce, since the arrival of the commercial stage, despite its discontents, signifies a fully civilized culture:

Still Autumn's gifts repay the labourer's toil  
 With richest products from thy fertile soil;  
 With bounteous store his varied wants supply,  
 And scarce the plants of other suns deny. (491-94)

Goldsmith is here asserting that plants of other countries will flourish in Canada, a claim which the English Goldsmith makes for Italy in The Traveller (113). But this statement extends beyond agriculture into other "peaceful arts of culture" (513) of which poetry is one. The Deserted Village ends with "sweet Poetry" being crowded out of the Old World by "sensual joys" (408). The English Goldsmith bids "Poetry" farewell (417) with the hope that she will find a home in the New World, and that her voice, "prevailing over time," will "Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime" (421-22). The Canadian Goldsmith is arguing that the old forms have indeed taken root in the new soil. In the 1825 version of The Rising Village, published in England, Goldsmith had written "scarce the fruit of other suns denies" (498) but changed this to "plants" in the 1834 edition, as if to assert that poetry in Canada is no longer just imported, but various verse forms are actually "transplanted" and adapted to their new environment by

indigenous poets. Though Pacey feels The Rising Village falls far short of the poem which inspired it, he grudgingly admits that "in those matters by which the flexibility and deftness of the heroic couplet are most often judged, the advantage is, if anywhere, on the side of the Canadian poet" (28). A careful study of the prosody reveals that the Canadian Goldsmith has adapted the old form to the new environment by making more use of enjambement, off-rhyme, and reversed beat. Goldsmith reinforces this "Canadianization" of form with a "growing sense of place" from the 1825 to 1834 editions (Lynch 48). Traditional poetic diction is interrupted by such onomatopoeic words as "clacking" (462) which Lampman later uses to great effect in his poem "Heat." The intriguing subtext provided by the footnotes also serves to transform a poem in the topographical tradition into a "documentary" poem, in which the poet "gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name" (Shakespeare, MND V.i.16-17). Goldsmith was apparently aware of the implications of transplanting foreign forms to Canadian soil, though he did not always rise to the challenge. Naturally, he expected his readers to recognize the progress entailed in the contrast between the artful sophistication of his poem and the "laboured verse" on the "rude cut stones" (465) of the village cemetery (Bentley, "Oliver Goldsmith" 54). And Goldsmith's verse, like those on the tomb stones, serves the dual function of a tribute and a warning. The garden of



Goldsmith's poetry, like Burwell's, contains "enough for fancy and enough for use."

In his so-called Autobiography, Goldsmith writes of the horticultural endeavours of his retirement in Newfoundland: "I had a flower garden, and also a large kitchen Garden, both of which I carefully cultivated, and my Strawberries and Celery were superior" (49). Some critics have complained that Goldsmith's poetry offers more celery than strawberries, but the continued attention it has received is evidence that his garden is a fruitful one. He was indeed derivative, but the task of finding fresh forms is a difficult one, as Joseph Howe reminds us in his introduction to a "Christmas Rhyme" that Goldsmith wrote in 1828:

the path has so often been travelled over, that it requires a keen eye and a ready hand to snatch a flower, the bloom and fragrance of which has not been stolen before. (qtd. by Myatt 104-105)

### III.

Two poets who face this challenge are John Richardson and Adam Kidd. They also explore the New World garden but place the Indian at the centre and the white man at the periphery. In Tecumseh; Or the Warrior of the West, Richardson explores the classic epic theme of "Heroic Martyrdom / Unsung" (PL IX.32-33), and also reveals the tragic extinction of a way of life and the loss of a newly-found Paradise. A close analysis of the poem reveals how Richardson uses the conventions of classical epic, the symbolic structure of Milton's Paradise Lost, and the peculiar conditions of

Canadian history to create "Things unattempted yet" (PL I.16) in the colonial literature of his day.

Unfortunately, because interest in Richardson has focused on his colourful career as a soldier and on his novels, his long poem, Tecumseh, has been largely ignored in the century and a half since it was published. If mentioned at all, it is dismissed as a historically interesting but poetically insignificant work: "Tecumseh displays too close and un-original a copying of classic models, and it is too uniformly mediocre and conventional to merit anything more than a mildly favorable comment" (Ballstadt 16). The poem may indeed be derivative, but it is rooted in a Canadian context by Richardson's choice of an indigenous hero through whom he can explore epic themes.

In Tecumseh, Richardson sheds light on one of the first and darkest chapters in Canadian history. He reminds his readers that while the early settlers believed they were discovering Paradise, they were, in fact, participating in its destruction. On the surface, Richardson's epic theme appears to be the same as Virgil's in the Aeneid: "Arma virumque cano: I sing of arms and the man" (3). The poem's subtitle "The Warrior of the West," the dedication "To Captain Barclay and other officers..." from "their companion in arms" (v), and the Preface in which Richardson asserts "[t]he following Poem is the production of a soldier" (xi), all prepare the way for a military tale of a heroic warrior who "swore to fall or set his country free" (I.xxxv.8).

However, all three of these elements are absent from the Canadian edition which is introduced simply as Tecumseh, a Poem in Four Cantos. If Richardson's poem is to receive the re-evaluation it deserves, critics must respect the changes Richardson made in the Canadian edition of 1842 and consider how they serve to strengthen his epic design.<sup>2</sup> It could be argued that Richardson may at last have recognized that war was not his true theme, but rather the disappearance of peace. Tecumseh begins:

It is in truth as fair and sweet a day  
As ever dawn'd on Erie's silvery lake,  
And wanton sunbeams on its surface play  
Which slightest breeze nor rippling currents  
break. [t/o] (I.i.1-4)

Richardson's poem begins in peace with a dawn like the first dawn. The world is paradisaical until the "break" at the end of the fourth line sunders calm into chaos:

Yet Devastation's voice her friends obey,  
And stern Bellona loves e'en here to slake  
Her quenchless thirst in streams of human gore,  
Which soon must dye that lake and distant shore.  
(I.i.5-8)

The tragedy of the entire poem hinges on the words "e'en here"; even the distant and beautiful garden of Canada will soon be shadowed by death and destruction. The pun on "dye" reinforces the impending doom; this distant shore will soon be stained with the dye of blood, and the dying of a world and its way of life. Thus, within the context of the opening stanza, what might initially appear as a conventional description of battle becomes a traumatic portrait of nature's first scarring. The details given are

not those which might be expected from a soldier who was there. The combatants are not introduced with triumphant fanfare, but rather with the question: "And who are they who, fierce defying, dare...?" (I.iii.1). Richardson describes the American warships that emerge from the mist with language that echoes Milton's description of the fallen angels in Paradise Lost (I.376) and reinforces the unprecedented nature of this event: "Nor seen, nor known, nor understood before" (I.iii.7). Explaining the surprise of the Canadian forces, Richardson notes that "a few months prior to this unfortunate engagement, the trees of which the American flotilla was formed were actually standing in their native forests" (I.iii.7n.). Though Richardson drastically reduced the footnotes for the Canadian edition, he saw fit to retain the following: "Captain Finnes, who commanded the Queen Charlotte, and Lieut. Garden of the Newfoundland Regt., (acting as Marines) were both killed by the same ball" (I.xvii.4 emphasis added), perhaps because the horticultural and New-World resonances of the names reinforced his theme.

Nature is "startled" and "shrinks quailing back" from these "scenes of fearful death, which darkly stain / The spotless bosom of the silvery plain" (I.viii.7-8). The opening line of Stanza IX, "And oh! by Heaven it is a glorious day," must be read ironically because of what follows. Richardson goes on to describe how the smoke of the guns hides the sun "[w]hich beautiful and bright that



phrased as a question: "Say, who that roveless warrior, who reclines, / His noble form against the craggy steep...?" (I.xxvii.1-2). Richardson claims to be true to the historical Tecumseh, a historical objectivity he defines in his Preface as a "strict adherence to the wild poetry of his character" (xi). As Richardson's oxymoronic statement makes clear, the task of objectively portraying a character who had already attained legendary status would be a difficult one. Carl Klinck describes Richardson's Tecumseh as "a noble savage and a Byronic hero" ("Early Creative Literature of Western Ontario" 156). Though these descriptions are not incorrect, Richardson undoubtedly wished his readers to perceive Tecumseh as a Christ figure. If he is angry, his is the righteous wrath of Christ driving the money changers from his father's house. If he is torn by grief, it is for the sufferings of his tribe. If he is sacrificed, his death is a ransom to redeem his people. He knows through sad experience the "faithless vow" and deceptive ways of his destructive but powerful enemy (I.xxxiv.8). His acceptance of the dark task before him is expressed the simple phrase, "They come," (I.xlii.6) words that echo those of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:42).

The first Canto closes with the arrival of young Uncas, Tecumseh's "sole born, and his Nation's pride" (I.xxxvii.4). in whom Richardson presents a brave son who shares his father's vision. Apparently, this positive portrayal is historically inaccurate; the son of Tecumseh was



In this precarious calm after war, this hiatus between battles, a song begins. Eighteen stanzas of Canto II are dedicated to a lament for the passing of a world. This song within a song begins with an invocation to Erie and the classical device of ubi sunt: "Oh! Erie, where are now those cherish'd hours / Which saw thee happy in thy children's joy...? (II.vi.1-2). What follows is a beautifully evocative recounting of the Indian way of life. Here, portrayed with nostalgic gentleness, we see the Brother, Bride and Child before they are torn asunder by war. The stanzas leading up to the song strongly echo The Deserted Village:

These were thy charms, sweet village; sports  
     like these, [t/o]  
 With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;  
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence  
     shed,  
 These were thy charms--But all these charms are  
     fled.

(The Deserted Village 31-34)

How gay were now those sights,--those sounds,  
     how sweet,-- [t/o]  
 For ne'er does man so well desire to hail  
 The soothing charm which hover'd o'er his head,  
 As when reflection tells that charm is fled.  
     (Tecumseh II.iv.5-8; 1828).

Richardson then proceeds, like Goldsmith, to give an idyllic vision of village life, complete with bashful virgins and dancing on the green; however, he transposes the scene to a Canadian context by incorporating details of native life with which he was familiar through personal observation. He may also have had Indian ancestry as the grandson of a fur trader and an Ottawa woman (Beasley 9). These stanzas



are suffused with authentic, if idealized, detail: fishing by torchlight, hunting by bow, hoary chieftains and glowing maidens, face paint and moccasins "work'd in many a wild, but fair design, / With vari-colour'd quills of porcupine" (II.xv.7-8). Like the English Goldsmith, Richardson offers a portrait of pre-lapsarian Eden, a joyous time of moonlight and music, preening and play. But Erie, like Auburn, is soon to feel the hand of desolation. Both the land, "in nature's simplest charms at first array'd" (DV 296), and "nature's simplest child" (Tecumseh II.xii.8) will be betrayed; this New-World pastoral is inevitably doomed to shatter with the end of peaceful days. The sun has set on the West, both literally and figuratively. In the second half of the song, the world as the Indians knew it has been turned upside down. The courting dance becomes a dance of war, and the weapons once used for hunting wild animals are turned against human foes. The animals turn vicious like those in Milton's Eden after the fall, and man is more vicious still. The parallels between this song and The Deserted Village ally Tecumseh with the tragic vision of Paradise Lost while evoking nostalgia and sympathy for a threatened way of life. Nevertheless, the passage that follows must have seemed a startling assertion to Richardson's first readers:

The white man terms us cruel, while his blade  
 Alone leaps thirsting for some victim's blood;  
 He hunts the peaceful Indian from his glade,  
 To seek for shelter in the pathless wood.  
 (II.xxii.1-4).

This passage has been changed from a third-person narrative ("The white man terms them cruel...") in the English edition to the more dramatic first-person in the Canadian, a change which enhances the immediacy and pathos of the scene by signaling that the singer is himself an Indian. At the end of the song the singer is revealed to be an aged Chief "[b]eneath the weight of many winters bent" (II.xxiv.4). Perhaps Richardson delays the revelation of the singer's identity because he does not wish to prejudice his audience against the content; possibly, he could not trust his readers to accept an Indian as a reliable narrator. The delay also allows him to use the vocabulary and diction of epic's "grand style" without raising questions of authenticity. In any event, Richardson's description of the old chief associates him not only with the old woman left behind in The Deserted Village: "She only left of all the harmless train, / The sad historian of the pensive plain" (135-36), but also with the poet himself. The English Goldsmith closes his poem with the hope that Poetry will find a home in a hostile New World. Richardson asserts that Poetry does not have to be imported, because it already exists. Though the strains may be "simple" and the "accents wild and brief" they are sufficient to express the "hopeless and devoted soil's lament" (II.xxiv.1,5-6). The old Chief is a creator in his role as singer. He offers a verbal artifact that tells the tale of the tribe. He grieves for the land and its people, because he has seen the beginning

and the end. He has seen his people seduced and betrayed by an enemy that will never be satisfied. He has witnessed death entering his garden, and "[h]is still full black, though half-expiring eye [I]" reflects a setting sun (I.xxiv.7). Although the aged Chief, Tecumseh, and Uncas form a kind of trinity, Tecumseh as the hero is himself a trinity. In the first and second Cantos he fills the role of the Mighty Father in his relationship to his tribe and his son who is sacrificed. His wrath resembles that of the Old Testament Jehovah, harsh yet just. In the third Canto he becomes the Adam who is banished from Eden, and in the final Canto he fulfills his destiny as the second Adam who is sacrificed to redeem the first.

The comparison of the New World with Eden is, as has been seen, not original with Richardson. But Richardson is unique in his choice of Adams. The one who is tragically driven from this Western Paradise is not the settler, but rather the native Indian, "nature's simplest child" (II.xii.8). He is the "first parent" seduced and betrayed. (Milton, in fact, anticipates the connection made by Richardson when he compares the "first naked Glory" of Adam and Eve to:

th' American so girt  
With feather'd Cincture, naked else and wild  
Among the Trees on Isles and woody Shores.  
(PL IX.1115-118)

The fall is doubly tragic because the Indian is, in a sense, a part of the garden he inhabits. In contrast to the white men, who are associated by Richardson with machines, the

native people share a unity with nature, and are usually described in organic terms. The aged chief is likened to an old pine "[b]eneath the weight of many winters bent" (II.xxiv.4) and Tecumseh is described as a "spirit of the forest" (I.xxvii.3). Both Tecumseh and his father refer to the "devoted soil" (II.xxiv.6), a curious phrase suggesting that even the soil shares a loyalty to its offspring.

As the last strains of the old Chief's song fade away, a new "wail of lamentation" (II.xxvii.3-4) is heard. Uncas is dead. The news destroys the Grandsire, and the two bodies are laid before Tecumseh, who grieves over the "last sad promise of his fallen name" (IV. xxii.2). In the "eye for an eye" tradition of the Old Testament, "the noblest of the hostile band" (II.xxxix.2) is slain in retribution. Death has found its way across Chaos into Paradise. Faced with "innate cruelty too shocking and almost too incredible to be detailed" (II.xxxviii.1n.), Richardson struggles with his task of justifying the ways of the Indian to his listeners. He achieves a balance by making the woman who slays the white chief into a demon rather than an Indian. In addition, he asks where Tecumseh was, indicating that had he been there, the murder would never have been committed. Historians confirm Richardson's conviction that Tecumseh, though a dedicated warrior, was not without mercy (Colquhoun 27), a point which Kidd also stresses in The Huron Chief. Significantly, both of the young warriors are described as flowers struck down, Uncas as "a blighted flower, / Cropp'd

in the bloom of beauty and of power!" (II. xxxiii.7-8) and the white soldier as "a scarcely budded flower" that "strew[s] it blossoms o'er a distant glade" (II.xl.3-4). Richardson acknowledges that war entails suffering for both sides. Canto II closes as a scout arrives to remind Tecumseh of his mission. Dawn has come and the "morn's first rosi-colour'd streaks" (II.1.7) not only echo Homer's "rosy-fingered dawn" (Odyssey II.1.) but are reminders of a night of blood. While Cantos I and II concern the Fall of the New World through the entry into it of war and death, interrupted by episodes describing the pre-lapsarian Paradise, Canto III concerns the banishment that follows. The coming day is to be one of numbing heat, not unusual for a Canadian summer, as Richardson explains to his British readers in the 1828 edition:

Notwithstanding the severity of the winter in Canada, the heat of July and August is intense; insomuch that the lassitude and debility occasioned by the weather is often little inferior to that experienced during the hotter months in the West Indies. (III.iii.6n)

Richardson skilfully uses the realistic detail of climate to suggest the conditions of Paradise. "The forest deer wends fearless to the tide" (III.iv.1) because the wolf "lies tame and spell-bound" (III.iv.6). Even the "scaly serpent.../ Barks near the drooping warbler" without striking, "tho' the victim felt it not secure" (III.v.1-2,8). Richardson's portrait of nature paralyzed by heat curiously approximates pre-lapsarian nature: "All nature owns the universal charm" (III. vii.1), and echoes Milton's description of the animals

in Eden before the Fall: "Sporting the Lion ramp'd and in his paw / Dandl'd the Kid..." (PL IV.343-44) and "close the Serpent sly / ...of his fatal guile / Gave proof unheeded" (PL IV.347-50). In both poems, the presence of the serpent reminds the reader that the repose is only temporary, and "Eden were no Eden thus expos'd" (PL IX.341).

Richardson manages to instill historical reality with symbolic significance not only in his depiction of the weather, but also in his description of the hall in which the soldiers meet to discuss strategy. The hall is at once a barracks and a chapel, a duplicity that is conveyed through lines of immense auditory power and texture: "Warriors' muskets ringing as they fall, / Or hymns to High Jehovah..." (III.xi.5-6). In contrast to Goldsmith, who lauds the efforts of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in his notes to The Rising Village, Richardson explicitly condemns the forces that he feels are trying to conquer the New World: "that too-devoted realm / Which craft, and Christians leagued to overwhelm" (I.xxxii.7-8; 1828). In the Canadian edition these lines have been changed to "that too-devoted soil / Which Guile and Rapine banded to despoil" (I.xxxii.7-8). Perhaps Richardson recognized that he could not assign guilt directly to Christianity if he intended to found his epic on its symbolic structure. Instead, he suggests that the enemy can use scriptures to tempt and seduce.

At Fort Malden on the shores of Erie, the furnace of

the day gives way to words of fire--those of Tecumseh's famous speech urging the English to hold their ground, rather than retreat inland up the Thames. Finally, against his better judgement, Tecumseh is persuaded to leave the banks of the lake he loves and the men are commanded to put fire to their own shelter, so nothing remains for the enemy. This example of scorched-earth policy stands in sharp contrast to the fires used in the arduous process of clearing the land in early Canadian settlement poems. In Talbot Road and The Rising Village, conflagrations are seen as a triumphant conquest of wilderness and chaos to make room for the creation of a garden, a shelter, a home. In Canto III of Tecumseh, the fire is lit not to create, but to destroy, a devastation that is reinforced by the negative language used to describe the scene: "clouds of smoke pollute the spotless sky" (III.xlii.3). Similarly, in Canto I, blood stained the "spotless bosom of the silvery plain" (I.viii.8). Destroying with their own hands the home they shared, the soldiers remember and grieve: "Alas! how oft within those precincts gay, / The laugh has echoed to their joyous bands" (III.xl.3-4). Intratextual echoes carry the reader back to the song of the aged Chief, and the time of joy and innocence he celebrated. Stanza Forty-One begins, "It is in truth a joyless sight to view..." (III.xli.1), a line that also takes us back in the poem, this time to the first line and the opening invocation to "truth." Now the tale has come full circle and the cycle







"flesh of his flesh" emerging from his side, and she also has an Indian name. She is the site of the first skirmish and the first defeat, holding within her bosom the first grave: "The Lake appears a Bride who mourns her Lord" (II.iii.4). In keeping with the Miltonic pattern of hierarchy, Tecumseh "shines / Pre-eminent above the silvery deep / A monument of strength" (I.xxvii.3-5). Erie graces the opening stanzas of the first three Cantos with her radiant beauty, and she is the muse to whom the aged Chief addresses his song, recalling the time when "plenty smiled upon [her] blooming powers" (II.vi.3). The Indians who participate in dances and games of peace are her noble sons. She is the mother of them all, a mirror to the unclouded sky. But these peaceful days are "for ever gone, and banish'd from [her] shore" (II.xvi.5) when she becomes a spirit divided. Richardson's description of Erie echoes Goldsmith's description of Auburn and the sexual language that informs it. Roger Lonsdale suggests that through the repetition of such words as "sweet," "lovely," "dear," and "charms" Goldsmith insists upon "the sexual identity of Auburn as an innocent girl, who will be betrayed, raped or prostituted" (69). Erie is also vulnerable to betrayal. Once again, though the choice of Adam differs, the vision is a masculine one in which female qualities are projected upon the landscape. For Tecumseh, the banishment is complete when he is convinced "[a]gainst his better knowledge" (PL IX.998) to leave Erie's shores and head inland. He argues

that he will have a better chance against the foe if he stays by the lake, but his eloquence is ignored and he finally yields. After this decision is made Erie's weakness is revealed:

The lonely harbour, of her strength divest,  
 No fire repulsive warms within her womb;  
 While on the fortress' weaken'd sides there  
                   rest [t/o]  
 Faint means to throw the round shot or the  
                   bomb. [t/o] (III.xxxii.1-4)

Lake Erie, like Eve from succor far, is vulnerable to attack. If the role of Eve is assigned to Erie, the assignation of guilt for the Fall becomes more complex. Without an explicit act of disobedience on the part of Eve/Erie, the blame rests solely on the shoulders of the greedy and deceptive Enemy. Richardson apparently absolves the Indians of responsibility for their own decline, and points the finger instead at those who sought to exploit the new land. The implications of this historical truth transform Richardson's flawed poetic effort into a relevant and continuing reminder for us, the inheritors of both the land and the guilt of those who seized it.

Tecumseh may ask with Adam: "Must I thus leave thee Paradise? thus leave / Thee Native Soil, these happy Walks and Shades, / Fit haunt of Gods?" (PL XI.269-71), but for him there can be no "paradise within..." (XII.587). He has nothing to look forward to except immediate fulfilment of the vision shown to Adam by Gabriel: "Concourse in Arms, fierce Faces threat'ning War" (PL XI.641). His reverie by his son's grave is interrupted by the hum of marching feet

(III.xlviii.4). As the Canto closes, Tecumseh returns through the forces and "join[s] his Warriors ere the troops defiled" (III. xlviii.8). The choice of this last word is no accident. It means "to march in file" (OED) but also implies that the soldiers go forth to desecrate the land.

In a reprise of the old chief's song, Richardson digresses to fondly recall the life of the warrior, the brotherhood of men who understand the ways of the wild. The masculine nature of Richardson's vision is emphasized by his Whitmanesque affection for men "whose youthful years no mildewing sorrows blight" (IV.vii.3) because they prefer nature's "checker'd scenes" to the "crowded room" of "social man" (IV.viii.7-8). Richardson repeatedly uses Milton's "thrice happy" to describe these young men who, like the Indians, have learned to survive where "the north wind along the ice-lake skims" (IV.iii.8). The catalogue of Indian warriors that follows is also rich with authentic and colourful detail. Prayers are rising both to God and Manitou.

Alone on the eve of battle, Tecumseh grieves for the slaughter of his people who were "reckless of harm, nor conscious of the guile / Which lurked unpitying in the guest's dark smile" (IV.xix.7-8). The solitary spot where he stands is described as a garden shaded by a huge Magnolia tree in bloom. This is no longer Eden, but Gethsemane. The first Adam has been banished from the first garden. Now the second Adam awaits his destiny. Though he gains a certain

strength from nature's loveliness, and from memories of gentler days, Tecumseh is haunted by despair because "naught of Indian life or growth remains / Along the vastness of those conquer'd plains" (IV.xx.7-8). Richardson reveals Tecumseh's sad knowledge that there will indeed be sacrifice, and this time there can be no resurrection. "For him again the moon may never rise..." (IV.xxiv.1). When the fateful day arrives there are "coruscations in the Eastern sky," a glittering in the east that foreshadows the white man's flashing weapons and his "glittering casque" (IV.xxviii.5). Curiously, this "glittering few" (IV.xxxvi.2) with their scarlet uniforms are particularly vulnerable to the enemy rifles, while those who "match their costume with the wood's dark gray" (IV.xxxv.7) have a much better chance of survival.

Tecumseh is slain by "the Chief who leads the foeman to his shore" (IV.xxxviii.6) and many rush to "bear the fallen hero's scalp away" (IV.xlii.4), like the Roman soldiers gambling for Christ's garment. The dead hero then figuratively descends to Hell as "wild Hell-fiends" revel in his destruction (IV.xlii.7). (In his note to this passage, Richardson's loathing for the Kentuckian Americans who reportedly "tore the skin from off his bleeding form, and converted it into razor-straps!!!" is made overwhelmingly clear). Tecumseh is left on the battlefield "pierc'd with wounds" (IV.xliii. 3), and bereft of honour. The poet's indictment of those who destroyed the Warrior of the

West is severe:

May they who left him thus e'er howl and creep  
 As vile through life, as cruel in that hour,  
 Which gave the first of victims to their  
 power. [t/o] (IV.xliii.6-8)

Richardson's language recalls God's curse upon the serpent in the Garden and Milton's description of Satan's followers reduced to loathsome hissing. The next stanza extends the snake imagery as Richardson warns whoever has done this that the memory will "[l]ike adder stings recoil upon his heart..." (IV.xliv.7). Richardson cannot hope for a resurrection, only revenge in the form of a verbal visitation of the sins of the fathers on their sons; those who destroyed the warrior will hear his praises sung by their own children, and be overcome by a nightmare of guilt. The last words of the four Cantos "gloom," "bled," "defiled" and "shame," are all contained within this final dark scene that brings the tragic cycle to completion. The English Goldsmith could not hope to avenge the banished villagers, but the voice of Poetry "prevailing over time" (The Deserted Village 422) preserves their tragic tale for posterity. Similarly, Richardson takes a historical reality and fashions an epic that is far reaching in its implications. The white man is guilty for having removed "nature's simplest child" from Nature's garden. The old story repeats itself, but this time without redemption, only remembrance. In The Story of a Trip to Walpole Island written two decades after Tecumseh, Richardson expresses the tragedy in prose:

As I contemplated this scene, and contrasted the really native dignity and simplicity of these interesting people, with the loathsome hypocrisy of civilized life, I could not but deeply deplore the fast approaching extinction, as a race, of the first lords of this soil--gentlemen of nature, whose very memory will soon have passed away, leaving little or no authentic record behind them, of what they once were--must have been from the earliest epoch of the existence of man. (71)

Because of the imperfect but worthy efforts of Richardson, we do have a record of the sad fall of the New-World garden at the hands of the white men. Richardson himself had felt the hypocrisy of European society throughout his struggles as a soldier and a writer; he died impoverished and alone. His writings reveal his "deep hurt at his social ostracism, evidently determined, he felt, by his birth" (Beasley 53), but it was this very heritage bequeathed by an Indian grandmother that qualified him to become a spokesman for a disappearing Adam.

#### IV.

Adam Kidd, the author of The Huron Chief, also speaks from the periphery, since he was:

not a member of the dominant Anglo-Scottish ruling class of the Colonies, but an unofficial voice, a radical Irishman with an elective affinity for the mistreated native peoples of North America and a personal grudge against the presiding religio-political order in Lower Canada. (Bentley, Introduction xii)

This perspective led him to perceive the New World as a vanishing Paradise. Kidd lays particular emphasis on the role of the church in destroying the primeval garden because of Archbishop Jacob Mountain and his son Archdeacon George

Mountain who had rejected his candidacy for the Anglican priesthood, perhaps because of his fondness for Indian women (Bentley xi). "Just as the "Mountain Demon" (796) is the devil in Kidd's wilderness Eden, so the real heathens in the Canadian wilderness are for him the white men" (Bentley xvii). Though, like Richardson, Kidd celebrates the Indian chief of his title, his tale is not so much one of military heroics as it is the story of a beautiful but threatened way of life. The poem opens upon a garden setting in which "all things bloomed with beauty gay" (2). This harmonious natural world resembles Milton's paradise, but Kidd changes "the Groves, the Fountains, and the Flowers" (PL III.26) to "groves, or plants, or waters" (12), deleting words which might imply the artful hand of man, a presence which he deprecates throughout his poem.

In contrast to the Canadian Goldsmith who, in adherence to the four stages theory, considered roving characteristic of a "ruder" more barbaric stage in the past, Kidd valorizes the freedom of wandering, both in the content and the form of his poem. Here, wandering "undisturbed and free," the narrator feels the bliss "once felt by Eden's daughters" (14). This unusual phrase goes far in locating Kidd's particular sensibility. He does not confine himself to the scriptural account of Genesis with its emphasis on the sons of Eden, but offers instead an unorthodox interpretation that extends the border of Eden to include the myths of a golden age, as Milton himself does when he describes his



Paradise as a place where "Universal Pan / Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance / Led on th' Eternal Spring (PL IV.266-68). Charles R. Steele notes Kidd's awareness of the etymology of Eden as "pleasure," and the association between the notion of the Golden Age and the Noble Savage (14n.). The phrase "Eden's daughters" also foreshadows the narrator's attitude towards the Indian women, whom he refers to in a note as the "daughters of the Forest," and particularly towards Ta-poo-ka who in the role of Eve is "the fairest of her Daughters" (PL IV.324). Bulwell believed nature should be attired by man with a "richer variegated vest," but Kidd prefers the wild garden "wrought in nature's richest hue" (18); however, as Bentley suggests in his Introduction to The Huron Chief, Kidd's use of conditional words such as "seemed" and "as if" indicates his awareness that the Edenic vision is illusory, and that the poet's dream of sharing this garden with an Indian Eve free from a "tyrant hand" (32) is already impossible.

This sense of threat and sorrow is confirmed by the first song of the Indian Queen for her warrior Moranka, slain by the white man who desolates the garden. The elegiac tone of the song resembles that of The Deserted Village, but the flora and fauna Kidd places in the garden of her childhood are pointedly indigenous. Like the English Goldsmith, the Indian woman mourns the passing of a world she loves: "Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen / And desolation saddens all thy green" (The Deserted Village

37-38). As Bentley notes, what the narrator perceives only as "a green hill" may in fact be Moranka's burial mound (xviii). This world, like that of The Deserted Village, is at once "a garden and a grave" (DV 302). The Rising Village begins where The Deserted Village left off, but both Richardson and Kidd echo the English Goldsmith's elegaic tone and his description of scenes of banishment in a way that lays the emphasis on paradise lost, on a world that is disappearing rather than one that is being built.

Both Richardson's "hoary chief" and Kidd's "Skenadow" resemble the withered matron of the Deserted Village as the "last sad historian of the pensive plain" (DV 136), a role she shares with the poets themselves. Kidd's Huron Chief guides the wandering feet of the poet and his readers into a strange and beautiful garden world that is swiftly fading. The chief himself is touched no longer only by "[t]imes, and seasons" (142) but by the cruelty of "the Christian foeman" (150). Though aware of his role as interloping observer ("I am a stranger" [177]), the narrator sets himself the Adamic task of discovering the name of the Huron Chief, and inscribing it to posterity. In so doing, he preserves not only the name of Skenadow but those of many other Huron chiefs who populate the poem, including Tecunseh whom Kidd erroneously includes among their ranks (Bentley, Explanatory Notes. The Huron Chief 99).

Kidd's chief, like Richardson's, is associated with a tree: "I am an aged hemlock...the winds of one hundred and

twenty years have whistled through my branches" (142n.). Though Kidd's footnotes are often rendered verbatim from their sources, Klinck's discovery of the source of this particular note reveals that this is not the case here ("Adam Kidd" 500). Kidd omits the chief's closing statement: "I am dead at the top." Though this image does not fit with the celebratory stance that the narrator assumes toward the old chief, it does signal the direction of the tree imagery that will unfold throughout the poem. Though the chief is imaged as a tree, he is withered and worn by long struggles. Like the trees at the centre of the deserted and the rising village, he represents all the branches of his tribe, and as the tree of life, he is a source of strength to his people. "The Five Nations," Kidd notes, "always express peace by the metaphor of a tree" (427n.). But the perfidy of the white man is slowly eroding the core of this tree and the garden in which it stands. The decline of the image of the tree becomes evident in the closing scenes. The Christian foeman three are "fast pinioned to that bas-wood tree" (1460) to await death for "crimes that should not be forgiven" (1462) in a dark parody of Milton's unholy trinity and of the crucifixion. The tree now becomes the Tree of Knowledge driving the "hapless pair" (1403), Ta-poo-ka and Alkwanwaugh, from their garden paradise into the arms of death. Nature "sends forth a broken sigh" (1429) in sympathy with their tragic fall:

And from the hollow, blasted pine,  
Where heaven's light'ning played along,

And wild grapes close their tendrils twine,  
Comes forth the screech-owl's boding song.  
(1431-34)

These fine lines reveal the tree as a central symbol of peace betrayed (Bentley xxv). By untying the roots (Wattap) that bind them to the tree, a Christ-like Tecumseh grants a reprieve to the captive whites. They slink away "as steals the guilty heart from danger" (1599) but soon return to kill the Huron chief. The dart that "pierced the recess of his heart" (1650) brings an end to the tree and all it represents. Skenandow is buried amidst "ERIE's darkling groves of pine" (1652) from which he once emerged to extend a guiding hand to the wandering poet. The garden has once more become a grave.

The many verbal echoes that connect The Huron Chief and The Deserted Village are reinforced by the mention of "poor GOLDSMITH" in a passage that is fittingly written in heroic couplets. Kidd was drawn to the poet who was, like himself, nurtured in the bosom of Erin, "that sacred land of song" (Appendix A, 115). Goldsmith also chose to record the passing of a way of life, and to reject the splendid pomp of European society in favour of the simple "luxury of doing good" (The Traveller 22). In The Deserted Village, he mourns "the land, by luxury betray'd / In nature's simplest charms at first array'd" (295-96), just as Kidd mourns "the plans of art" that have made of "beauty's shades a barren scene" (332). Because Goldsmith knew that his claims that the wealthy were destroying villages to create pleasure

parks would not be readily accepted, he insists in his Preface that he has "taken all possible pains...to be certain of what I allege" (24-26). Apparently, Kidd was also aware of the incredulity of his audience and the unpopularity of his perspective, for he insists in his preface that "I can fairly and honestly plead the correctness of my observations" (32). Goldsmith's vision of the New World as "matted woods" inhabited by wild beasts and "savage men more savage still than they" could not be more antithetical to Kidd's Edenic vision and his choice of Adams, but this irony only underscores the tensions within the poem and emphasizes Kidd's "centrifugal tendency" (Bentley xii) which is evident in form as well as content.<sup>3</sup>

The narrator of The Huron Chief is "bound" (316) to the tree at the center of the wilderness garden, but unlike the Christian foeman, he does not desire release: "Europe's pomp I'd quick resign, / To dwell within his grove of pine" (319-20). The "wilderness of trees" threatened the settlers of the Rising Village with "the horror of its gloomy shades" (64), but to Richardson and Kidd the sounds of the forest are comforting:

...those plaintive sounds from rustling leaf,  
Which, in the boundless forests of the West,  
So frequent woo the wearied soul to rest.  
(Tecumseh I.xxxix.6-8)

Skenandow tells his companion that "the rustling of the leaves / Will cheer us to the cabin side" (367-68). The world into which the Huron Chief welcomes the narrator is indeed a garden "where heaven bestows, / On every plant and

shrub that grows, / The fragrance of a spicy clime" (385-87). Kidd's use of the word "spicy" allies this garden with Milton's paradise, that "spicy Forest where Angels wandered" (PL V.298) and the gentle air "flung odors from the spicy shrub" in honour of the nuptials of Adam and Eve (PL VIII.517).

In this Edenic "bower kind heaven has granted / Where rose-buds, and violets, perfume the blest night" (425-26), Adam Kidd imagines himself as an Adam to an Indian Eve, but his admission that he "loved KEMANA over well" (476) implies "an excessive, Othello-like love" (Bentley xxv) over which looms the taboo against miscegenation. The ambiguous nature of this love is prepared for in the preceding three stanzas. The poet compares the garden "[w]here two kind hearts might rapture share, / As happy as an Eden pair" to Calypso's bower (450). Although Calypso loved Ulysses and worked to please his every desire, she also held him against his will, far from his hearth and home. The narrator insists that "the polished man, / Brought up in Europe's fashioned plan" could never, despite all his "formal art" and "school-taught lore," impart the kind of "graceful happiness" that "cheers the Indian's forest heaven" (453-58). And yet he himself is that kind of man. The poem itself is evidence of "formal art" and the Latin epigraphs sprinkled through the footnotes are certainly "school-taught." This gap between the poet and his beloved is reinforced by the suggestion that his love is not the result of genuine attraction, but rather,

like Desdemona's, the result of a "bewitching glance" and exotic "charms" (465-66). Adding to this alienation is the poet's recognition of his own post-lapsarian condition; though he desires a place in the garden, he has already fallen into memory, guilt, and self-doubt. As a child he "strayed with heart as light as feather" (496), but now he carries the heavy mantle of civilization and Christianity. Though his childhood pastime of slaying "the bee lodged in the heather" with a "rude unguarded hand" hardly seems a "joy so stainless" (497-99) when viewed through the polished lenses of civilization, it allies him with the Indian as a wandering hunter; Skenandow himself had chased "the bee from leaf to flower" in his youth (603).

The next stanza may well be a critique of the stadial theory of history that forces a man to stand in judgement of earlier, freer times, until he at last arrives at a civilized stage free from the "errors" and "terrors" of the past (504,506):

Yet, be our transports e'er so sweet,  
 Another hour we're apt to meet,  
 Which disapproves the one gone by,  
     And stands the Sage to show its errors--  
 Thus man moves on through destiny,  
     With wiser acts--all free from terrors--  
 Till every moment of the past,  
 Seems fool, or madman, to the last. (501-508)

On a personal level, Kidd is chastising a hypocritical church for condemning his "simple" pleasures. He finds "relief" from these troubling thoughts in the vision of the Huron Chief standing in his garden extending "parental care" to all his clan, and in the "beauties of a lovely face"

(550). In the firelight, "every leaf and plant and flower" (535) acquires the "burnished beauty" (536) of "vegetable gold" (PL IV.220). The "softest charms--by art unaided" (552) of Kemana resemble the "unadorned" tresses of Eve (PL IV.305). Eve's beauty "infused / Sweetness into [Adam's] heart, unfelt before" (PL VIII.474-75). The narrator also experiences "new joys, unfelt--unseen before" (566), but, unlike Adam, he knows that both his gazing and his praising are threatened by mortality. The poet claims that every bliss in the garden "proclaim[s] the Indian's richest treasure" (568), but in the context of Othello this assertion is a dark one, for Othello "[l]ike the base Indian, threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe" (V.iii.356-57).

Using the image of the sunset which Richardson so successfully exploits in Tecumseh, the old chief expresses his own mortality. He looks back upon a paradisaical past and the "toils that once were rendered sweet" (598)--a phrase that echoes Adam's "were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet" (PL IV.439)--and like the persona of The Deserted Village he hopes "Here to return--and die at home at last" (95-96). The narrator is so enraptured by the Indian way of life and the purity of their devotion that he thinks of the garden in which they live as:

A type of that pure sanctu'ry  
Where, first repenting, man had trod,  
When by some holy angel guided,  
To talk in prayer alone with God-- (634-38)

Steele notes that "Kidd's vision here, as elsewhere in The



Huron Chief, is post-Edenic" (635n.). This New World garden is only a "type" of Eden because mortality threatens it on every side. The conditional language that marks the opening stanza of the poem continues here. Though the poet desires to see this world as a Promised Land where angels "visit[ed] oft those happy Tribes" (PL III.535), the good he envisions only "seemed to cheer the bount'ous wood" (650), and the sun has already set on his "life's first happy day" (655).

Having breathed his "parting prayer" to the tribe, the narrator accompanies his chosen guide out into the larger world. As Michael guides Adam through a vision of the future, Alkwanwaugh guides the poet through the past, leading him from "days, that live but in tradition" (668) to this "very date of life" (680). Adam is first presented with a vision of death, in which "the unjust the just hath slain" (PL II.455); Cain kills his own brother as the first fruit of the "perfidious fraud" of Satan (PL V.880). Alkwanwaugh begins his tour of "every scene of varied strife" (679) with the tale of Logan who is betrayed by the "Perfidy" (721) of the white men who "will say to an Indian, 'my friend--my brother.' They will take him by the hand, and at the same moment destroy him" (721n.) Adam grieves at this revelation, as does the poet when "the bright illusion" is thrown aside to reveal "the dark confusion / Of gloomy images that pass / Before life's party coloured glass" (766-67). (This passage may echo Shelley's elegy for Keats,

Adonais (1821), in which he describes "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass" before which "Earth's shadows fly" [461-62]). For Kidd, the "gloomy images" are manifold, including the Lazar house of maladies which have reduced the Indians to a remnant: "the intemperate use of spirits... small-pox...the intemperate use of the sword, and the dreadful bigotry and cruelties" (613n.). The poet finds some solace in the "lovely wood" and "arbours blushing with sweet roses" that he sees from his canoe which, in a manner similar to Adam's hill, gives a fine view of the surrounding area though he is within rather than above the scene: "the captive eye surveyed / The mingled grandeur, far displayed / On every side" (777-78).

This song of Alkwanwaugh is the first of the "soft amorous ditties" (PL XI.584) the poet hears. The second is sung by Ta-poo-ka whose song he initially perceives as "Syren spells to lure away / The heart to some unthought of danger" (887-89). She is not dressed "richly gay / In gems and Wanton dress" (PL XI.582-83), but rather in the beauties of nature, "[w]ith cedar branches spreading o'er her, / As if her slender form to hide" (896-97). Alkwanwaugh's joy is restored at the sight of Ta-poo-ka who he thought was dead, but who was rescued from "a liquid grave" by three kind Chippawas (991-94). The reunited lovers move along a path over which appears "a beauteous evening star / As if by heaven's special order" (967-68) which parallels: "And now of love they treat till th' Ev'ning Star / Love's Harbinger

appeared" (PL XI.588). Several other echoes of Book XI of Paradise Lost reverberate through the tale of Ta-poo-ka's recovery and marriage. She has undergone many sufferings like "some lone flower upon a rock, / Which lately felt the light'ning's shock" (1003-1004), but day by day she "regain[s] / Her wonted charms" (1028-29), until she once more shines among "a Bevy of fair Women" (PL XI.582). Soon "[f]rom hut to hut the tidings flew" of the "marriage of the happy two" (1123-24) as "all in heat / They light the Nuptial torch" (PL XI.590). The people gather to celebrate the festival:

With Feast and Music all the Tents resound.  
Such happy interview and fair event  
Of love and youth not lost, Songs, Garlands,  
Flow'rs.... [t/o] (PL XI.592-94)

Viewing this spectacle of love, Milton's Adam is reminded of the Paradise he has left behind. He says to Michael: "Here nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends" (PL XI.602). The narrator in The Huron Chief is also convinced that this "jubilee" (1138) reveals "[w]hat heaven alone for man intended" (1216):

The scene--the place--the happy hour--  
Reminded much of MILTON'S bower:  
Where first the parent of mankind  
Conducted Eve--with beauty blushing,  
And feelings pure, and unconfined....  
(1043-47)

To the observer this seems to be "A world of peace--a world of love-- / A type of all that dwells above" (1240-41). As Adam says to Michael: "Much better seems this Vision, and more hope / Of peaceful days portends" (PL XI.599-600). But

Michael reminds Adam that all is not as it seems, for this apparently Edenic vision is, in fact, a fallen one, and "[t]he world ere long a world of tears must weep" (PL XI.627). When Adam looks again he sees "Concourse in Arms, fierce Faces threat'ning War" (PL XI.641). To the narrator of The Huron Chief the garden in which "[s]uch soft attraction seemed to run / In every blossom" (1148-49) appears to be a new Eden "far from Europe's crimes, and Europe's error" (1078). Yet even here the "Christian" has planted "Sectarian seeds, which rankly grew" (1250). The wedding festival is interrupted by the "foul intrusion" of the enemy; "so violence / Proceeded, and Oppression, and Sword-Law / Through all the Plain, and refuge none was found" (PL XI.671-73) except in the person of Tecumseh, who is able to "decide the horrors of the fight" (1320), but not before the bloodshed claims the warrior and his bride. All of nature mourns the fall of this "hapless pair" (1403) and the garden is overwhelmed by fire.

Throughout The Huron Chief, Kidd replaces Goldsmith's concept of the Ignoble Savage with that of the Noble Savage suffering his own Paradise Lost. Hayden White writes that "the concept of the Noble Savage has all the attributes of a fetish" (183). White argues that admiration for the natives of the New World was infused with a belief in the magical or spiritual, it inspired extravagant devotion, and it provided for a "pathological displacement of libidinal interest" (184). Certainly, the Indian world Kidd observes

appears to be magical. He repeatedly refers to it as "a splendid world of fairy bliss" (35) that comes "as if by magic call" (34). The poem is filled with references to magic, enchantment, spells, and charms. Related to this is an extensive pattern of religious imagery. The Indians are often referred to as "divine," "Angelic," or "Saintly" and the Huron Chief's final resting place is called a "holy shrine" (1654). Bentley sees this "use of the moral authority of Christianity to characterize the supposedly natural virtues of the Indians" as a compromise that is not entirely successful (xix), but these terms do suggest a belief that the Indians possess a spiritual power worthy of admiration. The third element of libidinal interest is clearly evident in the narrator's attitudes towards the Indian women which closely resemble Augustan attitudes toward the landscape garden as described by Fabricant.

The first of these ideological stances is that of a man to a woman. Like Richardson (Beasley 170), Kidd was apparently attracted to Indian women and, as noted earlier, it may have been this fondness that led to his rejection for the priesthood. The Huron Chief provides evidence that the poet had difficulty distinguishing between the "daughters of the forest" and the garden landscape from which they emerged. In her "wild impressive song" the Indian queen of the opening passage describes herself as both an inhabitant of a garden, and the garden itself. Her sensual language recalls The Song of Solomon in which the dark beloved

compares her lover to a young stag leaping across the mountains (2:8) and browsing among the lilies (2:16). His caresses are like the "breath of the morn, o'er summer buds stealing" (59). The narrator also praises the charms of the women, but it seems that their beauty is almost indistinguishable from the "blushing beauty of the grove" (1145) in which he takes equal delight.

The second stance described by Fabricant is that of the artist to the model. The Huron Chief is suffused with the language of art. The narrator desires to "trace," "draw," and "picture" the beauties of the landscape of which the woman are a manifestation:

The sculptor's polished chisel yet  
A finer model never set---  
Nor has the connoisseur surveyed  
Correcter lines, on eastern beauties,  
Than, unadorned, are here displayed....  
(1034-38)

Unlike Burwell and Goldsmith, who depict nature as a maiden in need of "sartorial assistance" (Fabricant 127), Kidd prefers the "unadorned" charms "[w]here only nature's hand had wrought" (551).

The female as objet d'art suggests the relationship between spectator and spectacle which is evident in the opening scene of the poem. The narrator comes upon the Indian queen and hides behind a pyre "to steal one happy glance" (76). This voyeuristic attitude, "[t]o hear--to see--and not be seen--" (87), is also evident in the poet's enraptured observation of nature's charms. This connection is made explicit in the song of Ta-poo-ka who can hardly be

differentiated from the garden in which she sits. Her song both mentions and resembles the song of the tree frog which also "assumes the color of the place it nests" (927n.). In a footnote, Kidd describes his first encounter with the tree frog:

...being anxious to know the author of such singular music, I went in search, and after some difficulty, arising from the cunning of the little creature--for it became silent on my approach--I found it perched close on the branch of a plum tree. Discovering, by its conduct, that it was no way solicitous about my visit, I instantly withdrew, and having concealed myself for a few minutes behind a large pine, it cheerfully resumed its accustomed song. (927n.)

This description provides a gloss on the narrator's hesitation to disturb the singing woman in the opening stanzas of the poem. He decides that the act of destroying the song by his intrusion would be "far more than madness" (126), so he goes away carrying with him the vision and the love it engendered.

Though he hesitates to interrupt the spectacle, he does not hesitate to appropriate the voice. The final attitude Fabricant describes is that of the possessor to the possession. The poet's admission of love for the Indian woman, "I saw, I loved the lonely one" (79) carries within it a disturbing echo of Caesar's "I came, I saw, I conquered" (Bentley xix). Fabricant notes that the possession of the land was expressed not only in economic terms, but in aesthetic and sexual terms as well. The concept of sexual possession is introduced after the opening song by the image of the bee in the flower that becomes a

central motif of the poem. The sexual connotation of the passage is made explicit in the comparison between "wild bees on the wing, .../ Drinking up the honey shower" and "the tender youth when loving" (99-102); it is apparent that "the luxury of roving" that marks the "flitting" of the bees, also characterizes the lover who is "never satisfied to stay, / With the rose, even one short day" (103-104), just as the narrator leaves Kemana behind. This image is later echoed in the humming bird that "banquets for a little minute, / Then quickly off it darting goes, / To seek elsewhere another rose" (1072-74). In his note to this passage, Kidd writes: "When feeding [the hummingbird] appears immovable, though continually on the wing, having its long fine bill dipped into the heart of the most delicate rose without the slightest injury" (1068). The last phrase of this sexual description reminds one of Leonard Cohen's poem, "As the Mist Leaves no Scar," and provides a parallel between the wandering lover and the roving poet taking aesthetic possession of successive spectacles:

Such were the joys here now displayed,  
Where'er I turned, where'er I strayed,  
Until imagination took  
A full repast-- (1083-85)

Though often "all the beauties of the way, / Like fairy visions placed around us, / Almost allured the heart to stay" (379-81) and "nature's lovely charms half bound [him]" (382), the narrator manages to move ever onward in his "airy flight" (1089). As a poet he takes possession of the



natural world, gathers its sweetness to fill his imagination's appetite, and then moves on: "The poet's joys are merely momentary--he is the child of impulse" (1445n.).

The wandering flight of the wild bee describes both the poet's sexual and aesthetic attraction to a female landscape, and his poetic technique. An orientation towards freedom in love "frequently issues in Canadian literature in free or loosened forms" (Bentley xxi). The Huron Chief, Kidd informs his readers, was written "on the inner rind of birch bark...during [his] travels through the immense forests of America" (16-17). He asserts that "a poem of such length can scarcely be free from errors" (14-15). In a letter written anonymously to The Vindicator on June 18, 1830 in defense of The Huron Chief, the writer argues that it is not the job of the critics, "in the fury of their zeal against weeds, to tear up many beautiful flowers by the roots," but rather to foster "the tender plant...gently pruning away those excrescent superfluities which betray, not its viciousness, but rather the richness of the soil" (117). The garden of Kidd's poem indeed springs from a soil rich enough to support both the imported and the indigenous in form and content.

Adam Kidd and John Richardson prove that the Indian heritage is fertile soil for the seeds of poetry. Though the death of the great chief signals the demise of the garden, the efforts of the whitemen to "blot away his name

and nation" (1495) can be counteracted by the songs of past and "future bards" (1656). Significantly, the plant Kidd chooses to guard the shrine of Skenandow is the wild grape. This "unconstrained and indigenous" plant was also chosen by F.O. Call in Acanthus and Wild Grape to designate those poems which owed their form and content to the hinterland rather than the baseland, the new world rather than the old (Bentley, Intro. The Huron Chief xxx). However, as we have seen, the fact that a poet departs from traditional subjects and verse forms does not mean that he escapes the patriarchal perspectives that dominate his historical era.

#### V.

All four of the poems discussed above exhibit an Adamic vision that is distinctly masculine, though Burwell and Goldsmith, as their heroic couplets suggest, present an ordered garden with the settler as Adam, and Richardson and Kidd argue for the Indian as an Adamic hero in a vanishing Paradise. Howe's Acadia is a poem that apparently attempts to incorporate both positions, as the title of Susan Gingell-Beckmann's article "Document of a Divided Sensibility" suggests. Ultimately, however, his choice of the heroic couplet and his celebration of Britannia place Howe in the conservative camp of Goldsmith and Burwell. Howe's poem reveals, like the other four, that whether the male observing the female landscape is an Indian, a white man or the poet himself, her charms forever entice and

forever endure. This is the aspect of Acadia which contributes most to a study of the Bildungsgedicht as garden.

Howe introduces the natale solum with which he begins his poem by describing his beloved Acadia [Arcadia] as a garden, a promised land comparable to "Canaan's verdant groves and rosy bowers" (22). The double agenda of Burwell and Goldsmith--to celebrate past history and inspire future patriotism--is presented by Howe within a framework of praise and desire. The poet wishes to "twine a rude wreath around [his] Country's brow" (40), a wreath made from Acadia's own "wild and simple" flowers (41). Interpreted as a desire to create art from the ingredients at hand, this becomes a significant statement of poetic approach which is only partially fulfilled in Acadia. The "flower't" of verse that Howe bestows on his beloved land belongs to a hybrid rather than an indigenous variety.

The land Howe describes is invitingly female, dressed in her "simple robe of flowers" (82). In contrast to Burwell who feels that nature needs the hand of man to attire her, and Kidd who prefers wild simplicity "by art unaided" (552), Howe seeks a balance between Nature and Art, and the two halves of the poem explore these contrasting influences. The portrayal of the land as female achieves three functions in the poem. It gives Howe a mode in which to celebrate Acadia as a lover bearing flowers to his beloved; it provides a context for his expanded treatment of

the various battles for the possession of Nova Scotia as "rival swains war[ring] for possession of a lovely woman" (Gingell-Beckmann 21); and it gives him fertile ground in which to cultivate his own fantasies behind a veil of poetic acceptability, fantasies that extend beyond the merely erotic into the Oedipal rapture of the son for his mother and a fascination for the aesthetics of violence. The cord that holds this bouquet of ideas together is Howe's conviction that no matter who possesses her, the land will remain lovely. As he says elsewhere: "Thy Native Country cannot die" (Poems 123).

Howe begins his catalogue of the flora that garb the fair form of Acadia with a description of the Mayflower which, like Goldsmith's description, is curiously erotic. The Mayflower bears "tidings to man of pleasure yet in store" (102) and "yields its fragrance to the wanton air" (105). The list of native crees and flowers that follows is filled with images of dressing and undressing; "the Buttercup displays / Its golden bosom to the Sun's bright rays" (135-36) and even the water lilies, "the lake's unsullied daughters, / Lift their bright leaves" before the poet's gaze (148). The garden resembles Eden in its untainted beauty, but even here mortality threatens, as the "Laurel spreads seductive flowers of death" (126). These are scenes, Howe reminds us, "which never can return again" (168) because soon the very flowers will be "bedew'd" with blood (166). Once the flora and fauna existed without

threat as they did in Eden; the trees feared no axe and the Cariboo no hunter. The notorious "gay moose" who "in jocund gambol springs" appears less absurd in this Edenic context. Milton describes the pre-lapsarian condition of animals surrounding Adam and Eve in Eden: "Bears, Tigers, Ounces, Pard, / Gamboll'd before them, th' unwieldy Elephant / To make them nirrh us'd all his might" (PL IV.344-346 emphasis added).

As M.G. Parks indicates in his notes to Acadia, Howe's choice of vocabulary is not always felicitous. Nevertheless, the use of the word "breaking" to describe the emergence of the Indian hunter from "the leafy wood" (181) seems to suggest an end of innocence in the garden, just as the word "break" signalled that all was not well in the opening stanza of Tecumseh. Gingell-Beckmann argues that the adjectives "dexterous," "agile," and "hardy" present the hunter in a positive light, but his presence in the garden is clearly a disruptive one. Adam observes Eden's "first Hunter" pursue "a gentle brace, / Goodliest of all the Forest" with great sadness because it foreshadows the death to come (PL XI.188-89). In Acadia, the Indian assumes mastery "o'er the fallen tenant of the wild" (199). The word "fallen" resonates with post-lapsarian significance, but the word "tenant" is slightly more ambiguous; is it merely a poeticism, or is Howe implying that the animals are the land's true first occupants who will be usurped by successively stronger rivals?

The image of possession culminates in an allusion to Othello. Parks is surprisingly dismissive of this reference, saying it is "probably decorative" and "not particularly apt when subjected to critical analysis" (213n.). Making a connection between Howe's evocation of Acadia as "Pearl of the West" (43) and Othello who "like the base Indian, threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe" (V.ii.356-357), Susan Zenchuk argues that Acadia, like Desdemona, "may be lost through incorrect action" (56). The text may not entirely support these assumptions, but "perplex'd in the extreme" (Othello V.ii.354) seems the perfect description of the Indians at the end of Part I. And by portraying the Indian as an overly possessive lover who, like Othello, prefers war to "the soft phrase of peace" (I.iii.84) does Howe not prepare the way for the second part of the poem by shifting the attention away from British cruelty to Indian inadequacy? The maiden, after all, deserves the best possible lover. Significantly, the passage that intervenes between the Othello simile and the closing section of Part I in which the Indian vows revenge was added sometime between 1832 and 1840 (Parks xxx). The vivid and sympathetic portrait of the Micmacs occupied as much by the dance as by the hunt, may have been added under the influence of the many positive portrayals of Indians that were then appearing, particularly those of James Fenimore Cooper. (Cooper's immensely popular novel The Last of the Mohicans was published to acclaim in 1826). Parks

suggests that Howe uses the concept of the Noble Savage but qualifies it. Both the Indian and the white man are:

fallen creatures stained with "Eden's guilt"  
(Acadia 230). The main difference that [Howe]  
stresses in Indian life in Part I is its  
simplicity and closeness to nature, qualities that  
are contrasted explicitly or implicitly with the  
"art" (and artificiality) of European  
civilization. (Parks xx)

The Indians are indeed more in touch with the garden as their anger over the felling of the trees suggests (339), but they also participate in the bloodshed that "bedew[s] the flowers" (166). In an effort to demonstrate that the two sections of the poem are "effectively connected by irony" (52), Zenchuk argues that the diction shows "many similarities between the natives and the European colonists" (52). A more persuasive case can be made to connect the Indians with the first tenants of the wild. Once the trees were proud and the cariboo fearless; now these are the characteristics of the Indians. The Papoose "to laugh and gambol goss" (268) like the "gay Moose" (175). The Indian who mastered the wild creatures will eventually face the same sad end. He, like the deer he once hunted, is "lost in amaze" (329) but, unfortunately for the whiteman, he has the resources for revenge.

Britain has also passed through "a darker age" when "rude Barbarians roved" (344) but has emerged victorious with Science, Religion, and Imagination to guide it. "Britannia" celebrates her dead, both soldiers and poets "[w]hose fervid eloquence the land awoke" (361). Now it is

Acadia's turn to make that same journey. Howe and others must rouse the sleeping land with their verse. Acadia's wild flowers will bloom over the poet's ashes as they have over the graves of those who have fought there, and among those blossoms will be the enduring "flower'ts" of poetry.

Up to this point Nature has dressed Acadia, "with charms well suited to the Indian breast" (226), but a new suitor requires a new trousseau. Now "culture," in both senses of the word, advances the sartorial task (386). The land must be made fertile and "taught to bloom" (699) by the male "in the dual role of husband and husbandman" (Fabricant 125). The land is still virgin because the Indian never took his bride, consumed as he was with hunting and martial pursuits. The whiteman now takes full possession: "God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth, i.e. improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour" (Locke 136-37). Howe celebrates the pioneer who "found his country a wilderness and left it a garden" (Eastern Rambles 134):

They felled the forest trees with sturdy stroke,  
The virgin soil, with gentle culture broke,  
Scatter'd the fruitful seeds the stumps between,  
And Ceres lured to many a sylvan scene. (385-88)

Gingell-Beckmann sees the presence of Ceres in this "description of a distinctively North American agricultural practice" as an example of "Howe's general failure to adapt language and mythology to his New World situation" (26), but she has not been sufficiently attentive to his diction. Howe recognizes that Ceres--the goddess of agriculture--is



not indigenous to Acadia, but that she can be "lured" here by careful cultivation of the land in the manner in which she delights.

Howe's use of the phrase "happy pair" to introduce the pioneer family suggests Eden, but this is definitely a fallen world. The pair is surrounded not by a garden, but "the dreary wild" (414) and their gun is always near at hand. Theirs is a hostile environment which they must learn to tame. As in the tale of Jack and the Bearstalk, in which the child delights (432), planting strange seeds in a strange garden brings great dangers and great rewards. The parents' memories of the "polished isle" (481) and allusions to the parting scenes in The Deserted Village suggest that this pair has already been driven from the original garden. Earlier, Howe presented scenes "which never can return." These are scenes "that ne'er can be forgot" (446), "childhood's sportive hours," the garden-like setting of first love, "the flowers / Of hope and joy" (443-44). Memories of innocence are interrupted by fallen reality in the form of the attacking Micmacs. Though this "howling crew" is related to Milton's "horrid crew" (I.51), the likelihood that Howe does not intend to present the massacre as a fall from innocence is suggested by the fact that the Indians reject the hour of "high noon" (519)--the time of the fall in Paradise Lost--in favour of night, and choose force instead of fraud (544). Gingell-Beckmann and others believe that the portrayal of the Indians in this passage is

inconsistent with the earlier more positive portrait, but in the context of the four stages theory, each successive "tenant of the wild" must have a foe. The deer was overpowered by the Indian ("the bleeding victim dies" 198), and now the Indian is overpowered by the whiteman ("one bleeding wretch expires" 554). Even the woman participates in the bloodshed with her household knife in an echo of the squaws who divided the furnished spoil into steaks (360). Just as the wise merchant gave up everything he had to purchase the pearl (Matthew 13:45-46), "Our gallant Fathers" pay a great price for the land (604). The violence Howe depicts with almost voluptuous detail is at once graphic and stylized; the connection between pain and perfumed roses (590) recalls the earlier blood and blossoms (166).

Though the garden is again safe from ambush after the threat posed by the Indians has been removed, there is yet one more incident that "checked improvement" of the land, the wars with the French. By claiming that the expulsion of the Acadians deserves "the Bard of Auburn's melting strain" (672), Howe achieves two objectives. His sympathetic tone directs the attention away from a critique of British action, and the allusion to The Deserted Village reminds the reader that those who now take over Acadia have themselves suffered the tragedy of expulsion. The French, like the Indians, fight to possess Acadia but their efforts are "in vain" (635), for the wheel of history rolls onward. It is perhaps not accidental that the only sign of a pastoral

stage in the poem is the "sportive flocks" (698) of the Acadians who are superseded by Britons fully committed to agriculture. The progress of the four stages theory from "rude" to "polished" accords perfectly with Howe's characterization of Acadia as a gem, once "rayless and obscure," now "so precious and so pure" (633-34). Acadia has now truly attained a stature equivalent to that of Britain for she, too, has felt the longing backward looks of exiles forced to leave her shore. Men have rejected "the fairest flowers" from "southern vales" (681), since they are not from the land they love.

Acadia emerges from all these trials unscathed: "And races, hostile once, now freely blend / In happy union, each the other's friend" (773-74). Elsewhere, Howe describes the union of England, Scotland, Ireland and Acadia as a garden in which Rose, Thistle, Shamrock and Mayflower grow side by side (Poems 57), but here he reiterates the theme of the motherland, with the same ambiguously erotic language that marked the earlier description of mother and son. The pioneers "sought amidst Acadia's wilds to claim / A Briton's feeling and a Briton's name" according to the patronymic line of descent. The "honest industry" of the settler "[c]overs with fruits and flowers his native soil" (806) and "together Art and Nature reign" (813). This garden, like those of Burwell and Goldsmith, contains enough for fancy and enough for use. The realm of fancy is the secret corner preserved for the poet's eyes alone:

Like a wife...Nature was to reveal her full charms  
and give of herself generously to her husband-like  
viewers while remaining a discreet, modest maiden  
who conceals her bountiful endowments from the  
vulgar prying eyes of all other suitors.  
(Fabricant 121)

One spot that is "by Art still unprofaned" (817) is "sweet"

Lake Lochaber, which:

Now to the eye its glowing charms revealed,  
Now, like a bashful Beauty, half concealed  
Beneath the robe of spotless green she wears,  
The rich profusion of a thousand years.  
(833-36)

Like the Indian and "the am'rous Moor" who "survey'd / The  
budding beauties of Venetia's maid" to whom he is compared,  
the poet can feel that "her beauties all were his" (218).  
The voyeuristic delight that the poet takes in this vision  
of "the forest's gentle bride" (820) is somewhat qualified  
by the allusion to "chaste Diana" (828), since Actaeon, who  
sees the naked beauty of bathing Diana, is changed into a  
stag and is destroyed by his own hounds. Perhaps the Indian  
hunter who has no hounds to "assist in the chase" (191) is  
better qualified to view nature unadorned. Howe admits that  
here where "Stem, branch, and leaf, like fairy tracery"  
(840) weave round the homes of guardian nymphs:

Nature seems to shrink from human sight;  
And shun the intruding step, and curious eye,  
That seek to know where her deep mysteries  
lie. [t/o] (844-46)

Howe brings Acadia to a close with one last narrative  
sequence that reiterates the theme of exile and longing for  
home, as well as proving that this race, like those which  
preceded it, is not immune to danger. The "desp'rate deer"

discovered that "life is sweet" (190), and the fisherman in the storm clings to "Life the rich prize" (908). However, a gracious God grants reprieve. The fisherman's children delight in the "hairbreadth 'scapes and daring deeds" of Robinson Crusoe (952), but to the adult reader the novel is a reminder of man's ability to impose his particular vision on an island wilderness. The reference to the moon in this passage places the relationship between man and the natural world into perspective. The moon is "dear to the Lover," "dear, doubly dear" to the poet, but "holier far" to Acadia's native-born. Throughout the poem, Howe has placed himself in all three of these roles, thus making him the ideal candidate to celebrate Acadia's charms. He acknowledges that there may be other "lands more fruitful" (1020), other gardens more alluring, but he prefers the charms of his first love, his native Acadia. Her "fertile valleys and lovely forms" crowd in on his mind with "dreams of mighty power" (1029); to her he gives the humble flowers of his verse.

Howe celebrated the garden in his public life as well as in his poetry. He was a founding member of the Nova Scotia Horticultural Society who worked to establish the Halifax Public Gardens, and he lectured on assuring a green future for Canada:

And the streets should be planted without delay.... For the first fifty years, in the settlement of a new country, trees are regarded as man's natural enemies. To cut them down and burn them up seems a labor of love.... [The cities] must be planted.... There is room enough

everywhere for trees, and for an abounding  
commerce and a busy population. (Poems and Essays  
329-30)

Howe, like Burwell and Goldsmith, believed in a garden that held enough for fancy and for use. These poets described a building Adam, whereas Kidd and Richardson described a banished one, but in both cases, the vision is masculine. Other poets such as William Kirby would employ Edenic imagery,<sup>4</sup> but not until a woman poet explored the themes of paradise lost and found would Eve find her way into the garden.

## Notes to Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> D.M.R. Bentley, "Oliver Goldsmith and The Rising Village," Studies in Canadian Literature 15.1 (1990): 21-61.

<sup>2</sup> Tecumseh: or The Warrior of the West was first published in London in May of 1828, and was then republished in 1842 in New Era or Canadian Chronicle, the Brockville paper of which Richardson himself was the editor. A reprint by Golden Dog Press appeared in 1978, but, curiously, its editors chose to return to the original London edition, rather than to the Canadian edition which Richardson had substantially revised. William Morley defends the choice in his Introduction to the 1978 reprint by saying that the Canadian Edition is "a greatly abridged version, nineteen stanzas being omitted" (ix), though five years earlier, he had written the following about the two editions:

Whether or not [Richardson] consulted the original Tecumseh manuscript, fourteen years after its first appearance in print (and nineteen after the poem was composed), the poet's style and taste must have changed.... Numerous verbal substitutions are introduced without much changing the sense (though improving the art perhaps)....  
(63)

Obviously, the poem does not rank with The Prelude in meriting an ongoing debate over the value of the earlier and later versions, but it is surprising that Canadian scholars should be so unwilling to accept Richardson's revised offering, published in his own paper in Canada. A close examination of the two versions indicates that the changes were neither artificially imposed nor accidental, but rather deliberate artistic improvements. In addition to making numerous verbal substitutions, Richardson omitted five stanzas from his introductory portrait of Tecumseh in Canto I which give a side to Tecumseh's character that counteracts what appears to be Richardson's intended design. These stanzas turn a Messiah with righteous wrath into a bloodthirsty monster boiling with vengeance and hatred. In the omitted stanzas Tecumseh chases his victims "like the fierce monsters of his native wood, / Till gorg'd with victims and with human blood" (I.xxxvi.7-8; 1828). He departs from the slaughter "in triumph... / Leaving despair and harrowing grief behind" (I.xxxviii.5-6; 1828). Only a passage referring to the way in which the dead bodies of white men "fertiliz'd the bosom of that land / They came to conquer with un pitying hand" (I.xxxvi.7-8) remains. All references in this chapter will be to the Canadian edition of 1842, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>3</sup> Goldsmith would not likely have been sympathetic to Kidd's willingness to incorporate a variety of verse forms into his long poem. In his preface to The Traveller he writes:

What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence? Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it. (4)

A close look at Kidd's use of various verse forms from ottava rima to ballad stanza, suggests that Kidd was very aware of the implications of form. In addition to maintaining a consistent dialectic between the white and native speakers, he repeatedly refers to the difficulties of transposing the native voice into verse: "I have been obliged to sacrifice harmony, in order to preserve, as much as possible the peculiar, short, pithy phrases generally used by the best Indian orators" (1594n.). Kidd's attentiveness to these matters marks an advance beyond the poetics of Richardson who is content to render the speech of Tecumseh in grandly eloquent ottava rima, though he claims in a footnote that "[i]t was in the true Spartan style, laconic but expressive..." (III.xxii.ln. 1828). Indeed, Richardson's use of ottava rima, associated as it is with Byronic wit, may even serve to undercut the stature of the hero (Bentley, "A New Dimension" 6).

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of paradisaical imagery in William Kirby's The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada (1859) see Dennis Duffy's Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario:

While the culture of Upper Canada remained materialistically absorbed in the exploitation of the environment and the realization of prosperity, its collective sense of what had made it great expressed itself in an other world vocabulary. (Duffy 93)

Margaret Blennerhassett's long poem Widow of the Rock, published in Montreal in 1824, contains many Edenic parallels. A pioneer couple named Reuben and Lucy labour side by side in the New World garden until one winter day when Reuben is fatally bitten by a snake, and the grief-stricken widow succumbs to insanity. Despite its similarities to Paradise Lost and to Goldsmith's Flora and Albert episode, Blennerhassett's poem is excluded from this study because of its American setting and authorship.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Eve Enters the Garden:

#### Isabella Valancy Crawford and Archibald Lampman

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, writers of the Bildungsgedicht began to reject "the notion of a found or waiting paradise," asserting instead "the garden that must be made," a process to which women have always been essential (Kolodny, The Land Before Her 218). In Isabella Valancy Crawford's Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story (1884), and Archibald Lampman's The Story of an Affinity (written 1892-94), the garden functions as a central symbol on three levels. First, the material gardens in the poems represent the efforts of the women to inscribe their vision upon a new land. Second, the language used to describe this process of Bildung (both of character and community) is filled with horticultural metaphors. And third, related to these metaphorical gardens are the mythical gardens which shape the texts, the most significant of which is the Garden of Eden. "No longer the realm of the isolate Adamic male adventurer, the frontier...came to embrace home, family, and a social community informed by their values" (Kolodny The Land Before Her 176). Eve now joins Adam in the task of transforming the wilderness into a garden, not for themselves alone but for all those in need.

Crawford and Lampman do not stop with Milton at Eden's gates but carry their characters beyond to "fresh Woods, and Pastures new" ("Lycidas" 193). Leaving Eden's innocence behind, the poems focus instead on the process of education and maturation through suffering to which Adam and Eve must submit. However, despite their many "glad inversions of Milton's epic" (Early, Archibald Lampman 134), both poets imply that Eve cannot entirely escape the power of patriarchy; the will of the father continues to humble the female dream. The Eve they portray does not lie "in dejection on the barren shore" (Jones 51); she is instrumental in bringing her male counterpart to spiritual maturity, but that achievement comes at great cost to herself. The role of Satan previously assigned either to the "savage" Indian or the "savage" Pale face, is reinterpreted through the two-suitor convention; Eve must choose between Adam and the "handsome devil" who woos her in his absence. Though both Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story and The Story of an Affinity employ several conventions which John Reed lists as typical of Victorian literature, such as regeneration through suffering, the return of the labouring lover to his patient bride, and the "last chapter" marriage, the poems are unconventional in their richly complex use of the Eden story. Both poets turn to other sources in addition to Milton to illustrate that "the politics of egalitarian love is the answer to the politics of hierarchical power" (Hughes, "Democratic Vision" 45).

## I.

The story of the Garden and Crawford's careful manipulation of its elements is revealed not only in the explicit references to Eden in the final section of Malcolm's Katie, but throughout the entire poem. Crawford enriches her narrative with a creatively subversive response to Milton's epic. One of her models for this undertaking appears to have been Elizabeth Barrett Browning's A Drama of Exile (1844), an attempt to redefine the Eden story in female and romantic terms. In 1845, Barrett Browning wrote: "I look everywhere for grandmothers and see none" (Letters 1:232). A few decades later, Crawford no longer faced such a predicament; she could turn for inspiration and ideas to a woman who surmounted challenges of gender and poetic aspiration similar to her own.<sup>1</sup> In discovering with Barrett Browning that "Exiled is not lost" (2258), Crawford responds to Paradise Lost with a story of maturation through love and suffering, in which the hierarchical relationship imposed upon Adam and Eve by Milton is explored and redefined.

The opening passage of Malcolm's Katie in which Max places "a ring on little Katie's hand" (I.1) has been interpreted both positively as a sign that Max has transformed economic interests into love interests (Hughes and Sproxton 56) or negatively as a symbol of the man's effort to purchase the woman as a commodity in keeping with the advice Max gives to Albert: "Get you a Kate" (IV.159). In Paradise Lost, Adam weaves "Of choicest

Flow'rs a Garland to adorn" the tresses of his Queen (IX.840), but tragedy intervenes before the gift is given. In Malcolm's Katie, the exchange is made and the symbol is, as Katie points out, not the conventional double hearts but a unifying of initials that function throughout the poem as symbols of power.

In an effort to reassure himself of Katie's constancy, Max encourages her to "look down amid the globes / Of those large lilies.../ and see within the polish'd pool / That small rose face of [hers]" (I.17-20). In his notes to this passage, Bentley suggests a Lacanian interpretation: the mirror stage leads "to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development" (Lacan 4). In Paradise Lost, Eve's search for identity is symbolized by her desire for her own image. Newly awakened in Eden, she lies down "On the green bank, to look into the clear / Smooth Lake, that to [her] seem'd another Sky" (PL IV.458-59) and there she perceives her own image with its "answering looks / Of sympathy and love" (PL IV.464-65). In Milton, a voice warns Eve not to look upon herself, suggesting the narcissism of that action, and promising to bring her face to face with man in whose image she will eventually rejoice. In Crawford's version, the male tells the female to look, thus imposing his perimeters on her self-discovery, a possibility reinforced by the fact that the name "Maxwell" itself means "pool" (Mathews 54). At

this point, Katie does not concede that "beauty is excell'd by manly grace / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (PL IV.490-91); she insists upon a more egalitarian vision in which "'M. is part of K., and K. of M.'" (I.9).

Like Adam, Max imagines a scenario in which the "fairest unsupported Flow'r / From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh" (IX.433-34), will be unable to remain faithful. Max earlier compares Katie to "a seed of love" able to split granite with its "subtle strength" (I.21-23), but now implies that once he is gone she will revert to being a flower, decorative but vulnerable. Katie argues against Max's prophecy, not with the "sweet austere composure" of Eve, but with forceful and highly sensual rhetoric. Her response deconstructs his horticultural metaphor by turning it in a new direction; Max builds words "up" into the conventional metaphor of woman as flower, fragrant but fragile. Katie pushes words "down" below the surface of the soil, to the stronger half of that same metaphor, the magical roots that serve as anchor. With allusions to Shakespeare and Ruskin, Katie delves below the surface of Max's metaphor to reveal her own strong deep roots in the garden she has created: "I have made / Your heart my garden" (I.39-40 emphasis added), an image that may have come from John Ruskin's essay on female education "Of Queens' Gardens" (Bentley, Introduction to Malcolm's Katie xx):

If [women] rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty

induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking of the territories over which each of them reigned, as "Queens' Gardens." (Ruskin 85)

In her critique of Ruskin's essay in Sexual Politics, Kate Millett insists that "the pastoral coign of a Queen's Garden would appall any man confined to it" (104), but Katie appears to accept this role as the most positive option open to her, conditioning her confinement with the enlarging power of love.

Feminists have long struggled with the Genesis story "with its linguistically powerful Adam and its anxious, tongue-tied Eve" (Gilbert and Gubar, No Man's Land 265). Recently, however, some feminists have argued that the interpretation of Eve as powerless is a misreading of the biblical account: "Throughout the myth [Eve] is the more intelligent one, the more aggressive one, and the one with the greater sensibilities" (Trible 79). These are all qualities Crawford gives to Katie in the opening passage. Katie is confident of her power to withstand temptation, and her assertions, unlike those of Milton's Eve, are not ironized by the reader's foreknowledge of her fall. Though Max may possess "quaint old books" (I.47), it is Katie who can apply their metaphors to her own situation. Significantly, the man, and not the woman, goes forth to a distant part of the garden to labour, and there he, from his "best prop so far / and [winter] storm so nigh" will like "some frail, wither'd reed" (IV.216) succumb to temptation.<sup>2</sup>

Max's survey of the landscape leads to the first

explicit mention of Malcolm, the man who dominates the poem by virtue of his position in the title. The subsequent passage forms the foundation for what Mary Joy Macdonald refers to as the "apotheosis of Malcolm" (33). A man of immense wealth, he has subdued the Leviathan in creating the world out of chaos (Psalm 74:14). He is the good shepherd and the Rock (Genesis 49:24). His voice is an instrument of power "in Council and in Church" and thunders across his realm (Psalm 29:3-4). Like Milton's God who, sitting "High Thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye, / His own works and their works at once to view" (PL III.58-59), he sits on his porch on the hill and surveys the world he has made. He is the original gardener and the master of the "vegetable gold" (PL IV. 220) that his Eden contains.<sup>3</sup>

Crawford's association of Malcolm with the God of the Garden serves a twofold purpose. First, it elevates him to a position of complete authority within the garden where his rules are law; moving beyond the perimeters of his power and his plenty entails great toil and suffering. Max must labour with "two arms indifferent strong" in "some dim, dusky woods" in exile from Eden (I.114-115). The apparently materialistic aspirations that govern this venture have proven to be a stumbling block for some readers. Yet, Max aspires not to "the wealth that oppresses" (Mathews 49) which Crawford denounces in other poems, but rather to the "ruddy gauntlet.../ Of harvest gold, to dash in Famine's face" (VI.19-20). In "A Harvest Song," Crawford equates

agricultural wealth with a victory over the curse on the soil that accompanied the departure from Eden:

The lives of men, the lives of men  
 With every sheaf are bound!  
 We are the blessing which annuls  
 The curse upon the ground!  
 And he who reaps the Golden Grain  
 The Golden Love hath found. (CP 37)

In his summary of the colonizing process, Max rejects the violence of imperialism and the tyranny of commerce in favour of a humble agricultural ideal that resembles Eden:

"...--four walls, perhaps a lowly roof;  
 "Kine in a peaceful posture; modest fields;  
 "A man and woman standing hand in hand  
 "In hale old age, who, looking o'er the land,  
 "Say: 'Thank the Lord, it all is mine and  
 thine!' [t/o] (I.104-108)

Significantly, this is a post-lapsarian vision. Enclosure is required against the elements, whereas only a flowery bower was needed in the perpetual summer of Paradise. Expelled from the luxurious abundance of the garden, this pair has had to work for "modest fields." Instead of the perpetual youth they might have enjoyed, they must experience old age, albeit filled with health and gratitude. However, to attain this regenerated world Max and Katie must first suffer trial and loss. Katie still stands "on that smooth, violet plain, / Where nothing shades the sun" (I.117-18). Max sees even the stones as "seam'd with gold and precious ores" (I.122), like those in Eden and its environs (Genesis 2:12). The transforming power of sorrow awaits them outside the gates of Eden.

The second function of Malcolm's apotheosis is to place



Katie in a special position as his daughter. In Paradise Lost, Eve criticizes the harshness of the Father, and Adam must remind her that "God towards [her] has done his part" (IX.375). In Malcolm's Katie, Max demurs against the will of the mighty Malcolm, "Self-hewn from rock, remaining rock through all" (I.57), but Katie asserts simply "He loves me" (I.58). In contrast to Milton's Eve who sleeps through the moments of greatest revelation, Katie has an active relationship with her father, which contributes significantly to the poem's title of "A Love Story." However, the first half of the title, "Malcolm's Katie," implies a relationship that carries perimeters as well as privilege. Katie is her father's daughter, "his chiefest treasure" to be given or withheld:

For woman in our culture, however, a proper name is at best problematic; even as it "inscribes" her into the present discourse of society by designating her role as her father's daughter, her patronymic effaces her matrilineage and thus erases her own position in the discourse of the future. Her "proper" name, therefore, is always in a way improper because it is not, in the French sense, propre, her own, either to have or to give. (Gilbert and Gubar, No Man's Land 237)

Macdonald and others have drawn attention to the silent passiveness of Katie's attitude as symbolized by her "pray'rful palms close seal'd" (I.135). Nonetheless, Katie's silent kiss is contrasted with the aggressive Axe, associated throughout the poem with voice as "the steel tongue of the Present" (II.238), and Crawford's treatment of the axe is not without irony (Ower 41). Like the seed within the stone, the kiss is a creative and non-violent

method of pursuing change, which in the second Psalm is suggested as the way to appease God's anger and receive his blessing and inheritance (Psalm 2:12). The kiss and the axe represent the dialectic between creative and destructive forces of change that permeates the poem.

The lyric that closes Part I contains the "first explicit reference to the myth of Eden (in Genesis 2 and Paradise Lost) that helps to shape Malcolm's Katie" (Bentley, Explanatory Notes. Malcolm's Katie 54). The description of "Eve's rosy bar" reflected in the water echoes again the passage in Paradise Lost where Eve delights in her own reflection. The loving union between the sunset and the evening star may be drawn from Barrett Browning's A Drama of Exile in which Lucifer begs his Morning Star to sing to him (149). In a lyric entitled "Song of the Morning Star to Lucifer" the Morning Star mourns the loss of her lover who has fallen from the realm of light: "Henceforward, human eyes of lovers be / The only sweetest sight that I shall see" (882-83). The connection between these two passages may appear tenuous, but, as I hope to demonstrate, there are many structural and linguistic parallels between A Drama of Exile and Malcolm's Katie. In her preface to Poems of 1844, Barrett Browning explains her purpose in writing A Drama of Exile:

My subject was the new and strange experience of the fallen humanity as it went forth from Paradise into the wilderness; with a peculiar reference to Eve's allotted grief, which considering that self-sacrifice belonged to her womanhood, and the consciousness of originating the Fall to her

offence, --appeared to be imperfectly apprehended hitherto, and more expressible by a woman than a man. (vii)

In her effort to defend herself against what Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar have defined as "Milton's bogey" (Madwoman in the Attic 187), she continues:

I had promised my own prudence to shut close the gates of Eden between Milton and myself, so that none might say I dared to walk in his footsteps. He should be within, I thought, with his Adam and Eve unfallen or falling,--and I without, with my EXILES,--I also an exile! (viii)

This, too, is what Crawford has done, carrying her tale beyond the gates of Eden, and discovering, with Barrett Browning, "the lyrical emotion in those first steps into the wilderness" (vii). Crawford manages to close the door between herself and Milton even more tightly by transposing her tale to a contemporary pioneer setting.

A Drama of Exile, like Malcolm's Katie, is written in blank verse interspersed with various lyrics which was, as Bentley points out, a common technique of the period and a favorite of Tennyson's. However, interspersed among the dialogue between the central characters Lucifer, Adam and Eve, who correspond roughly to Alfred, Max and Katie, are the songs of various Eden and Earth spirits. Barrett Browning's decision to incorporate "organic and inorganic natures" (1034) into her poem provoked much criticism from her reviewers but may well have given Crawford a model for the integration of the Indian material which she so skilfully employs to mark the passage of the seasons (Waterston 75). Like other poets before her, Crawford is

careful to stress that the land Max pioneers is uninhabited waste (Monkman 133), thus incorporating the Indian presence in a mythopoeic rather than realistic fashion, with the exception of the "half-breed lad" who helps Max in his labours (II.165). Hayden White describes the "fetishization" of the natives of the New World as evoking a sense of the magical, the extravagant and the libidinal (184), all elements which are present both in Crawford's Indian passages and Barrett Browning's Spirit songs. White indicates, however, that this "idolization" occurs "only after the conflict between the Europeans and the native had already been decided" (186), representing a desire for a way of life already passed into myth and no longer accessible.

In A Drama of Exile the Eden Spirits, whose songs haunt Adam and Eve with a sense of lost beauty, are represented in order by the Spirits of the Trees, River Spirits, a Bird Spirit, and Flower Spirits. This order corresponds almost exactly to the arrangement of the Indian passages in Malcolm's Katie which were "once thought to be gratuitous ornamentation" (Bessai 416), but have since attracted so much critical attention and praise.<sup>6</sup> Of course, to argue for Barrett Browning's presence in these passages is not to deny the influence of Crawford's personal experience of nature during her years in Paisley and Lakefield (possibly under the capable tutelage of Catherine Parr Traill), and her imaginative ability to animate that world with myths local and universal.



acknowledges the violence against the land necessary to the pioneering process, but not without regret.

Apparently oblivious to the destruction his axe has caused, Max's thoughts return to love:

For Love, once set within a lover's breast,  
Has its own Sun--its own peculiar sky,  
All one great daffodil--on which do lie  
The sun, the moon, the stars--all seen at once,  
And never setting; but all shining straight  
Into the faces of the trinity,--  
The one belov'd, the lover, and sweet Love!  
(II.184-90)

Max's "daffodil apocalypse" (Reaney, "Isabella Valancy Crawford" 276) has been traced by Bentley to Tennyson's "Maud," and Dante's La Vita Nuova (Explanatory Notes 57). In a lyric in A Drama of Exile, the Morning Star describes the experience of Love:

Stars, planets, suns, and moons dilated broad,  
Then flashed together into a single sun,  
And wound, and wound in one:  
And as they wound I wound,--around, around,  
In a great fire I almost took for God. (862-67)

Max, like Adam before him, is fortified by love for the difficult passage from a horticultural to an agricultural way of life. Yet, Max is not alone "[i]n these new days" (II.193); "smooth coated men, with eager eyes" (II.230) have also come. The anaphoric passage that describes the advent of technology has been interpreted as Crawford's critique of the machine age, but, as Mathews points out, Crawford may well have been in favour of the progress that was transforming the wilderness into a bountiful garden. In her poem "Canada to England" Crawford writes:



Crawford was intimately aware of the stages of pioneer development through her moves from the backwoods settlement of Paisley, to the village of Lakefield, to the town of Peterborough, and finally to urban industrial Toronto; "Her history is Canada's history in microcosm" (Farmiloe xv). Her later narrative, Hugh and Ion, suggests that she was aware not only of the triumphs of progress, but of its tragedies as well. The process of Bildung is one to which the land must submit, but it carries with it a measure of violence and grief just as the maturation of Katie and Max involves suffering and trial. Like Eve who begs forgiveness of the wailing earth spirits in A Drama of Exile, Crawford expresses regret for "the wail / Of the falling forests" (II.238-39) and couches her description of the bold violence of Max's axe in subtle irony. The inadequacy of Max's vision is reflected in "the black slope all bristling with burn'd stumps" that the women refer to as "Max's house" (II.252). They know it takes a woman's creative touch to transform man's destructive labour into a "home" (VII.3). (The fact that women were important partners in the pioneering process was reflected in North American property laws of the time, which, unlike those of Britain, gave wives certain legal rights to their husband's land [Kolodny, The Land Before Her 49]). In her discussion of the settlement of North America, Kolodny suggests men dream of raping the land, while women dream of nurturing it:

Massive exploitation and alteration of the continent do not seem to have been part of women's



fantasies. They dreamed, more modestly, of locating a home and a familial human community within a cultivated garden. (The Land Before Her xiii)

Barrett Browning's *Eve* expresses her desire for a reconciliation with the natural world in horticultural terms:

Let some tender peace, made of our pain,  
Grow up betwixt us, as a tree might grow,  
With boughs on both sides! (1308-310).

In Malcolm's Katie, the two aspects of the pioneering process, the destructive and the creative, are linked by the use of the word "smooth" to describe the garments of the men who come to crush, saw and grind, and the garment of Katie. Katie has blended "smooth urban ways" with the "healthy" vine of rustic life, resulting in a hybrid similar to the trees of Milton's Paradise which bear "Blossoms and Fruits at once" (PL IV.147-48). Apparently, no one has yet linked the passage describing Katie's education with the notorious "smooth-coated men" passage of Part II, though the anaphoric structure is exactly parallel. While the men lay iron tracks across the land, Katie learns to plough a handsome furrow; while they build mills to "saw the great wide-arm'd trees" Katie learns to plant an orchard, a task which Archibald Lampman later describes as second in importance only to the care and education of children (At the Mermaid Inn 43). Macdonald argues that Katie receives this "second potentially empowering education only by default" (32) because Malcolm does not have a son. Nevertheless, she does receive an education, not like *Eve* passively through her

dreams or second-hand from her husband, but directly from the father; ironically, it is the father who receives messages in dreams. Gilbert and Gubar note that "one of the most dramatic emblems of Eve's alienation from the masculine garden in which she finds herself is her motherlessness" (Madwoman in the Attic 243), but Crawford inscribes the mother as a voice that speaks from beyond the grave to protect Katie's interests.

Here in the Eden of Malcolm's making, Katie is still confined to the domestic sphere, but she is preparing for the hard life beyond the walls of innocence and ease. A symbol of this process is her "gay garden," but even here, the garden breaks "on the peak'd roof" of Malcolm's grim stone house (III.21): "The garden dominates the farmhouse precisely to the degree that Katie has influence over Malcolm at this point" (Hughes and Sproxton 56). In A Drama of Exile, Eve fondly remembers her reign as queen of the garden:

Could I touch  
A rose with my white hand, but it became  
Redder at once? Could I walk leisurely  
Along our swarded garden, but the grass  
Tracked me with greenness? (1239-43)

Ultimately, Eve emerges from her place of "garden-rest" (1900) into a world of passion and pain, a journey which Katie must also take. Malcolm's desire for fences to enclose his treasures, of which Katie is the "chiefest" (III.216), has been interpreted as a sign of his materialism, but the resemblance between his enclosures and

"the verdurous wall of Paradise" (PL IV.143) strengthens the portrait of him as the king of the garden and prepares for the entrance of Alfred as "a Thief bent to unhoard the cash / Of some rich Burgher, whose substantial doors, / Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault..." (PL IV.185-88).

Several critics have noted how Alfred's language and behaviour resemble those of Milton's Satan, but Crawford's portrayal also bears a strong resemblance to Barrett Browning's Lucifer who confronts the lovers in exile; Eve's poignant response is "Adam! hold / My right hand strongly! It is Lucifer / And we have love to lose" (645-47). The seducer's presence only strengthens Eve's commitment to her first love; similarly, Alfred's wooing reinforces Katie's fidelity to Max. In her preface Barrett Browning explains that she included Lucifer in her poem as "an extreme Adam to represent the ultimate tendencies of sin and loss,--that it might be strong to bear up the contrary Idea of the Heavenly love and purity" (viii), a notion which illuminates the relationship between Max and Alfred. Max's red birth mark is echoed in the red blood on Albert's forehead after his rescue; Barrett Browning's Lucifer also has a red mark as "God's sign that it bows not unto God" (83-85). All three are therefore associated with Cain who first brought mortality into the world.

According to Macdonald, Alfred plays a positive role in making Katie strong, a role which Barrett Browning's Lucifer shares.<sup>5</sup> Bentley describes Alfred as a "selfish but highly

articulate and physically attractive nihilist" with "intellectual appeal" (xxviii). Lucifer also displays "energy, cleverness, and (what is all too rarely allowed to enter Elizabeth Barrett's earlier poetry) verbal irony, in a way that recalls Jacobean tragedy..." (Mermin 88). Lucifer stands "Most absolute in beauty" (756) and "hast one day worn a crown" (708) like Alfred who has "the jewels of some virtues set on his broad brow" (III.59). But because Lucifer has lost "[t]he essence of all beauty... Love" (777), he descends to nihilism and a belief that death is triumphant. When Lucifer and Adam meet in confrontation, Lucifer mocks the simplicity of Adam's doctrine of love and faith:

Ha, my clay-king!  
 Thou wilt not rule by wisdom very long  
 The after generations. Earth, methinks,  
 Will disinherit thy philosophy  
 For a new doctrine suited to thine heirs  
 And class these present dogmas with the rest  
 of the old-world traditions, Eden fruits  
 And Saurian fossils. (731-738)

This, in brief, is the "subtle" argument with which Alfred confronts Max when the two are alone in the wintry woods. Though Alfred appears to be promoting egalitarian relationships, the possessiveness for which he criticized Max emerges the moment he believes Max is dead: "Now, Katie, are you mine" (IV.224). His "pangs of love for gold must needs be fed" (III.150), but he desires the treasure without the attendant labour. While Max is swinging an axe, Alfred is lounging by the river bank "[w]ith pipe and book" (III.218); Max's relationship to the land makes him a more

worthy suitor than Alfred who hopes to acquire gold by stealth rather than honest labour. As Crawford reveals in her fairy tale, "How the Nightingale and the Parrot Wooed the Rose," the suitor who acts "for the benefit of others" is the most worthy (34). Persistent evidence of Katie's faith in her choice drives Albert into the arms "of that cold mistress" Nothingness (V.152). Alfred invites Katie to "look down" into the tumultuous mill stream to read his passions; she bids him look into her eyes, but since he sees there only the fire of his own rage and despair, he prefers his "blank-ey'd queen" (V.158).

In contrast to Alfred's barren union with his "cold mistress," Max and Katie's relationship with "Sorrow" is a fruitful one. From that "Dark Matrix" their "light" souls emerge chastened and strong. Significantly, the language of the Invocation to Sorrow that opens Part VI is woven into the narrative of Max's rescue of Katie and Alfred which closes that section. These linguistic parallels suggest that Katie, rather than becoming "radically disempowered" (Macdonald 42), functions as a creative, if passive, "instrument" of change. Her tears and anguished wail associate her with Sorrow without whom the "Soul but lightly built / Of indeterminate spirit, like a mist / Would lapse to Chaos..." (VI.9-11). Katie sees in Max's eyes "a larger soul / Than that light spirit that before she knew" (VI.132-33). Earlier, Katie had insisted to Alfred that "[Max] is true since I am faithful still" (V.131). This assertion is

more than rhetoric on her part; she is insisting upon her role in the shaping of his spiritual strength. Just as "Sorrow, dark mother of the soul" is asked to "Arise," Katie is asked to "Arise" and see the change her faith has wrought in Max.<sup>6</sup> After witnessing Max's victory over evil, Katie is "Close-clasp'd against his breast" (VI.168), just as Sorrow, the "Helper of the Universe," is "Close-clasp'd within the great Creative Hand" (VI.18). This passive helping role is subordinate to the active Christ-like role of Max, according to the hierarchy advocated by Ruskin in "Of Queens' Gardens" (101). As Judith Lowder Newton explains:

To have influence, the middle-class woman was urged to relinquish self-definition; she was urged to become identified by her services to others, in particular to men. (4)

In her preface to Poems of 1844 Barrett Browning elevates this role of self abnegation: "if knowledge is power, suffering should be acceptable as a part of knowledge" (x). She insists that suffering is a source of knowledge and power to which those traditionally excluded from the educative process may have access. For a moment, Katie allows herself to forget the man who has taught her a painful lesson about the nature of evil, and remember only "the broad green earth" (VI.170) which symbolizes the creative force she personifies throughout the poem.

The final section of Malcolm's Katie opens with the possibility of new hope on the far side of Eden's gate. In A Drama of Exile Eve says: "Noble work / Shall hold me in the place of garden-rest" (1899-1900), but she is forced to

admit that the fallen world includes the "pressures of an alien tyranny / With its dynastic reasons of larger bones / And stronger sinews" (1865-67), a negative possibility echoed in the image of Max twisting "Katie's hair / About his naked arm" (VII.16-17). There is room, even here, for a positive interpretation. Max's arm which once "fell, wither'd in its strength" before the wintry forces of despair (IV.173), is once again strong from his toil. In Paradise Lost, one of the gardening tasks of Adam and Eve is to lead "the Vine / To wed her Elm" that she may bring "Her dow'r th'adopted Clusters, to adorn / His barren leaves" (V.215-19). Earlier, Eve's hair is compared to the tendrils of the Vine (IV.307); Crawford may have conflated these two images to suggest conjugal intimacy, as they do elsewhere in her poetry (CP 302), but the image is still one of hierarchical dependence. Katie now looks "o'er the rich, fresh fields" (VII.5) like her father before her, but this is not, as Max would have it, paradise regained. The garden Max and Katie have struggled "hand in hand" to build is surrounded by "fleers from the waves of want" (VII.38). At the close of A Drama of Exile, Christ admonishes Adam and Eve to "Live and love...that the smile of [their] heroic cheer may float / Above all floods of earthly agonies" (1995, 2001-2003). Katie rejects with Ruskin:

...the woman playing in her garden, smiling, because there is a little wall around her place of peace: and yet she knows in her heart if she would only look for its knowledge, that outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon is torn up by the agony of men.... (129)

To truly remain Queen of the Garden, Katie must proceed outside its walls to restore a fallen world through grace and love. Katie's vision of a regenerated world resembles the new earth described by God to his Son in Paradise Lost (III.334-38), a world that can only be achieved through sacrifice and reconciliation. Some readers have found Alfred's repentance and forgiveness "somewhat abrupt and not artistically credible" (Rader 331). In A Drama of Exile, Eve pardons Lucifer because she shares his exile. Adam is overwhelmed by anger, but Eve forgives Lucifer "as freely as the streams of Eden flowed" (691) with the plea that he will not "seek / To harm [them] any more or scoff at [them]" (694-95). Max and Katie also pardon "the false, fair devil" (VI.164) Alfred, by naming their child after him, a detail that ambiguously inscribes not only their forgiveness, but Alfred's values into the discourse of the future.

The closing line of Malcolm's Katie has been the source of much critical controversy because it informs all that precedes it. Bentley suggests that Katie's assertion that "Adam had not Max's soul" (VII.30) is "fulsome flatter[y]" ("Sizing Up the Women" 4), but to prefer Adam is to deny the long process of Bildung which has transformed Max from "a light spirit" into an unselfish and noble man, and Katie's role in that process. A positive interpretation of Part VII finds Katie looking out upon fields that she may well have been instrumental in creating with the education she received from her father. She has become independent from



Malcolm without alienating his love for her, so much so that he now relies on her. She has won the suitor of her choice and she speaks to the future through her son, as Eve does through her "seed." She appears whole, rather than in the bits and pieces through which the metonymical male imagination had hitherto perceived her. And she who once kept silent before the "thunder" of her father's voice is granted the last word.

However, the nature of that "last word" places a positive interpretation in doubt. Katie's closing "if I knew my mind!" imperfectly echoes Alfred's "If I know my mind" (III.151). The line could be interpreted ironically since the exclamation mark implies the same tone of condescension that marks the first exclamation in the poem, Max's "But womankind is wise!" (I.12), and since Katie alone remains true to her original intentions, though all three men in the "Love Story" attempt to sway her mind. Alfred believes his pangs of love for gold will be assuaged, if he knows his mind (III.150-51), but they are not. Max believes Katie's heart will be swayed by a wooer, but she remains constant. Malcolm believes Max to be a drone who "never will put honey in the hive" (V.85), but Max builds a farm large enough to accommodate all of Malcolm's herds. Katie alone sees her predictions fully realized. Yet, the hesitancy of her closing words suggests her inability to fully inscribe an egalitarian vision. The men in the poem inscribe themselves upon the world through poems and



Crawford's effort to restore Eve to the New World garden is evidence that she desired to "run the lines" of her poem in such a way that "'M is part of K., and K. of M.'" (I.6-7) but "few pioneer women actually encountered such idealized configurations as daily reality" (Kolodny The Land Before Her 176), and Crawford's poetic sincerity does not allow her to deny the reality that surrounded her. Though she insists with Barrett Browning that "Exiled is not lost" (2258), Crawford admits that her world is a fallen one. Like Adam in A Drama of Exile, she blesses her characters not only "to the memory of Edenic joys," but also to their contraries, "the desert and the thorns" (1891-92).

## II.

The Story of an Affinity may have been written "partly in response" to Malcolm's Katie (Bentley, "Sizing Up the Women" 5), but despite the recent efforts of some critics, notably Bentley, L.R. Early, and Barrie Davies, to show that the poem is central to the Lampman canon, it has yet to receive the critical attention bestowed on Crawford's poem. Davies suggests that the "neglect and obscurity into which it has fallen is the probable result of a conventional and dated structure" ("The Forms of Nature" 75). I hope to demonstrate that The Story of an Affinity, "conventional and dated" though it may be, is, like Malcolm's Katie, a richly complex response to Paradise Lost drawing from many diverse sources and offering a radical reinterpretation of Eve's

role in the garden, and in the process of Bildung.

One hesitates to trace sources for Lampman, because of the vehemence with which he rejected this "ridiculous genealogy-hunting" in one of his At the Mermaid Inn columns in The Globe:

The blind bookworm never realizes that it is possible for two strong imaginations even at a distance of many centuries to happen upon the same image without ever having communicated with one another in the remotest way. (283)

The intention is not, of course, to question Lampman's originality but rather to demonstrate the genius with which he transforms the images and ideas he drew from other sources. In his annotations to The Story of an Affinity, Bentley traces Lampman's title to Goethe's Elective Affinities. Lampman was an avid admirer of Goethe, claiming that his autobiography, "the record of an insatiable and most vital mind uniting the scientific and artistic spirits each in an extraordinary degree," would be one of the six books he would take with him to a desert island (At the Mermaid Inn 231). Lampman would almost certainly have read Elective Affinities which perfectly illustrates the combination of "scientific and artistic spirits" he so admired. Goethe translates the scientific theory of chemical affinities developed by Torbern Olof Bergman in 1776 (Winkelman 108) into the realm of human relations, with possible reference to Swedenborg's philosophy of spiritual affinities.<sup>7</sup> Near the end of Elective Affinities, some English visitors tell the story of "The Two Strange

Children" which functions as a microcosm of the affinities operating throughout the novel. This brief story within a story parallels many of the basic plot elements of Lampman's The Story of an Affinity: two children who grow up together and appear destined to marry are separated to undergo the process of education. Meanwhile a new suitor arrives to whom the girl makes an unspoken commitment. After a series of complications the old affinity reasserts itself and "the two strange children" confirm their love.

Yet, the two tales differ in several significant ways. Lampman does not include the childish animosity the girl feels for the boy, but simply states that Richard and his brother's "ways grew over manful" for young Margaret (I.43). He also omits the entire melodramatic ending in which the young woman attempts suicide by throwing herself overboard, only to be saved by her childhood friend so the two can promise everlasting love to each other in a cabin in the wilderness. Crawford certainly made use of such sensational episodes of suicide and near drowning, but--despite Davies' assertion that Lampman's poem is "a rather melodramatic tale of love" that would "appeal to Victorian tastes" ("Makeshift Truce" 136)--Lampman rejects them in order to focus instead on the process of Bildung, and the encounter between Richard and Margaret that initiates that process.

In Elective Affinities, Goethe "uses the garden motif not only to mark the stages of his plot but also as a source of symbols that indirectly characterize" his protagonists

Charlotte and Eduard (Winkelman 109). In the opening lines of his tale of affinity, Lampman introduces his readers to a garden that functions on several levels. On the material level, the "golden land of fruit and flowers" (I.2) represents the Niagara region which Lampman describes in a letter written during the period of the poem's composition: "I always delight in that country and I enjoyed wandering about again among my uncle's grapes; I also picked the last of the early peaches off the trees" (Letters 94). The Keatsian description of the seasons that follows offers not only exquisite poetry but in a manner similar to that of the Indian passages in Malcolm's Katie, anticipates the succeeding action. The splitting of the peach stone and the robin's storming of the vineyard foreshadow the violence and "lawless energy" of Richard (I.81), and the heavily freighted wings of the wasp imply the weight of "feverous yearnings and blind powers" under which he struggles (I.161). In the same way that the "ripe Fruit" symbolizes mortality in Paradise Lost (XI.535), the "[d]ropped golden fruit and whirling golden leaves" (I.19) foreshadow the waste of Margaret's dream "of growth and mind-enlargement for herself" (I.288) and the "ruined fabric" of her hope.

By avoiding specific references in this opening passage, Lampman also manages to evoke the gardens of myth, the Elysian Fields, and the "vegetable gold" of Milton's Paradise. The passage that leads up to the first explicit reference to the Eden tale resonates with Miltonic echoes.

Richard with "blank eyes and dawdling feet" makes his way "by a winding footway / Into an orchard old with gnarled trees" (I.223-24) and there, under the "goodliest of these fruitful trunks," he experiences the encounter that will change his life. Lampman, like Milton, chooses "the stroke of noonday" (I.350) for the climactic encounter between innocence and knowledge, but as several of his lyrics indicate, noon for Lampman is "the quadrant in which positive visionary experience--epiphanic insights into man, nature and human life are most likely to occur" (Bentley, "Watchful Dreams" 190). This is only one of many "glad inversions of Milton's epic" (Early 134). The encounter between ignorance and wisdom is not between the female and the serpent, but rather between the male and the female and the symbol of the power of knowledge is not an apple but a book. In Eden, the encounter between innocence and knowledge leads to a fall from grace into nature; in the already fallen world of Lampman's garden, the encounter between ignorance and wisdom leads to an elevation from fallen nature towards grace. Therefore Richard's enlightenment is not a fall but an ascent, not a covering up in shame, but an unveiling into the liberty of self-knowledge:

For as our primal father and fair Eve  
 In that old story of the first of things  
 When they had eat of the forbidden fruit  
 Grew conscious of their nakedness, so he  
 Now at a single stroke was made aware  
 Of his own ignorance. (I.365-370)

Adam and Eve's recognition of their nakedness symbolized an end to their innocence, but Richard's recognition of his

ignorance symbolizes the joyous beginning of his education.

Lampman appropriates the language of the proponents of the fortunate fall for his own purposes, in a manner reminiscent of Goethe's use of the scientific theory of elective affinities. One of the most dedicated and eloquent advocates of this philosophy through a Gnostic interpretation of Swedenborg was Henry James Sr., the father of the novelist.<sup>8</sup> James takes what in Swedenborg are only hints and develops an elaborate framework within which to reinterpret the creation story. James reassigns the roles, elevating Eve from the subservient role of temptress, to the wise being who grants consciousness to Adam, just as Margaret inspires Richard to knowledge:

Adam, before the birth of Eve, pictures to us what man is by creation merely; an eternal infant, incapable of growing in love and wisdom and power, because he is without selfhood, or personal experience; without any experience of himself.... With Eve accordingly, who symbolizes his Divinely vivified selfhood, Adam's proper personal experience begins; or the negative innocence of childhood prepares itself to be taken up into the positive innocence of ripe and wise manhood. (James, Substance and Shadow 426-427)

Elsewhere James writes that it is Eve's task to bring Adam:

characterized as yet not by the possession of selfhood, but only by a dumb and blind yearning after it, up to the normal human level out of sheer unrelieved brutality. (Literary Remains 215)

In a column written while he was working on The Story of an Affinity, Lampman looks to women to "ensure the elimination or repression of a great part of the fool and the brute that is in men" (At the Mermaid Inn 48). He facilitates that project through his portrayal of



Margaret as a linguistically powerful Eve who brings knowledge to an ignorant Adam. The "reaching tendrils and thick-twisted stems" of the vineyard through which Richard passes (I.175) reflect a mind that has yet to achieve its potential. When Richard first encounters Margaret, she appears in the passive role of an allegorical figure asleep with book in hand. When she awakes, Lampman grants his Eve the power of naming, in an inversion of the "male authority to accord names" implied by Adam's role in Eden (Gilbert and Gubar, No Man's Land 237). In her first speech she says "Ah, Richard, it is you; and you know me? / Why it is Margaret" (I.399-400). Though Margaret modestly admits her own inadequacy as a scholar, she simultaneously reveals her eloquence and skill with metaphor, so much so that "Richard shrank a little, as if bowed / By too great joy of that delicious word" (I.444-45). The symbol of Margaret's power is, of course, her book. It is the book, and not Margaret herself, that evokes in Richard "a sweet immeasurable desire" (I.387), just as the Fruit "[s]olicited [Eve's] longing eye" in Paradise Lost (IX.743). Lampman does not reveal the title of "Margaret's little book," only that "It was a work / Printed in curious words and unknown type" (I.410-11), implying either that Richard cannot read or, more likely, that the book is in a language other than English, possibly Greek. Lampman describes his affection for Greek to a friend:

There never was and never will be another language  
like the Greek. It is worth while giving two or

three years of one's life even to get a moderate knowledge of it. Those who possess an intimate and discerning knowledge of Greek literature have an enormous advantage over all other people. They survey modern literature from a certain solid standpoint of breadth and beauty. (Letters 6 June 1894, 121)

Gilbert and Gubar argue in No Man's Land that the exclusion of women from classical studies was a "crucial step in gender demarcation" and a way of preserving patriarchal power (243). Men chose to preserve Latin and Greek for themselves as "a privileged priestly language or father speech" relegating the women to the mother tongue shared by all (252). Whatever the language of the book, Margaret has learned to "thread the mysteries of other tongues" (I.418), making her a "bilingual heroine" which Patricia Yaeger describes as one of the more successful "emancipatory strategies" in nineteenth-century writing by and about women (35-36).

Because the book is the source of Margaret's power, defined here "not as dominance and control but as ability and energy" (Newton 6), she lets Richard have it only after insisting that "someday in a future year they two / With wiser heads would read it through together" (I.463-64). She does not want to be disprized of her potential again, as she has been by her father. Though Margaret welcomes Richard into the world of knowledge, her own Bildung has been stifled by the pressure of patriarchy; like Katie, she must "tread / The circuit of her house-kept days content" (I.296-97). Although this restricted life is "interwoven" with

study, much as the rustic bench upon which she sits is "interwoven" with cedar boughs, it is the "lowlier guise" of her old dream (I.310). In another context, Lampman uses a horticultural metaphor to describe a woman whom "the awful blindness or shortsighted obstinacy of parents" has destroyed:

Her life was like the rose which has never spread into blossom, but remained withered and stunted in the bud because its root was buried in a barren and innutritious soil, denied water and denied the sun. (At the Mermaid Inn 294)

Despite the restrictive world in which she lives, Margaret has worked hard to maintain a level of knowledge and insight; she is understandably reluctant to part with the book that symbolizes that struggle.

Though the staff is more often the repository of a magician's authority, the magician's book can also be his source of power as it is in Tennyson's poem "Merlin and Vivien." The Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones visualizes the central episode of Tennyson's poem in his painting "The Beguiling of Merlin."<sup>9</sup> Merlin is depicted sleeping on a rustic bench under a flowering hawthorn tree while Vivien takes his book from him; he has explained to her that he derives his power from this book containing "in every square of text an awful charm, / Writ in a language that has long gone by" (Tennyson 669-72). Vivien desires the charm because those against whom it is used are "lost to life and use and name and fame...(968).

Richard does not share Vivien's malevolent aspirations

(although reading the poem for the first time, one senses the sinister possibilities of a menacingly huge man approaching a small sleeping maiden), but the fact remains that Margaret gives over her source of power "[a]s a bird veers before the wind" (I.459). The ambiguity of the exchange is captured in Lampman's description of Margaret at this moment: "And now as Margaret ended and her speech / Subsided in the sunlight of a smile" (I.481-82). Does the relinquishing of the book mean the "end" of Margaret as her power of speech subsides? After all, to kiss and keep still is the only option left to Katie.

The exchange of the book as the symbol of her power is marked by the sound of the conch blown "thrice each day" (I.476). Is this, then, a moment of betrayal? For Richard, it is a moment of victory: "The conch-shell which calls the farm hands for food calls Richard to feed his mind as well as his body" (Davies, "The Forms of Nature" 85). Milton identifies knowledge with food in Paradise Lost, but Richard is free to learn with no Raphael to warn him against intellectual indigestion (PL VII.126-30). As Margaret and Richard walk "through the humming garden" toward the midday meal, she "[k]ept silence too, knowing not what to say," (I.501-502) just as Adam and Eve are "struck'n mute" (IX.1064) after the fall. Later when she bids Richard farewell, Margaret murmurs "she knew not what of gentle speech" (I.581). He leaves her at the garden gate while he journeys beyond. From this point onward, in a kind of

structural chiasmus, Margaret descends while Richard ascends.

The first step in Adam's education in Book XI of Paradise Lost is the cleansing of his vision. This is also where Richard's education begins. He comes to the orchard with clouded vision, a point that Lampman takes great pains to emphasize, filling the pages preceding Richard's encounter with Margaret with references to his misted view. He is described as having "blank eyes" (I.157), "wasteful eyes" (I.319), and "earth-ward eyes" that do not mark "the Hebe-loveliness of leaf / And flower" (I.163-64). The "single gleam of wild intelligence" is only temporary: "In his eyes / The remnant of that wild and startled flame / Died gradually away as embers die, / Shrouding with ash (I.214-17). After his vision of the sleeping Margaret, "a wild light fluttered from them..." (I.331). For the first time, "[h]e stood in the clear light, and felt, and saw" (I.342). When the recognition "that all / His life had lacked of insight and of power / Came gathering in a great and welling flood," Richard's vision is transformed: "With ever deepening pierce he saw the world / And his own life, and comprehended all" (I.357-60). This latter passage most closely resembles Milton's description of Michael's purging of the vision of Adam:

And from the Well of Life three drops instill'd.  
 So deep the power of these Ingredients pierc'd,  
 Ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight,  
 That Adam now enforc't to close his eyes,  
 Sunk down and all his Spirits became intranst.  
 (PL XI.416-19)

Later the men at the noon meal make remarks about the extended scope of Richard's vision: "Ye look / As if ye had seen something beyond the wall" (I.535-37).<sup>10</sup> Inspired by his new vision, Richard decides to go out into the world, not like Max to gain wealth, but to find knowledge. The desire to accumulate riches is, according to Lampman, due "to a species of madness or mental blindness" (At the Mermaid Inn 157) while the accumulation of intellectual wealth requires vision.

The beginning of Richard's odyssey towards self-fulfillment is not without obstacles. He first feels a return of his "old truant mood" which had earlier seized him at a border place "hemmed with briar and bloom" (I.182), but nature which once drove him to tear a young birch tree "root, stem, and branches from the earth" (I.206) now exerts a "gentle influence" over his troubled spirit. His purpose clarified, he informs his mother of his plans:

I think I am a man now, but before  
I was a brute; and I have got my mind,  
And I can think and learn; I'm going forth  
To make a new beginning of my life,  
Where men are many, and I may prove myself.  
(I.653-57).

His father, William ("resolute helmet") Stahlberg ("steel mountain") stands in his way, not, like Margaret's father, because he fears his child's absence, but because he fears the "evils and temptations" of the city (I.718). Richard assures his father that he will have "a beautiful spirit" to guide him on his way (I.721). Richard's victory over parental opposition draws attention to Margaret's failure;

while her "boyant spirit" is "bent" under her father's will (I.293), Richard goes out into the world to find his "bent" (I.701). Like Katie's mother, Richard's mother acts as advocate, bringing "a lighted candle for her son" (I.736).<sup>11</sup> Rachel "reads" the heart of her son to discover his love, extending the importance of reading to the educative process into the realm of human relationships. Lampman, like Shakespeare, uses the book as a recurring trope as well as a central prop (Curtius 305); Richard learns to "read" not only the text, but also the hearts and faces of humankind.

Thus begins the education of Adam/Richard. The panoramic vision from the train corresponds to the vision from the Hill which Michael and Adam ascend. From this vantage point Adam is shown "what shall come in future days" (XI.357); similarly, Richard's vision carries him from an agricultural present into an industrial future. Though the "dusty hoer" and "anxious farmer holding in / His restive horses" (II.25-26) resemble the "sweaty Reaper" and "a Shepherd next" that comprise Adam's first vision from the Hill, they are not the victims of "some great mischief" because Lampman's story contains no fall. Like Milton, Lampman follows the pattern of Genesis 4:20-22 to paint a dark portrait of the city. Instead of one man labouring "at the Forge" (PL XI.564) Richard sees the "reeking depths / Of ringing foundries, and the flaring gleams / Of smoke-veiled forges" (II.30-31). Instead of the "melodious chime" of Harp and Organ (PL XI.559), he hears the "din on din" of

"this loud great world" (II.36), and instead of "Tents of various hue" (PL XI.557) he sees "stone built palaces" and "little cottages." Richard at last finds a family with whom he can lodge:

As the spent mariner,  
Whom some long billow of the wreckful sea  
Hath flung far up upon a sunny strand,  
Crawls out of reach, and basks and is content,  
So Richard rested thankful and secure.  
(II.108-12)

Lampman's use of a nautical metaphor harks back to Margaret's assurance to Richard that "every port is possible / To him who stands unshaken at the helm" (I.438-39) but may also echo the Goethe narrative in which the young man seeks comfort in a "solitary cottage" after rescuing the girl from the churning waters: "There he found kind, good people--a young married couple; the misfortunes and the dangers explained themselves instantly" (258). (The extra element of the little daughter who initiates her parent's acceptance of the child-like Richard strongly resembles Lampman's own daughter born during the composition of The Story of An Affinity. He describes her in a letter to Thomson as "a very wilful and opinionated little person, but exceedingly pretty with her abundant mass of curly golden hair [and] everlasting life and energy" [Letters 16 Aug 1893, 92]). Once established in his attic room (yet another image of his ascent), Richard sets up a shrine-like shelf for "the book / That Margaret's hand had given him" (II.189-90). When his toil seems "fruitless" this "guide and symbol of his hope" returns him to Margaret's orchard (II.192-95),



providing a "thread of memory" to protect him from the shrivelling aspects of urban life which Lampman so vividly describes in "The City of the End of Things" (CP 179-82).

Though the "seasons [are] but forms and empty names" to Richard who is eager to begin his study despite the summer holiday (II.139), the poetry that marks their passage is, as in Malcolm's Katie, some of the most exquisite the poem has to offer. Much as the autumnal passage that opens the poem symbolizes Richard's mental captivity, the poetry describing the arrival of spring signals his release. The sky is cleared of clouds; the "last knots of the discoloured snow" rush from the drains (II.204). The birds come "flocking in full chorus with the flame / Of crocuses in teeming garden beds" (II.210-11). Symbols of decay have been replaced by those of fertility, but Richard will not return to Margaret until, like Max, "strength [is] in his hands" (II.219).

Richard's course of study may well be, as Davies suggests, "a likely guide to Lampman's own reading" ("Lampman and Religion" 50) or, as Bentley suggests, a specifically Arnoldian agenda. But it also follows very closely the pattern set out in Milton's tract Of Education which certainly would have been included in Lampman's "extensive reading of Milton."<sup>12</sup> In his essay, Milton compares the educative process to the climbing of a hill, "laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect" (632), an image which corresponds to the physical setting of Adam's education and

the metaphor Lampman uses to describe Richard's task: "The mount of knowledge seemed a giant height...attainable / Only to patient and eternal toil" (II.158-60). In Paradise Lost, Adam's instruction juxtaposes "two sets of readings, one derived from sensory experience, the other from revelation" (Grossman 181), in accordance with the precepts set forth by Milton who insists that students should not be confined to the study of books alone:

To set forward all these proceedings in nature and mathematics, what hinders but that they may procure, as oft as shall be needful, the helpful experiences of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries; and in the other sciences, architects, engineers, mariners, anatomists; who doubtless would be ready, some for reward and some to favor such a hopeful seminary. And this will give them such a real tincture of natural knowledge as they shall never forget, but daily augment with delight. (Of Education 635)

Similarly, Richard's "thirst of knowledge grew--all knowledge, not / The love of books alone" (II.222-23). He goes out into the workshop and the world to learn. Lampman uses Milton's metaphor of hill-climbing, "He mounted to a higher range" (II.253), but augments it with a horticultural metaphor which maintains the vertical direction: "a rich new life / Grew up" (II.294-95). Bentley suggests that Richard's reading follows an Arnoldian pattern, but Lampman has clearly chosen texts relevant to Richard's own situation. He, like Achilles, has committed himself to "ten year's toil" (II.275), a period which Goethe believes to be significant in a man's life (Elective Affinities 268). Like Odysseus, he must wander through

"many outer lands of monstrous men" (II.280) before returning to his loyal Penelope.

Richard's education, like Adam's, is not devoid of a social element, allowing Lampman a forum for social criticism. In the same way that Adam sees "Oppression, and Sword-Law / Through all the Plain" (XI.672-73), Richard recognizes that "ceaseless warfare is but man's rule" (II.324). Adam's vision of a "reverend sire" who preaches conversion and repentance "But all in vain" (PL XI.726), corresponds to Lampman's "pastor with impassioned tongue" who challenges "the rich and proud... in vain" (II.341,344). The most significant aspect of Richard's education into the harshness of the world is a visit to Lampman's version of Milton's "Lazar-house" (PL XI.479). In the doorway of this "wretched cabin" wherein lies a "broken spirit wavering at death's door" (II.391) Richard encounters Charlotte Ambray. Margaret, one assumes, would have been like this "queenly girl," had she been allowed to follow her dream "of onward and heroic toil, / Of growth and mind-enlargement for herself, / And generous labour for the common good" (I.287-89). Charlotte appears to have escaped the restrictions of patriarchy, and, as Bentley points out, the typically diminutive stature of the Victorian heroine. Like the women of Lampman's utopia, the Land of Pallas, she is large and strong though she still requires Richard's help. She is the type of woman, "superhumanly beautiful, superhumanly wise," that Lampman looked forward to: "When

the moral and intellectual emancipation of women is fully effected many a cloud will be lifted from human life" (At the Mermaid Inn 48). Margaret offers Richard her "little book," but Charlotte herself is "an open book / Of curious tints and gorgeous character" (II.443-44). After meeting her, Richard passes through the "magic doors" of science to explore the "round of glittering space.../ Dark systems and mysterious energies" (II.456,462). Davies indicates that science in The Story of an Affinity means "astronomy, geology, biology, those branches which most directly challenged orthodox religious beliefs" ("Lampman and Religion" 50) and, in a parallel passage in Paradise Lost, Adam is discouraged from asking "How first began this Heav'n which we behold?" (VII.86). But elsewhere Lampman argues that though the new knowledge may not be religious in the traditional sense, it is "intrinsically religious" (At the Mermaid Inn 291).

This is certainly true of Richard's communion with nature; he goes "far beyond the city's wearying roar" to cool "his hot brain amid the blossoming fields" (II.480-81). In Of Education Milton writes:

In the vernal seasons of the years when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth. (638)

While Richard is experiencing this "same charm / And sympathy of Earth" (II.490-91), he meets the poet who teaches him "what glorious and magnificent use may be made

of poetry, both in divine and human things" (Of Education 637). This education in eloquence awakens Richard to "fresh worlds and a new day" (II.539), a phrase reminiscent of the "fresh woods and pastures new" of Milton's "Lycidas." Bentley traces the catalogue of poets that follows to the preferences of Arnold and Lampman himself (Introduction xxi). Significantly, the reference to Milton reiterates the climbing process that has marked both Adam's and Richard's education:

And Milton's line  
Bore him upon its volume vast and stern  
In august cadences to the sheer height  
Of earthly vision. (II.549-52)

To complete the education of his soul to beauty, the poet introduces Richard to his "three fair friends" who like the three Graces introduce him to the charms of discourse and harmony. The scene with the "garden, full of trees, where the cool air / Hung fragrant over beds of curious flowers" (II.589-90) is not unlike Botticelli's Primavera with the presence of Zephyrus, Flora, the Three Graces, a young man gazing upward, and presiding over all, Venus as "Humanitas, that is, the study of the Liberal Arts" (Hartt 62). Here in a "fair" room where "Beauty breathed in all its garniture" (II.622) Richard is introduced to "the piano's hidden heart of fire" (II.625). Music, according to Milton, has "great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions" (Of Education 638). Here "under the goodly garden trees" Richard's education is brought to

completion (II.645). He has come full circle to the orchard setting where Margaret first introduced him to knowledge. Horticultural metaphors echoing the description of young Margaret as a "tireless gleaner in the field of books" (I.272) are used to describe the process; Richard has feasted upon the "long-stored fruits of old philosophies, / And all the harvest of the modern light" (II.652-53). He even becomes a "lecturer in a famous college hall" (II.658), an unfulfilled goal which Lampman apparently cherished for himself (Sommers 82).

To Margaret, meanwhile, "the years had brought a differing destiny" (III.7). Her spirit has been slowly deadened by the "monotonous round / Of duties and incessant petty cares" (III.8-9) in much the same way that Eve sleeps through Adam's ascent of the Hill so that all her spirits may be "compos'd / To meek submission" (XII.597). Richard has flourished like a tree to the fullness of his "soul's spreading stature," but in Margaret's secluded garden, the implacable will of Jacob Hawthorne has choked her growth. In At the Mermaid Inn, Lampman writes: "The human mind is like a plant, it blossoms in order to be fertilized, and to bear seed must come into actual contact with the mental dispersion of others" (140). Isolated from "the magnetic touch of life" (III.6), Margaret finds herself regressing to Richard's condition at the opening of the poem as her once cultivated garden returns to the wild. Her "wayward and unusual deeds," her "strange moods" and her "wild discourse"

all resemble Richard's "old truant mood." When her mother dies, Margaret must face the will of the patriarch alone, but, like Katie, she learns to live within "the narrow range" of service. Ultimately, it is this "store of helpful love" (III.23) that saves her. Her power is restored to her in the measure that she does good for others. She becomes "wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation" (Ruskin 103). Like the Queen of Ruskin's essay she does not stay within the selfish perimeters of her private garden, but makes her way into the larger world to help and heal. According to Ruskin, "The way of a noble woman is strewn with flowers," and Margaret "plant[s] in many a genial soil / The seeds of knowledge and divine desire" (III.55-56). For the children she "weav[es] a web of tender allegories" that, like Penelope's tapestries, serve to pass the time (III.66). Back in the orchard, when she was still in full possession of her power, Margaret names Richard and names herself, but now the power of her name is restored to her only through the way of sacrificial love: "Through all the countryside her name was known / And honoured" (III.50-51). Apparently, "just as triumphant self-discovery is the ultimate goal of the male Bildungsroman, anxious self-denial...is the ultimate product of a female education" (Gilbert and Gubar, Madwoman in the Attic 276). In Paradise Lost, the devils consume the fruit only to chew "bitter ashes" (X.565), but here "underneath its cloak of ash," a "secret smouldering" remains (III.78-79).

At this point, the Goethe plot reasserts itself with the arrival of a second suitor:

A young man, somewhat older than her previous neighbor-antagonist, of rank, property, and consequence, beloved in society, and much sought after by women, bestowed his affections upon her. (Goethe 252)

Unlike Crawford's Alfred, John Vantassel appears to be interested in Margaret herself rather than in her father's wealth, though what first attracts him is that she is "a nobler and a juster listener" to the "wider drift and purpose of his speech" (III.93,92). Eventually, however, their friendship evolves into mutuality, as symbolized by Margaret's willingness to "let him help her at her flowers" (III.122). Like the young woman in Goethe's narrative, "she believed that she was happy, and in a certain sense she was so" (Goethe 253). After much struggle, she inwardly promises Vantassel her hand, though "her heart remain[s] untouched" (III.130).

Margaret hears word of Richard Stahlberg's return. "The absent youth had meanwhile grown up into everything which was most admirable" (Goethe 253). Richard's mother has kept Margaret up to date with the story of her son's accomplishments, until a "sort of mythic splendour wrapt it round" (III.214). The two activities over which the women discuss Richard reinforce mythic patterns established earlier in the poem. The knitting by firelight recalls the patient weaving of Penelope, and the "long summer afternoons / When apples were selected, peeled, and cored" again



reinforce the Edenic motif. Margaret is "flattered by the tale, / Remembering with a subtle sense of power / That curious meeting by the orchard tree" (III.226-28). Here Lampman makes a revision that is as troubling as Crawford's emendation from "Max plac'd a ring in little Katie's hand" to "...on little Katie's hand" (I.1). Lampman changes the original "The powerful man, to whom perchance some touch / Of her own soul had given the power to grow" to "...the need to grow" (III.233). One cannot help but wonder why Lampman thus denigrates Margaret's role in Richard's Bildung, after having worked so hard to invert Miltonic patterns of hierarchy.

Unlike the returning youth in Goethe's tale, who originally has no aspirations as suitor to his childhood friend (254), Richard returns believing in the affinity that ties his life to Margaret's. This second encounter between Richard and Margaret on the "many-hued ellipse of lawn and flowers" (III.247) resembles the first, only with the roles reversed. Margaret sees that Richard "had gone beyond her, and stood now / Her spiritual master, large, and armed with power" (III.294-95). Now it is her turn to stand "like a girl.../ Flushed and tongue tied" (III.308-309); but significantly, Richard does not take advantage of his power, releasing her hands, and restoring her to the gracious dignity she possesses as a mature woman (Bentley, "Sizing up the Women" 10). Richard gone, Margaret retreats to her porch which Lampman refers to not as a trellised cage but as

"a dim and odorous bower" (III.342), a description that visualizes Margaret's struggle. Though the Edenic bower is open to the natural world beyond the domestic sphere, the light of Margaret's inspiration has become dimmed. There she attempts to "read" her own heart. Richard emerged "naked and free" from his first encounter with her. Now his presence has "stript her soul and robbed it utterly / Of all its guarded vesture of content, / Its gathered veils and careful barriers..." (III.347-49), in an echo of the woman's unveiling in Lampman's prose tale "The Fairy Fountain" (47). While Adam and Eve "devise / What best may for the present serve to hide / The Parts of each from other" (IX.1090-91), Richard and Margaret are metaphorically stripped bare in each other's presence, and in this spiritual nakedness intimacy is restored. Nonetheless, if Margaret is to maintain her "queenly honour," she must reckon with her heart-made commitment to Vantassel even if it means "the certain failure of one half her life" (III.376). The depth of Margaret's psychological struggle contrasts strongly with the shallowness of Goethe's young woman:

She bewailed the sleepy state into which she had fallen. She execrated the insidious lazy routine which had betrayed her into accepting so insignificant a bridegroom. (255)

Goethe's "heroine" ignores the fact that she is "bound inextricably to the bridegroom by the world, by her family, and by her own promise" (255) and decides she must commit suicide to punish the returning youth for his want of interest in her, to "wed herself for ever to his imagination

and to his repentance" (256).

Though the tear-stained letter on Margaret's bed, "the final sad memorial of her strife" (III.707), implies the possibility of suicide, Lampman cloaks Margaret's decision in ambiguity, revealing only that she chooses the way of honour. In Malcolm's Katie the way of honour puts Max's physical life at risk, but Margaret's decision places her spiritual life in jeopardy. The "swift and steady steps" that take her away from Richard and the garden can be contrasted to the "wandering steps and slow" which carry Adam and Eve "hand and hand" into the world. For Richard this is a moment of torment. Margaret's garden in which he stands "like one blinded and stunned" (III.502) once represented the "enclosed garden" of his beloved (Song of Solomon 4:12), but now becomes the Garden of Gethsemane in which he awaits the final darkness. He calls her name as a charm against the encroaching mist. Fortunately, the rising of the morning sun illuminates Margaret's mind, and she realizes that she cannot betray her affinity with Richard. This is evident to Vantassel who returns to "read" her face and its "lines / Of strife and suffering" (III.546-48) because Margaret cannot give him the "one bright word" he longs for.

To set in relief this retreat from a near tragic ending Lampman develops a subtle fabric of allusions to Othello. Margaret's father explains to the grieving Vantassel that the college prodigy "has returned / And brought a sort of

magic in his tongue;" he has "bewitched her utterly!" (III.592,595). Vantassel, overwhelmed by "wrath and the desire / Of vengeance" (III.608-609) goes out to find Richard. The accusations he cries out resemble those of Brabantio who, guided by Iago, condemns Othello for stealing his daughter Desdemona:

You are a thief!  
 A mean and treacherous thief! There is a law  
 To punish them that rob us of our goods,  
 But how shall we be safe from such as you,  
 Traitors who creep about us in the dark,  
 And tempt and steal away our happiness!  
 (III.630-35)

Here, the possessive attitudes that mark the men in Malcolm's Katie emerge, as if Margaret is a chattel to be exchanged in the market place. The confidence of Othello's "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them" (I.ii.60) resonates through Richard's response to Vantassel's attack: "Put by your anger for a moment now, / And let me speak" (III.640-41). In a manner reminiscent of Othello before the council chamber, Richard tells "the story of his labour and his love" (III.668) to the subdued and quivering lawyer who at last, like Desdemona's father, is forced to yield. Significantly, Richard conquers both "by force of hands /... and by force of soul" (III.681-82), proving that the former imbalance between his physical and mental capacities has been corrected.

Of course, Vantassel is no "motiveless malignity" and Richard and Margaret are held together by more than a handkerchief "with magic in the web of it" (Othello III.

iv.71); they have also learned to love wisely rather than too well. Margaret awaits her destiny at the garden gate in the shadow of the shining mountain, where she hears "without surprise" the sound of Richard's steps. He does not presume, but rather asks "Am I right to come?" (III.725). Margaret's "silent full surrenderment" resembles Eve's "thou to mee / Art all things under Heav'n" (XII.617-18). This commitment could be interpreted as a defeat for Margaret for, in Victorian times, "marriage meant the relinquishing of power as surely as it meant the purchase of a wedding dress" (Newton 8). But Lampman suggests otherwise with his vision of a man returning the light to the woman who gave it to him, so their mutual future might be illuminated. The words of Richard: "Henceforth as one / Let us take up the way together, each / Made stronger by the other's loving touch" (III.453-55), are a beautiful echo of Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." Lampman's closing image of Margaret incorporates the horticultural metaphors of both Max and Katie: Her lips, with their "strange and speechless smile" become "a flower," but that flower is made lovely by "its hidden root" (III.735). In a gesture of mutuality that supersedes the need for language, "they [take] each other's hands" [emphasis added] and proceed "up the cool path" between the orchard trees that form the aisle of a wedding chapel in the cathedral of nature. They have passed through the dark

matrix to attain "the portals of the perfect fields of life" (III.741). The glow that dazzles them is not the sword glare that drives Adam and Eve from their garden home, but rather the clear light of freedom.

Lampman also uses a horticultural metaphor to explore human progress in "Man's Future." In this sonnet written less than a year before his death, Lampman writes that "the noble and harmonious tree" has attained perfection,

But man is still unfinished: many an age  
Must bear him slowly onward stage by stage  
In long adjustment,--mind and flesh and soul  
Finally balanced to a rhythmic whole...  
(At the Long Sault 34)

This is the process of Bildung explored in both Malcolm's Katie and The Story of an Affinity through images of natural growth enriched by references to material and mythical gardens. Both Lampman and Crawford offer a richly complex response to a variety of Edenic texts in which the central characters as "Authors to themselves" (PL III.122) struggle to inscribe their vision upon the land. In contrast to earlier poets who use the Eden theme to explore the process of Bildung, Crawford and Lampman emphasize Eve's importance to the creation of a new world garden, but with differing degrees of success. Perhaps Crawford, as a struggling woman writer, recognized how easily "the dream of a domestic Eden [could] become a nightmare of domestic captivity" (Kolodny 9). The difference in the ultimate status of Katie and Margaret may also be a reflection of the larger historical perspectives of the two poems. While Malcolm's Katie

explores the dialectic between the "voices of the past" and the "steel tongue of the present," Richard's passage by train carries him from an agricultural present to an urban future, where he finds Charlotte Ambray. As a woman of the future, Charlotte inscribes the possibility of female self-development in The Story of an Affinity though Margaret is still confined in a self-sacrificial present.

This difference in historical perspective may also explain why The Story of an Affinity is the first of the Bildungsgedichte in Canadian poetry to make no mention of native peoples. Even in Malcolm's Katie, the Indian passages taper off as settlement progresses. The natives who accepted the "broad green earth" as their garden are replaced by men and women who must struggle to build gardens where the forest once stood. Crawford and Lampman teach that, even for those fortified by education and love, the progress from one garden to another is never easy, especially for Eve.

## Notes to Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> During Crawford's lifetime, Barrett Browning's poetry was widely available and immensely popular on both sides of the Atlantic; it is safe to assume that Crawford, who by all accounts read widely and voraciously, would have been familiar with the work of the most famous woman poet of the nineteenth century. The National Union Catalogue reveals that over fifty editions of Barrett Browning's collected poetry containing A Drama of Exile were published between 1844 when the poem first appeared and 1884 when Malcolm's Katie was published. Over half of these were published in the United States and an article entitled "The Death of Mrs. Barrett Browning" in the Toronto Daily Globe (July 22, 1861) confirms that her popularity extended north of the border into Canada:

The publication in 1850 of her collected poems in two volumes, gave a great impetus to her reputation, and obtained very general knowledge of her title to rank, in many points of view, as the first female poet of the age.

Though there are as many differences between A Drama of Exile and Malcolm's Katie as there are similarities (Barrett Browning presents her tale in the form of Greek tragedy, Crawford in the form of popular romance), a comparison between the two poems serves to illuminate the role of Eve/Katie in relation to her lover, her tempter, and the natural world in which she lives.

<sup>2</sup> Max sees his separation from Katie reflected in the image of the lake and the hill: a lover king "gone from his bride and queen; / And yet delay'd, because her silver locks / Catch in his gilded fringes..." (I.51-53). Macdonald interprets this image as "one of domination and subjugation, for the queen is most likely at the king's feet if her hair is catching in his fringes" (43). This is almost certainly a misreading because later in the poem the hill speaks, saying: "Now on my breast / Hang the soft purple fringes of the night" (V.6-7). The queen's hair mingles with the fringes on the king's chest, symbolizing an intimacy through which the queen is empowered to delay her lover.

<sup>3</sup> Linguistic echoes also tie this passage to the interpretation of Genesis given by Volney, whom Bentley cites as a probable source for Alfred's speech on the revolution of empires. Malcolm's ploughs "like Genii chained, snort o'er his mighty fields" (I. 66). Volney writes: "The world is not there [in Genesis] said to be created by the God of Moses (Yahouh), but by the Elohim or gods in the plural, that is by the angels or genii" (246). Volney elaborates by explaining the names of Jacob's sons, Reuben and Simeon. His mention of Reuben, "one quite



un-Scottish name" (Mathews 54) which Crawford gives to Malcolm's brother, reinforces the possibility that Crawford intended her rendering of Malcolm to be perceived as a creation myth.

4 The South Wind passage that opens Part II largely concerns "The pulseless forest..." (II.32). In A Drama of Exile the trees of Eden are "still throbbing in vibration" from the voice of God:

Which divine impulsion cleaves  
In dim movement to the leaves  
Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted,  
In the sunlight greenly sifted,--  
In the sunlight and the moonlight  
Greenly sifted through the trees. (285-290)

Barrett Browning's poetic skill is here inferior to Crawford's, but the subject and the mood are similar. The next Indian passage, which begins Part IV, tells how the North wind "with his ice-club beat the swelling crests / Of the deep watercourses into death" (IV.4-5). Barrett Browning's River Spirits remind Adam and Eve: "How the silence round you shivers, / While our voices through it go, / Cold and clear" (305-307), but the river-sounds become inaudible, as they "Expire at Eden's door" (324). Crawford begins the next non-narrative section with a description of an eagle waiting to strike down "that pale dove beside her nest" (V.16). In Barrett Browning the Bird Spirit speaks of "[t]he poor brown bird, alas" that now "[s]ings in the garden, sweet and true" (339,340) but will soon be silenced. The Song of the Flower Spirits corresponds to the song of the "Forget-me-not" which Katie sings in Part V with its emphasis on nostalgia:

We are spirit-aromas  
Of blossom and bloom.  
We call your thoughts home,-- as  
Ye breathe our perfume. (359-62)

Later in A Drama of Exile two Spirits, one "the spirit of the harmless earth" (1053), and the other "the spirit of the harmless beasts," (1067) confront Adam and Eve with the losses they have suffered through the Fall and the harsh seasons that accompanied it, seasons, which according to Milton, were a direct result of the Fall: "else had the Spring / Perpetual smil'd on Earth (PL X.678-79). Examples from the songs of the Earth Spirits suggest how these passages may have influenced Crawford:

I bounded with my panthers...  
My stag, the river at his fetlocks, poised  
Then dipped his antlers through the golden  
weather.... (A Drama of Exile 1092,1094-95)

As panthers stretch to try their velvet limbs...  
 The warrior stags, with does and tripping fawns,  
 Like shadows, black upon the throbbing mist  
 Of evening's rose, flash'd thro' the singing  
 woods.... (Malcolm's Katie II.13,80-82)

My roses on the bough did bud not pale,  
 My rivers did not loiter in the sun;  
 I was obedient. Wherefore in my centre  
 Do I thrill at this curse of death and winter?  
 (A Drama of Exile 1129-32)

--its deep and dusky heart,  
 In a deep trance of shadow, felt no throb  
 To such soft wooing answer: thro' its dream  
 Brown rivers of deep waters sunless stole....  
 In this shrill Moon the scouts of Winter ran....  
 (Malcolm's Katie II.41-44,50)

<sup>5</sup> Curiously, the positive language Crawford uses to describe Alfred echoes the vocabulary of the love lyric that closes Part II: the words "azure," "golden," "sparkling" and "rose-wing'd" correspond to Alfred's azure eyes, his gilded locks, his jewels of virtue, and his pink, poetic glow.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, to equate Katie with "Matrix" problematizes her relationship with Max, evoking some of the same ambiguities as the eroticized relationship between Summer and her children in Part II, but perhaps the passage is illuminated by the relationship between Eve and Christ; Eve's "seed" Christ ultimately saves her from Satan who is told: "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). Max emerges "bruise'd and bleeding" (VII.158) from his encounter with Alfred among the logs of the millstream, "the brown scal'd monsters" that Katie's foot once "Spurn'd...with its rose-white sole" (III.204).

<sup>7</sup> Georg Brandes traces the influence of Swedenborg on Goethe, particularly on his creation of the Earth spirit in Faust (293). Swedenborg's influence was very widespread in the late 18th and 19th centuries; several writers whom Lampman read, including Carlyle and Emerson, admired his ideas. Blake, responsible for powerful romantic reinterpretations of Paradise Lost, invokes Swedenborg in the opening lines of his poem to Milton.

<sup>8</sup> Though James died in 1882, just as Lampman was beginning to write poetry, his writings would certainly have been available to Lampman, particularly in his hometown of Boston to which Lampman travelled in 1893 while he was writing The Story of an Affinity. In addition, James published regularly in The Atlantic Monthly and other periodicals on topics that would have been of interest to Lampman: Blake, Carlyle, Emerson, The Women's Movement,

Gnosticism, and Spiritualism. The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James, edited by his son William, was published in 1885 by Houghton and Mifflin, a Boston publisher with whom Lampman sought to affiliate himself.

<sup>9</sup> Lampman would almost certainly have been familiar with the work of Edward Burne-Jones, because of his interest in contemporary painting and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites upon whom he wrote a column in At The Mermaid Inn. In addition, Burne-Jones was a good friend of William Morris whom we know influenced Lampman both artistically and politically. In fact, Burne-Jones did illustrations for collections of Morris' poetry. The most important American collection of Burne-Jones' work is in Boston at the Fogg Art Gallery at Harvard University and at the Museum of Fine Arts which Lampman visited in August of 1891 (Sommers 75). Lampman may also have seen books of Burne-Jones reproductions (such as Sir Edward Burne-Jones: A record and review by Malcolm Bell, 1892), many of which are housed at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Harrison 193). Among the Burne-Jones' motifs which may have influenced Lampman are the "The Beguiling of Merlin" discussed above, several paintings and engravings picturing a young woman in a garden with a book ("Summer Snow," "The Princess of Egypt," "The King's Daughter" etc.), the paintings of the "Briar Rose" series which illustrate the story of Sleeping Beauty, a fairy tale which parallels Margaret's situation at several points, "The Mill" which transposes the Three Graces of Botticelli's "Primavera" to a contemporary setting and Burne-Jones' illustration for Rossetti's poem "The Blessed Damozel" which Bentley associates with the penultimate scene in The Story of an Affinity (III.709n).

<sup>10</sup> Lampman uses this image of a "world beyond the wall" in his short story "The Fairy Fountain" which, though not published in his life time, appears in Archibald Lampman: Selected Prose (31-49). The tale offers several parallels to The Story of An Affinity.

A poor cobbler enters a paradisaical world with the help of a key given to him by the stone statue of a fairy. He decides to make himself "rich and mighty" in order to win her hand, only to find the garden beyond the wall transformed into a wilderness. He eventually recognizes his folly in abandoning the world of knowledge, poetry and social good, and returns chastened, to offer himself to "the maiden who had been his friend of old, only now no longer a girl, but a grave and beautiful woman" (47).

<sup>11</sup> Duncan Campbell Scott, in his edition of The Story of an Affinity, excised the name of Rachel, but her name is significant to the process of labouring to be worthy of one's beloved since it belonged to the girl for whose hand Jacob labours seven years plus seven in Genesis 29. There may also be an intended parallel between the two sons of

Lampman's Rachel and the two sons of the biblical Rachel, one of whom goes to the far country of Egypt where he gains wisdom and prospers, and whom his father blesses as "a fruitful bough...whose branches run over the wall" (Genesis 49:22).

<sup>12</sup> Bentley discusses Lampman's familiarity with Milton in "Watchful Dreams and Sweet Unrest" Part 1: 189. A letter that appears in Carl Connor's biography of Lampman reveals both Lampman's intimate familiarity with Milton, and his despair over the way in which masterpieces such as Paradise Lost were studied in Canadian literature classes:

They read it; they declaim it rhetorically; they get it by heart; they analyze it sentence by sentence; they parse it word for word; they study its language syllable by syllable; following each word to its remotest kindred in Latin, Greek, Saxon, old High German, Lithuanian and Sanskrit; they turn it into prose and back again into verse; they hunt up all the allusions; they make themselves acquainted with the parallel passages; they discuss it historically, geographically, critically; they tear and worry and torture the lines of the great poem till they are littered out as dry and innutritive as a worm-eaten codfish. When all this has been done, the student's mind is perhaps acuter for the mental training, but he wishes never to hear the name of 'Paradise Lost' again. It is indeed a Paradise lost to him.  
(Connor 62-63)

Lampman clearly believed in a fresh and creative response to the "power and beauty" of the poem which The Story of an Affinity provides.

Milton's Of Education was published as early as 1644 and was reprinted often in collections such as The Prose Works of John Milton (Philadelphia: J.W. Moore, 1856). In a letter to John Scott (June 11, 1816), Wordsworth notes that Milton's Of Education "never loses sight of the means of making man perfect both for contemplation and action, for civil and military duties" (The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: 1812-1820 323).

### CHAPTER THREE

#### Eden and Gethsemane:

Anne Marriott and E.J. Pratt

Northrop Frye, in "The Narrative Tradition in English-Canadian Poetry" (1946), and Dorothy Livesay, in "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre" (1969), suggest that the Canadian narrative tradition of the nineteenth century has been kept alive in the work of Modern poets such as Anne Marriott and E.J. Pratt. According to A.M. Klein in "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" written in 1948, the Modern poet is "the nth Adam taking a green inventory / in world but scarcely uttered." His or her task is to defy mortality with eloquence, to guard the shining secret of metaphor, to endure in a hostile environment. The human capacity for endurance is the particular theme of Anne Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy (1939) and E.J. Pratt's Brébeuf and His Brethren (1940). The central figures of both poems struggle against seemingly overwhelming odds by clinging to a sense of design even as the world darkens. The imperishable gardens in their minds allow them to pit their courage against the desert that surrounds them. Both Marriott and Pratt employ biblical imagery from the Old and New Testaments to explore the cycle of death and

regeneration, and the spiritual strength which redeems the sacrificial process and allows the protagonists to maintain their commitment to the land.

In both poems, the evocation of Gethsemane, the garden of trial, is paralleled with a portrait of Eden, the garden of delight. Both Marriott and Pratt provide alternating visions of bounty and barrenness, plenty and privation. Donald Stephens writes of The Wind Our Enemy: "The poem's success lies not only in its portrayal of the wind, but also in the juxtaposition of those years when the prairies bloomed with fields of golden wheat" (158). Similarly, in Brébeuf and His Brethren, scenes of suffering and trial are juxtaposed with pastoral visions of "Strawberries in July...." (1626). Thus, external nature becomes a reflection of the spiritual vision of the protagonists. Both poems offer a continuing dialectic between physical and spiritual gardens, the garden of the fallen world and the garden of the imagination.

Accompanying this dialectic is a combination of modernist and traditional techniques. E.K. Brown criticizes Marriott's "imperfect success in welding the varied elements of the poem into a totality" (34), but Munro Beattie argues that The Wind Our Enemy "shows that no poet has better understood how to make the methods of modernism yield full value" (2:271). Marriott acknowledges her debt to T.S. Eliot and Cecil Day Lewis, but these are not the only influences at work in The Wind Our Enemy. In his discussion

of how the poem "in its techniques, as in its imagery... points both to the past and to the future" (The Gay Grey Moose 48), Bentley argues for the influence of Imagism and the Joyce of Dubliners, as well as that of Eliot. George Parker writes: "Marriott's imagist style combines the compactness of medieval alliterative verse with the colloquial language appropriate to her subjects and their setting" (319). Much of the success of The Wind Our Enemy rests in its "mosaic-like" (Parker 319) combinations of traditional and contemporary elements.

Pratt's poetry also shows a multiplicity of influences. According to Fred Cogswell, "Pratt is an anachronism--a mid-Victorian with an eighteenth-century practicality" (8), but Sandra Djwa prefers to define him as a "transitional modern." Pratt's poetry, she writes, remains romantic "in its obsession with the relation between man and nature, in its use of organic form and symbol, in its belief in the primacy of the imagination and the capacity of the poet to make his world" (Djwa xxix). Despite Livesay's assertion that Brébeuf and His Brethren is "eminently Victorian" in "form and intention" (40), the poem is more Modern in its concern with language as power and play. Pratt's use of fragments of historical data and documents "put together in a mosaic form" (Buitenhuis xviii) anticipates the "archaeological" sensibility favoured by Canadian post-moderns. At the same time, Pratt's choice of blank verse and other Miltonic (not to say Virgilian) characteristics

such as a twelve part structure, link Brébeuf and His Brethren to an earlier era.

In a 1938 article entitled "Canadian Poetry--Past and Present" Pratt praises "the leaders of the Canadian Renaissance," Roberts, Carman, Lampman, and Scott, for their fidelity to the Canadian landscape and their intimate knowledge of its flora and fauna, qualities which he emulates in his best work. In that same article, Pratt employs a horticultural metaphor to assert the importance of both old and new: "Tradition and revolt are inevitable complements like rain and sun: the first by itself mildews; the second burns or explodes" (9). Tradition and revolt are the sun and the rain that nourish the poetic gardens of Pratt and Marriott. The characters in their poems plant their dreams in a particular soil, but the language that flowers forth transcends time and space with a universal message of endurance.

#### I.

The Wind Our Enemy has been referred to as "the most anthologized poem in Canada" (Audience, CBC Radio 1982). Yet, it has received very little critical attention other than as a realistic portrait of a period in prairie history. In a 1940 review in The Canadian Forum, Earle Birney wrote: "In miniature, the poem traces for Canada the same bitter history which Steinbeck records in the first chapter of The Grapes of Wrath" (24).



Marriott witnessed the devastation brought about by prairie drought during a summer spent visiting an aunt in southern Saskatchewan (Philp 11). She writes:

My best-known poem, 'The Wind Our Enemy,' was written following a summer in the prairie drought area after an illness--the intense contrast with the green west coast was a traumatic experience resulting in a documentary poem. (Contemporary Authors 301)

The experience clearly had a profound impact on her. Her short story "The Garden" published in First Statement in August of 1943 is a prose rendering of much of the material that appears in The Wind Our Enemy. The story concerns a prairie couple, Jean and Steve, in "the sixth year without a crop" (9). Many of the same objects appear in both works: the alkali-encrusted bucket, the unpainted buildings, the Russian thistles, the grasshoppers, the accordion, and, of course, the wind. Against this back-drop of dust and despair, the people tell the old joke about the clouds: "Empties goin' back," and argue about whether to swallow their pride and go on relief. Steve believes that Jean's garden is a grave and that the land is dead. Jean maintains that "Maybe the garden would grow after all. Maybe" (10). The story concludes with a brief miraculous rain fall which allows tiny green shoots to break through "the bony crust" of the soil. Jean thinks, "it's kind of like a resurrection" (15). Standing together with their heads close, the couple feels a resurgence of will. Steve says: "You know--if a fellow can hope--if he feels there's any sense in hoping--he can go on" (16). The sense of

resurrection inherent in the symbol of the garden is also central to The Wind Our Enemy which retells this tale in poetic form.

Marriott's decision to transform her prairie experience into poetry may have been inspired by Dorothy Livesay whose acquaintance she made in 1938, and with whom she later founded Contemporary Verse. According to Hilda Thomas, Livesay's Day and Night "served as a stimulus in the writing of The Wind Our Enemy" (245), but the more relevant poem appears to be The Outrider which Livesay wrote while recovering from an illness on a farm north of Galt (now Cambridge), Ontario. This poem appeared in First Statement in 1943 with the following Editor's Note: "'The Outrider,' hitherto unpublished, was written in 1935. It was discussed at length by W.E. Collin in The White Savannahs" (2.2 [Sept 1943]:18). Since the poem was in circulation by 1936 when Collin's study of Canadian Modernism was published, it is very likely that Marriott knew of it. The Outrider, a vehicle for Livesay's socialist concerns, resembles The Wind Our Enemy both in technique and theme. Livesay's poem tells of a young man who has learned the harsh lessons of farming life:

How the expected sunlight will shrivel your pounding  
heart, [t/o]  
the seed you plant be killed  
The apple be bitter with worm, but your honesty firm  
seeking another start.

The youth sets out for an urban life of factory work where he learns the even harsher lesson of social injustice.

He returns to the farm of his childhood, "this familiar earth," armed with the belief that those who labour on the earth and those who sell their toil are one brotherhood: "The battle is the same." He calls for the unity of the proletariat in the struggle described in the Epilogue, the section of the poem most relevant to The Wind Our Enemy:

We prayed for miracles: the prairie dry,  
Our bread became a blister in the sun;  
We watched the serene untouchable vault of sky  
--In vain our bitter labour had been done.

The people pray for rain and miracles. At last a scout returns, not with news of a promised land, but of "a country to be won by hard digging and fertilized with sweat and blood" (Collin 166). According to Collin, the wind is "the energy which alone can move these sleepy, lumbering farmers" (165) to the struggle and sacrifice required of them:

O new found land! Sudden release of lungs,  
Our own breath blows the world! Our veins, unbound  
Set free the fighting heart. We speak with tongues--  
This struggle is our miracle new found.

Livesay's focus here is political rather than religious--her hope is in the unity of the proletariat--but she nonetheless phrases her jubilation in the language of Pentecost. The Wind Our Enemy differs from Livesay's poem in that the struggle Marriott portrays is spiritual as well as physical.

Livesay cites her own poem The Outrider and Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy as examples of the "documentary poem based on topical data but held together by descriptive, lyrical, and didactic elements" ("The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre" 269). Andrew Stubbs and Jeanette Seim take

Livesay's definition as a starting point for their discussion of The Wind Our Enemy. They conclude that "the tendency of narrative is not toward resolution but a vision of utter devastation; the two figures at the end of the poem occupy a landscape empty of human significance" (48). Others critics have interpreted the ending more optimistically. In a 1941 review of The Wind Our Enemy, Collin wrote:

Perhaps this scene is the epitome of the human spectacle, of the eternal spirit of man and woman, eternally hoping, pledging an eternal truth, while all the universe about them is disintegrating in the teeth of relentless wind and everlasting drought. (57)

In a more recent review, Donald Stephens offers another positive interpretation:

Though the poem echoes a bleak plight of desolation, the resounding chord is one of hope and optimism unrestrained. It will rain again, "it will!" The essence of the Canadian character may be survival but the root, the heart, of that survival lies in the capacity to discover, grow and build, captured best by Marriott in this poem.... (158)

The basis for a hopeful interpretation of the poem lies in its religious symbolism, particularly in relation to the pattern of death and resurrection that is echoed in the cycles of nature. In an 1983 interview about Marriott's most recent collection of poetry, The Circular Coast, in which The Wind Our Enemy is reprinted, Ruth Scott Philp asks Marriott to explain the significance of the circle: "The reply was that the poet is thinking of going back to roots and beginnings. New life comes from decay--nature follows a

cycle of destruction and renewal" (11). Marriott's verse reveals a subtle but refined religious sensibility through her admiration of Herbert and Vaughan, references to ministers, sermons and hymns (Marriott sings in her church's choir [Philp 11]), and an eloquent and expressive use of scriptural language.

The Christian influence is even more explicit in Salt Marsh, Marriott's chapbook of lyric poems published in 1942, three years after The Wind Our Enemy. In "This the Adventure" she concludes that the "ancient forlorn hope" of Christian faith is the only candle still burning against "the great, the enormous dark of the future":

(Fragile candle showing the lips' stiff whisper  
Persisting, "Calvary inexcrably is succeeded  
By the giant light of Easter, the stupendous  
grave, [t/o]  
The forlorn hope striding the astounded world.")  
(Salt Marsh 8)

In "Good Friday," Marriott makes an explicit connection between the events of Easter and the cycle of nature:

Crescendo of fierce pain--"Crucified,  
Crucified"-- [t/o]  
I run in terror  
While the sonorous crying follows me  
Into my garden.

Peace here,  
Where white narcissus flowers will bloom  
In three days. (Salt Marsh 5)

This is the pattern of The Wind Our Enemy. Though the narrative stops short of the final regeneration, the symbolic pattern is established through references to Christ from Passion to Pentecost, with parallels to the sufferings of the children of Israel in the Old Testament and the

prophecies that promised them a way out of the darkness. The opening prologue of The Wind Our Enemy sets the scene for the drama to come, but as Collin points out, "instead of giving us all the objects in the field of vision, Miss Marriott selects those which have dramatic meaning, which are characters in action, not things to be described" (53). Thus, in addition to "the last / old scab of paint," "the cocoa-coloured seams / of summer-fallow," and the soiled "water pail," Marriott includes several verbs and phrases which recall Christ's Passion as it is described in the Gospels and in Part V of The Waste Land. ("Ira Dilworth's reading of The Waste Land was Anne's first introduction to T.S. Eliot and turned her interest toward modern poetry" [Philp 11]). Eliot's evocation of Gethsemane-- "the torchlight red on sweaty faces" (322)--is echoed in Marriott's wind "snatching the sweaty cap / shielding red eyes" (9-10). The "wounds / of time" (3-4) inflicted by the enemy wind on the "naked siding" (3) suggest Christ's Stigmata, and the "whipping" of "shoulders worry-bowed too soon" (13) recalls His trial. The "bitter dust" that fills the dry mouth is reminiscent of the bitter "gall" offered to Christ on the Cross (Matthew 27:34). The "dry sterile thunder without rain" (342) which haunts the despairing disciples in The Waste Land also plagues the prairie farmers.<sup>1</sup>

Marriott is quick to remind her readers that the garden was not always so barren. There was a time when "[t]he

wheat in spring was like a giant's bolt of silk / Unrolled over the earth" (16-17). But no garden, it seems, is safe from threat; even here, the wheat ripples "as if a great broad snake / Moved under the green sheet..." (19-20). As well as being fine examples of the imagist technique of "super-position" in which surprising new analogies are created by a layering of images (Bentley, The Gay] Grey Moose 49), these similes present a vision which is primarily Edenic. The gentle sunshine weaves a tapestry of domestic content which contrasts sharply with the violent energy of the wind in the opening passage. This garden, like those in Burwell's Talbot Road, contains "enough for fancy and enough for use." For the man, the land is once again imaged as a female to be possessed: "his land, / Smoothly self-yielding" (29-30 emphasis added); he caresses her into fertility, fancying the fruition of all her promises. The woman's affection for "the soil" is less possessive and more practical, perhaps because she is separated from it by the domestic constraints implied by "her kitchen window" (33), a boundary that is at once transparent and real. The woman translates the soil's "black depths" directly into the things she needs. Though her desire for "a silk crepe dress" (34) suggests a luxury beyond the merely practical, as do the silks in the store of The Rising Village, her fancy is immediately undermined by the prosaic considerations of price: "(Two-ninety-eight, Sale Catalogue)" (35). Though Collin considers the "tin pan"

simile that follows as "striking and very apt" (56) he sees this phrase as an example of:

the feminine mind continu[ing] an image after its poetic strength is exhausted.... Perhaps the farmer's wife did so jump, but the reader's mind, more aesthetically occupied, sulkily turns from black earth and wheat and granaries to Eaton's Catalogue. (56)

Apparently, Collin prefers a simile created by imagistic super-position to the rapid juxtaposition of materials from different aesthetic orders, though both techniques are central to Eliot's The Waste Land and Pound's Cantos. The very quality that Collin criticizes of the mundane juxtaposed with the poetic will become increasingly evident in Modern and Post-Modern poems. In fact, Marriott's use of the phrase "(Two-ninety-eight, Sale Catalogue)" anticipates Robert Kroetsch's Seed Catalogue which, as the title suggests, gives poetic precedence to the catalogue over the "black earth and wheat and granaries" which Collin considered aesthetically appropriate.

On the "third" day the man abandons his beloved fields. Here as elsewhere, the pattern of threes established at the beginning of the poem by the triple reference to "Wind" recurs. The three days of forlorn waiting on the part of the farmer recall the three days of despair experienced by the disciples and described in The Waste Land:

He who was living is now dead  
We who were living are now dying  
With a little patience (Eliot 328-29)

At the beginning of Part IV, the farmers try to encourage each other with the promise of "next year." In contrast to



Peter who denies his faith three times, the farmers make three assertions of their hope, but the final one breaks down in mid-phrase and is not completed, a technique reminiscent of Joyce whose influence Bentley finds throughout Marriott's poem (The Gay] Grey Moose 48). Brown argues that "the scraps of conversation in a singularly impoverished language will not bear the emotional weight assigned to them when they come to interrupt the passages of high poetry" (34), but the interdependence of parole and poetry is essential to the design of the poem. Parched lips can no longer speak with meaning to a people who consider themselves betrayed. Even the language of gesture becomes twisted and barren; laughter is cold and smiles never reach the eyes. Marriott reveals that language is a crop as subject to failure as the wheat itself. From the opening stanza in which the wind fills "the dry mouth with bitter dust" (12), the poem is filled with references to the withering of speech. Ultimately, girls with "silky lips" (64) become "blue-lipped" (87), jokes become diseased, pleas for help shrivel into "whinings" (108), and songs give way to silence. The sky now becomes the focus of attention which, in contrast to the fluid organic images used to portray the land, is described as mechanical and sterile, its "metal hardness" (47) "soldered to the earth" (40).<sup>2</sup>

Another portrait of the garden before and after the coming of dust and despair is given through the horses. They, like the land, were once the object of man's fanc. "a

fortune more sweet / Than a girl's silky lips" (63-64). The last moment of triumph and freedom--"Turn the colts loose!" (61)-- may be an allusion to Christ's last triumphal ride into the city where his suffering would begin. Christ tells two of his disciples:

Go ye into the village over against you; in the which ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat; loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. (Luke 19:30-31)

But now those horses that once filled the veins with glory have "[n]o more spirit than a barren cow" (69). As in the Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:18-19), the lean cattle representing years of famine have devoured the sleek well-fed cattle representing the good years. The old mare collapses from plodding in relentless circles around the empty water barrel; bloated with thistles she "heave[s] once" (79) and "gives birth to death" (Bailey 9). After hauling her away the farmer considers how he might have prepared for the drought by exchanging horses for a tractor but admits that "you can't make gas of thistles or oat straw" just as the Israelites could not make bricks without straw (Exodus 5:18). The farmer has indeed been driven from the original garden under Adam's curse: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake.... Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Genesis 3:17-18). Section V in which the fate of the horses is described marks the mid-way point of the poem and reveals the effects of the decline in form as well as content, a connection which Marriott takes

very seriously:

From the beginning of her career, Marriott obviously has been intrigued by the rhythms of the form and the sound of words. For her, language is almost an obsession, a powerful conviction: she is not like so many of her contemporaries who have written poetry over the years, merely preoccupied with it. (Stephens 157)

Up to this point in the poem, Marriott has used a relatively free verse relying on the rhythms of natural speech, but she now turns to a more regular meter with end rhymes in alternating lines. The first eight lines of Section V describe the pre-drought glory of the horses in the galloping rhythm of predominantly dactylic feet reinforced by repetition, internal rhyme, and enjambment. The octave climaxes in a twelve-syllable line that gathers speed in a pyrrhic conclusion. Marriott's choice of the word "feet" over "hooves" is clearly more than a rhyme with "sweet" because it implies both that man and beast are one and that the poetic "feet" echo the untamed quality of the motion described. The brief but phonetically drawn out phrase, "But now," signals a shift in perspective. The plodding monotony of the primarily iambic pentameter is stressed by frequent use of long vowel sounds and dashes. The words "Dull," "Straw," and "Dry" are emphasized by their stressed position at the beginnings of lines, and the whole despairing picture is brought to life by effective use of onomatopoeic words such as "crackling" and "jolting". The line "Straw and salt--and endless salt and straw--" (71) mirrors the "[m]adly relentless circle" travelled by the old mare (78)

and the farmers themselves.

In the next section, Marriott perfectly captures the ambivalence of the prairie farmer to government relief programs which she hints at in her story "The Garden." After all, the relief they truly desired was the renewal of the land. The italicized word "Relief" is repeated three times, followed each time by a response from the people. This format resembles that of the liturgy which Marriott employs in her poem "Answer" (Salt Marsh 15). There, the thrice repeated response of the people, "We believe," is italicized and set off from a discussion that progresses from doubt to certainty. Here, the direction is reversed. After a prolonged effort to "stand alone," the people give in and take what is offered to them: "Apples, they say, and clothes" (90), the very same items in which Adam and Eve seek relief from the "harsh" rules of the garden. In fact, the radio which the farmers hope will "kind of brighten things" reveals, like the Tree of Knowledge, only conflict, confusion and death. The farmers imagine a war in which they will "get paid to fight" (101) because they now fight for no reward. They attempt to affirm their own position in contrast to the alternatives, but again the third "Maybe--" breaks off in hesitation and doubt. They know the vaudeville voice of Eddie Cantor will provide only temporary relief from an enduring disease. Though Cantor provides comic relief, and the "well-fed in the east and west" (106) send material relief, neither effort is accompanied by

sympathy, the vital quality that the voice of thunder insists upon in the closing section of The Waste Land.

In an attempt to forget politics and the wind (which in this context implies meaningless rhetoric), the farmers and their families seek escape in "pathetic efforts at communal amusement" (Brown 34). The people must now rely on Mrs. Olson's coffee and Mrs. Smith's cake, where the fields themselves were once "[s]weet as a biscuit" (23). The schoolhouse where the dance is staged has been "unpainted seven years" (86) (the number of famine years promised to Pharaoh), and the attempts at music are as parched as the earlier attempts at speech; the guitar is "shrill," the accordion is "squeezed...dry," and the songs the piano plays are sad ones.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, the attempted gaiety does not last. In the morning, the desert returns and the small oasis of pleasure is revealed to be "a lying mirage" (140). Marriott reinforces the drought imagery by mentioning "the icy-white glare / Of the alkali slough" (141-142), an arid version of the Slough of Despond which Bunyan's Pilgrim must face.

In Part VIII, Marriott uses language that echoes the tragic headlines of Part VI to indicate that the prairie farmers are indeed "as badly off as some" (100). The image of a military siege in the "wall / That cut them off from east and west and north" echoes "Insurgents March in Spain" (97). Kindness and honesty seem "blown away" like the Chinese who are bombed, and "lost" like the airliner. In

the phrase "frantic soil" (147) Marriott bestows upon the soil the attitude of those who inhabit it, as Richardson has done in Tecumseh with his phrase "devoted soil"

(I.xxxii.6). The suffering of the farmers reaches a climax when they feel that even God has abandoned them: "At last they thought / Even God and Christ were hidden / By the false clouds" (148-150). This parallels the darkest hour of Christ's crucifixion when he cries out "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46). But Marriott's use of the word "thought" implies that this is a matter of earthly perception, not heavenly fact. The people are "[d]just-blinded to the staring parable" (151) of the "pain-bent Cross" (152). Overwhelmed by despair, they fail to remember that death is followed by resurrection, Calvary by Easter, darkness by dawn. As Paul reminds the early Christians: "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (I Corinthians 15:36).

Alternating images of pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian gardens throughout the poem imply a fall, an interpretation that hardly seems fair to the farmers who struggle against nature's harshness and the wind. But Section VIII reveals that the farmers are not without guilt. They have abandoned hope which, as the inscription at the entrance to Hell in Dante's Inferno reveals, is the way "to join the lost people" (III.1). The farmers have come to believe that their suffering is meaningless and without end. The wind is indeed their enemy because it has driven them to despair; it

symbolizes a land destroyed and a language diminished. The echo of Marie Antoinette's "Let them eat cake" in "give them forgetfulness!" (158) reveals the sad lack of alternatives. In Pharaoh's dream the lean cows devour the fat cows and remain lean, but here the Finn devours empty souls and grows fat. Once faith is abandoned, the poem reaches its lowest point. The sun has gone down. The disease of despair has triumphed as the earth, once bartered for that which sustained life, now leans "like a thick black coin" against a jaundiced sky. The body is laid to rest. The chores of the day are done. "It is finished" (John 19:30). All that is left of an envisioned Eden are a few shrivelled garden-leaves, "gnawed and scraped" by grasshoppers, which in turn have been devoured by chickens. Reminiscent of the two pitiful children which appear beneath the cloak of the ghost of Christmas Present in Dickens' Christmas Carol ("The boy is ignorance. The girl is want" [57]), the skeletal figures of poverty and fear stride hand in hand across the land. They have come of age with "none to oppose" (173). Equally determined, however, are the man and woman who stand "heads close, arms locked" awaiting renewal. Though driven from the garden, this couple is still yoked in love. In Section V, the farmer "hitch[es] up the strongest team" to haul death away from his farm. Now, he and his wife prove to be the strongest team of all. Marriott's poem "Prayer of the Disillusioned" which appeared in the first issue of Contemporary Verse describes people seeking an answer in the

desert:

We who have sifted the world through arid  
 fingers [t/o]  
 Probed everything, found nothing,  
 Never the thing we sought  
 With yearning like sandy throat for smooth cold  
 water, [t/o]  
 Found only sand [...]  
 Give us too a faith...a reason for living, one  
 reason,  
 Or a reason for dying:  
 Make some shape from the shapeless sand,  
 Give us a vision...even us, the doubters...  
 Over our aimless desert.  
 (Firm that we know it no mirage)  
 A cross like a certain star in an empty sand-  
 whipped sky.

(1.1 [September 1941]: 13)

The prairie farmer and his wife in The Wind Our Enemy are granted just such a vision:

And suddenly some spirit seems to rouse  
 And gleam, like a thin sword, tarnished, bent,  
 But still shining in the spared beauty of moon.  
 (178-80)

Adam and Eve are prevented from returning to Eden by a flaming sword, but this sword signals the return of determination and faith: "We're not licked yet!" (181). In the final book of Paradise Lost, Adam and Eve, though deprived of their garden, claim God's promise to "bring back / Through the world's wilderness long wander'd man" (XII.312-13). The farmer and his wife also lay claim to a vision of hope.

At the conclusion of Livesay's The Outrider, the people "speak with tongues" as a sign of their renewed courage. In Marriott, the wind that throughout the poem was perceived only as the enemy may now be interpreted as the wind of Pentecost that accompanies the baptism by fire (Acts 2:17).



In his attempt to explain the significance of the events of Pentecost, Peter refers to the prophecies of Joel:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:17)

The book of Joel is relevant to The Wind Our Enemy at several points. The prophet describes a land that is plagued by drought and locusts; the rivers are dried up, the crops are destroyed, the cattle moan and "joy is withered away from the sons of men" (Joel 1:12). He chastises a people who have turned away from hope to complacency: "Awake ye drunkards and weep" (Joel 1:5). He describes a mighty enemy that will descend upon the nation; "the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness" (Joel 2:3). But accompanying this picture of doom is one of hope: "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice for the Lord will do great things" (Joel 3:21). He will restore the rainfall, the crops and "the years that the locust hath eaten" (Joel 3:25). But in order to bring these promises to fruition, the people must first rouse themselves to do battle with the enemy: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men...beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears; let the weak say I am strong" (Joel 3:9-10).

This passage, which inverts the famous call to peace in Isaiah 2:4, is particularly relevant to the vision that concludes The Wind Our Enemy for the farmers, too, are being

called upon to fight, to take up the sword and renew their courage. Though weakened by the struggle, the farmer asserts the strength of his will. Significantly, this assertion signals the end of silence. The farmer's voice is "strained," but imbedded within that word is the hope of "rain." In contrast to the earlier "Maybe" which broke off without hope, this last "Maybe" is completed with a tentative but determined "soon". One song played at the square dance told of growing too old to dream, but this man has not aged beyond imagination and hope. His dream is tarnished and bent, but still shining.

The closing section of the poem describes the action of the wind as does the prologue, but significantly the pattern of threes that symbolizes despair throughout the poem has been broken. According to Stubbs and Seim, "the wind becomes a negative term, only signifying an 'absence'" (48). The picture painted in the first and last sections is indeed a bleak one, and the Roman numeral X that hovers over the final section almost as part of the text, can be seen as reinforcing this sense of absence. Yet, "X" is also the symbol of Christ and the "pain-bent Cross" on which he died. The question, "God, will it never rain again?" could be interpreted as a curse, but also as a prayer. Nothing remains for these people, "only wind," but the word "only" is significant because, as Bentley points out, the first two letters visually reverse the "no" of the preceding list of absences. "Only" is also the word that marks a shift in the

penultimate section of the poem, introducing the climactic scene of the "two figures." Perhaps the wind is now the spirit that overcomes despair, the pneuma that infuses the body with life. There is also a gesture of hope in the simile comparing dust with winter underwear. The anomalous dust is out of season, and every good gardener must have faith in the eventual arrival of seasonal changes that allow the earth to bring forth its miracles.

Though The Wind Our Enemy is evidence of Marriott's effort to develop a dialectic between the exterior garden of the natural world and the interior garden of spiritual struggle, she has been accused of "mere absorption with the bright surface of things" (Creighton 220). In his review of Sanastone, Alan Creighton writes; "In her drive towards realism there is a certain absence of intellectual contribution, a dearth of ideals" (220). Jan DeBruyn concurs with Creighton's estimate, insisting that Marriott's poetry reveals "a preoccupation with externals, rather than the inner life of people" (24). Among other things, Marriott's creatively complex use of the image of the garden with its manifold Biblical implications surely saves The Wind Our Enemy from being merely "a fine journalistic report of the ravages of drought" (DeBruyn 25). It is the tension between the endurance of the ideal garden and the demise of the actual one that carries the poem forward to its conclusion. According to DeBruyn, the "inconsistency" of the conclusion "fragments the unity of the work" (25),

providing evidence of Marriott's lack of artistic discrimination; when "Marriott tries to persuade us that the human spirit is not in reality beaten...the note of optimism sentimentally invades a world in which faith, hope, and joy have been shown to be absent" (25). Clearly, here, as in her short story "The Garden," Marriott demonstrates her understanding of regeneration as a force in both the spiritual and natural realms. Significantly, The Wind Our Enemy which Marriott wrote after recovering from an illness speaks of her belief that the world must at long last become green again. The poem is a portrait of a land in crisis, but it is also a record of a spiritual journey, and it is the image of the garden and the exploration of an organic language planted therein, that tie the two together.

Critics have long concentrated on the "documentary" qualities of The Wind Our Enemy, assuming that Marriott's gifts lie entirely in that direction. Though Livesay has long admired The Wind Our Enemy, referring to it in 1984 as "the seminal poem concerning the use of the vernacular" (Long-liners 86), her early estimates of Marriott's scope were surprisingly narrow:

Miss Marriott is in her milieu in dramatic, objective expression; as soon as she becomes personal, purely lyrical, or philosophical, she is completely lost as a poet. In none of her best work is she metaphysical nor purely lyrical; and strivings to be other than herself end in a bog. (Contemporary Verse 8 [June 1943]: 13)

Perhaps still smarting from this deeply negative review in which Livesay referred to her verse as "disastrous" and

"adolescent," Marriott wrote a critical review of Livesay's Call my People Home, a documentary poem about the Japanese-Canadians uprooted after Pearl Harbour. This brief review is significant as one of the few published statements of what Marriott values in the long poem. She centers her discussion around the following quotation from C. Day Lewis: "A dramatic context provides greater scope for the use of audacious metaphor and novel imagery than a lyric or contemplative one" (19). Both Marriott and Livesay experimented with dramatic poems intended for radio, but the "audacious" and "novel" did not always result. According to Marriott, Livesay's poem "bogs down in prosaic expressions of fact and never gets back onto good poetic ground" (19). Marriott feels that, despite an auspicious beginning, the poem is marred by "dullness," "outworn poetic stuff" and "sentimentality." She argues that "the enormous potentialities of this poem's theme cry out for verse of at least somewhat comparable proportions" and that the "final sections do not build high enough to make a climax fitted to the whole conception of the work" (19). None of these accusations can be levelled against The Wind Our Enemy. The poem, though not perfect, is neither dull nor sentimental and builds to a haunting conclusion of visionary strength, while remaining consistent with the Modernist impulse to temper epiphany with ambiguity. In "Countries," a later poem which also portrays suffering and trial, Marriott writes:

I am past strength  
 in this white bed  
 but I call on a green country  
 to give me love. (The Circular Coast 73)

This is the fighting spirit she celebrates in her most famous poem. At Gethsemane, sorrow and strength go hand in hand, and the memory of Eden endures.

## II.

Both of these gardens also play a role in Pratt's Brébeuf and His Brethren. Robert G. Collins argues that the two central themes of the poem are "the concept of willing sacrifice" and "Brébeuf's total involvement with the virgin wilderness of Canada" (87). The critical discussion of the poem in the fifty years since it was first published has centered on the former theme with scarcely a mention of the latter. Sacrifice is indeed a central theme of Pratt's poetry, as the concluding stanza of "From Stone to Steel" suggests:

The road goes up, the road goes down--  
 Let Java or Geneva be--  
 But whether to the cross or crown,  
 The path lies through Gethsemane. (CP 1:261)

Pratt first introduced Brébeuf and His Brethren in 1940 as "a lesson in courage [that hardly needs] to be enforced in weeks and months like these when the epics are written in the skies and on the beaches."<sup>4</sup> Several critics, including John Sutherland, Peter Hunt, and Northrop Frye, discuss Pratt's ideal of sacrifice in the context of a Christian aesthetic. Vincent Sharman, on the other hand, considers

the sacrifice of the Jesuits to be an expression of the tragedy of illusion. For most critics, regardless of their interpretation, the impact of Brébeuf and His Brethren appears to lie in the climactic torture scenes. Magdalene Redekop warns against such a mis-reading: "I had imagined the scenes of torture to loom large when, to my surprise, the largest section of the poem is Section III in which Brébeuf painstakingly lays the groundwork for the building of his dream" (52). Pratt himself insists that:

the fibre of the story is seen not merely in the outstanding moments of crisis which pierce the imagination, although such moments are many...but in the long tug of years in the constant resistance of the temptation to renounce and relinquish the tasks. (OHLP 115)

It is in these passages describing the laying of the "groundwork" for the Jesuit mission that Pratt's garden imagery flourishes. Here also the second theme of "total involvement with the Canadian landscape" (87) to which Collins draws attention is addressed. Pratt referred to The Jesuit Relations upon which he based his poem as the "most accurate and illuminating history of the beginnings of a country or a civilization" (OHLP 120), and it is as a poetic document of the founding of a "culture" (in the double sense used by Goldsmith and others) that Brébeuf must be explored.

To explore the Jesuit effort to transform the Canadian landscape into a garden is not to deny the centrality of the theme of sacrifice but rather to show how the two themes work together to unify the poem. The Christian tradition of meaningful sacrifice or martyrdom is compared to the cycles

of nature in I Corinthians 15:36: "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies," a verse to which Pratt alludes in a poem about the sacrifices of World War I, "The Seed Must Die" (CP 1:11). For Pratt, it is this sense of design that elevates the tragedy of Brébeuf, who had "faith in a spiritual heritage," above the tragedy of the passengers of the Titanic who had "faith in a material structure" (OHLP 47). Throughout the poem, as in The Wind Our Enemy, Gethsemane experienced is juxtaposed with Eden envisioned. Accompanying the account of Brébeuf's Passion is an account of his efforts to create a New-World garden on the spiritual and physical levels. In a comparison of Brébeuf and His Brethren and Towards the Last Spike, James F. Johnson notes: "In the two poems, this western vision has both an internal and an external dimension; that is, in both cases the vision must be built in men's minds before it can be physically accomplished on the ground" (143). The survival of the Jesuit mission depends upon the bounty of both the internal and external gardens, Brébeuf's spiritual vision and his natural environment. He must adapt to the wilderness locale already in existence before he can begin to transform it. Brébeuf and His Brethren is above all a tale of transplantation as the priests plant a vision, a cross, a crop, and finally their own bodies in the soil of the New World. Pratt's symbols may sometimes be fortuitous (Cogswell 21), but this cannot be said of the carefully woven tapestry of organic images he uses to reveal Brébeuf's



quest; rather, "in the least metaphor or image reverberations are started that sound throughout the poem and establish its rich texture and closely-knit form" (Buitenhuis xix).

The distant locale where the spiritual seed will be planted first takes shape in Brébeuf's meditations: "Forests and streams and trails thronged through his mind" (69). Yet, the vision of the New World emerging in Brébeuf's mind is still conditioned by an old world understanding; Brébeuf is, after all, "one of the flowers of French Renaissance civilization" (Johnson 145), and the oath of service he takes has "its root / Firm in his generations of descent" (101-102). Slowly, however, the great cathedrals of France begin to resemble the natural world--the soaring columns suggest white pines that "could brush / The Pleiades" (77-78).<sup>5</sup> But an enormous effort must yet be made to transform the "vast blunders of the forest glooms" (53) into an understandable and accessible world. Pratt's use of the word blunders (related to the Middle Swedish word blundra meaning "shut the eyes," and implying clumsiness, ineptness, and blind stumbling QED) suggests the enormous perplexities awaiting the Jesuits. Upon his arrival, therefore, Brébeuf sets about the task of "Mastering the wood-lore, joining in the hunt" (138) not only for food but for the ways and words of the Huron people. Brébeuf discovers that, although conditions are harsh and trying, the forest is surprisingly bounteous, even in winter. The food it provides, though

unappealing to European tastes, is enough to fend off starvation:

...acorns,  
 Turk's cap, bog-onion bulbs dug from the snow  
 And bulrush roots flavoured with eel skin made  
 The menu for his breakfast-dinner-supper.  
 (152-55)

Significantly, this winter harvest is not readily visible but is composed almost entirely of roots growing beneath the surface, available only to the initiate. Pratt's extensive preparation for the writing of Brébeuf and His Brethren included not only careful study of The Jesuit Relations and related volumes, but also:

a number of visits to the shrines and the sites of the ancient missions to get some knowledge of the topography, of the flora and fauna, of the rocks and trees, the trails, the waterways, the edible roots, and the proper names, person<sup>s</sup> and geographical.... (Pratt, QHLP 123).

Paul West argues that, "heir to a tradition of inbred, poor landscape poetry, [Pratt] has determined not to be Canadian: to sink the national in the prehistoric, the regional in the cosmic" (16), but Brébeuf and His Brethren provides ample evidence to the contrary. Fidelity to the natural detail of the Canadian scene was a quality Pratt admired in the Confederation poets:

The new poets went after nature in dead earnest until by the time they had finished with her there wasn't a recess or a ligament in her anatomy left unexposed. They were naturalists in the best sense of the term--exploratory, microscopic, their observation informed with interpretative vision. Canada in its central and eastern provinces is known through their work just as accurately as it is revealed through the records of the geographers, zoologists, and botanists, and this assertion is a tribute because any poetic fire is

but a flickering thing at the best when there is not an abundance of good solid material to burn. (Pratt, "Canadian Poetry--Past and Present" 5)

This "microscopic" attention to nature is everywhere evident in Brébeuf and His Brethren and provides the raw material with which Pratt builds a complex pattern of garden imagery.

Nature is revealed in the poem through diction that is "overwhelmingly specific" and "consistently enumerating," characteristics which, according to Frank Davey, "help the poet toward a tone of confidence and knowledgeability" (37-38). In Brébeuf and His Brethren, Pratt's obsession with "naming" results not, as Livesay suggests, in "monotony" and "absence of texture" ("The Polished Lens" 40), but in a powerful portrait of a man involved in the Adamic task of ordering his world. Brébeuf, like Pratt himself, names his new found land into existence; language enables him to chart an unfamiliar terrain.

Davey goes on to identify a third characteristic of Pratt's diction as "metaphoric whimsy in the guise of historical understanding" (39). He cites the opening lines of Brébeuf as an example of this "interpretative metaphor" in which "the simplifying images of soaring nature enable Pratt to avoid dealing directly with the potentially troublesome topic of religious inspiration" (41). Yet, the fact that Brébeuf and His Brethren is consistently identified as Pratt's masterpiece may be because the poem primarily provides "observation informed with interpretive vision" (the quality Pratt praised in his predecessors in

"Canadian Poetry--Past and Present") rather than "metaphoric whimsy." Instead of the iceberg as calf, or the Laurentian Shield as reptile, Pratt offers the ancient but enduring images of the garden and the cross, the seed and the tree, rich with universal symbolism and local significance.

The Huron Indians whom the Jesuits encounter in Brébeuf and His Brethren need not depend solely on hunting and gathering because of their agricultural efforts.<sup>6</sup> In fact, they exchange their harvest for manufactured goods: "Axes and beads against the maize and passage" (164). This line is a superb example of Pratt's ability to make each word operate on several levels. Ironically, the priests bring implements of violence to a people who are as much farmers as they are warriors. "Beads" symbolize both the worthless trinkets of the white man and the rosaries of the church. "Maize," or Indian corn, is a harvest indigenous to the New World, but the word is also a pun on "maze," that arduous "passage" into the interior that must be conquered by the Jesuits. Brébeuf has only the slender thread of his faith to guide him through the labyrinthine forest. He commits himself, nonetheless, to a physical transplantation to accompany the spiritual transplantation that has already begun. From the moment Brébeuf "plant[s]" his bare feet "dead in the middle" of an Indian canoe (178), he is rooted in Huronia:

Not so much deracinated as having found his true roots, Brébeuf is brought to full maturity through the transplantation; it is there that he finds and fills his life role. (Collins 88)

Brébeuf arrives at his destination to "turn the first sod of the Jesuit mission. / 'Twas ploughing only--for eight years would pass / Before even the blades appeared" (211-13). This is the first of many references to the biblical imagery of planting and harvest that permeates the poem. A passage in which "gospel language abounds" (Hunt 70) describes the progress of the mission in 1634, eight years after the original planting:

A year's success flattered the priestly hope  
That on this central field seed would be sown  
On which the yield would be the Huron nation  
Baptized and dedicated to the Faith;  
And that a richer harvest would be gleaned  
Of duskier grain from the same seed on more  
Forbidding ground when the arch-foes themselves  
Would be re-born under the sacred rites.  
(440-47)

By "aligning the souls of the Indian with the land that they inhabit" (Monkman 21), Pratt can explore both the Jesuits' husbandry of the soil and of the soul. The central image is that of the "apostolic field" which Brébeuf uses in a letter to his General at the end of Section IX. Christ tells his disciples: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38). This image is developed through allusions to several parables of sowing and reaping that appear in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew and elsewhere in the Gospels. Underlying them all is the concept of sacrifice: "What you sow will not come to life unless it dies" (I Corinthians 15:38). When Pratt explains that many years passed "before even the blades

appeared" (213), his choice of the word "blades" foreshadows the "blades" of protest that will later be sharpened against the Jesuits. Throughout the poem, the fortunes of the spiritual mission are directly related to the bounty of the land; when "the corn / Was low" on a canoe journey, sickness strikes, "slowing down the blades" (426). Here, the word "blades" refers to the blades of the canoe paddles, but also suggests the retarded growth of the spiritual seedlings, as discontent turns "murmurs into menaces" (427).

The priests recognize that in order to make any kind of progress they must cultivate the field of language, but "the speech / Was hard" (216-17). This field that to the other priests had been "barren" (213) and "fruitless" (230) begins to yield for Brébeuf who approaches the task with military precision. He understands that language is a formidable weapon in this garden as it was in the first Garden. The Arendiwans use language as a tool for "[e]xtorting bribes for cures, for guarantees / Against the failure of the crop or hunt!" (253-54). Without a successful grasp of the Huron language, the Jesuits can make no such promises about the garden they inhabit, and it is, in fact, famine that closes the first chapter of the mission (268).

Brébeuf returns to his native France, but whereas he had once judged the New World landscape through a European sensibility, he now measures the European setting against the wilderness garden. He gauges "the height / of the Cathedral's central tower in terms / Of pines and oaks

around the Indian lodges" (273-75). Though his eyes look upon stained glass windows, his mind sees the "glassless walls of cedar bark" (280). The New-World garden has now become firmly planted in his mind, much as he himself is now firmly planted in that distant soil. This interlude in France marks the beginning of a dialectic between plenty and privation that will continue throughout the poem. Amidst the glories of his homeland and "the ecstasy / Of unmolested prayer before the Virgin" (289-90), Brébeuf prepares to pit himself once more against "the hungers of the wilderness" (330).

Back in New France, the ploughing of the hard field of language is beginning to show results, and this harvest is supplemented by "the store / Of speech, manners and customs that Brébeuf / Had garnered ..." (408-10). Monkman argues that although the poem begins "with a catalogue of the various religious and cultural impulses that gave rise to the Jesuit order in Europe, the poem never acknowledges an equivalent Indian religious tradition" (21). Although Pratt cannot entirely escape such an accusation, his poem makes clear that the Jesuits did not merely impose an Old-World vision upon the Indians but sought to find common ground for the planting of faith. This fact is beautifully imaged in the mission house which, significantly, is constructed "with native help" (458). The structure Pratt describes is not so much built as planted in a manner reminiscent of the organic nature of Gothic architecture alluded to earlier in

the poem: "the frame / Of young elm-poles set solidly in earth; / Their supple tops bent, lashed and braced to form / The arched roof overlaid with cedar-bark" (459-62).

In the Jesuit Relations Brébeuf wrote: "I cannot better express the fashion of the Huron dwellings than to compare them to bowers or garden arbors..." (Kenton 108). The house of three rooms becomes a parable of the Jesuit mission: "The first is used for storage" of the material goods the Jesuits have transported across the Atlantic. The second is where they live; like Christ who "has no place to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20), their "bedstead is the earth; rushes and boughs / For mattresses and pillows" (471-72). The third serves as a chapel where the spiritual cargo, "the altar, / The images and vessels of the Mass" (473-74), is stored. The Indians are attracted not to the spiritual and material "storage" rooms, but rather to the rooms in which the Jesuit conduct their daily lives. "It was the middle room that drew the natives" who come to see the marvels of the machine age: a magnet, a handmill to "grind the corn" (485), and a clock.

To "natures nurtured" on charms and spells, these objects are wondrous indeed, but none more so than the miracle of written language. Sometimes these "black signs" are made on "peel of bark," and sometimes on paper -- "From what strange tree was it the inside rind?" (507). Exposed to this potent marriage of the imported (the word) and the indigenous (the bark), the Indians ask themselves "what



charm was in the ink that transferred thought / Across such space without a spoken word?" (508-509). In Brébeuf and His Brethren, the written word is a medium that transcends not only space, but time as well. The poem suggests that the contrasting use of language may, in fact, be the essential difference between the Indian and the European cultures, and the cause of the latter's ultimate triumph. The oral speech of the Indians, like the sustenance gathered from their wilderness garden, is random and transitory, but the written word, like the reliable harvest from the Jesuits' carefully planted acres, is perennial and lasting. Kidd's poem The Huron Chief, written "on the inner rind of birch bark" (Preface 16), survives for posterity as do the Jesuit Relations, but the words of the Indians themselves evaporate into history. "The Iroquois finally render [Brébeuf] wordless" (Wilson 56) by "girdl[ing] his lips" with fire (2051), (a metaphor derived from an early method of killing trees),<sup>7</sup> but his written words are forever beyond their reach. It is as much these characters inscribed on the bark of trees and upon the earth itself, as "the carbon and calcium char of the bodies" (2135), that fertilize the new faith and allow Aves to be spoken once more on Canadian soil.

Sometimes like Jesuits gain a technical advantage (the accurate prediction of an eclipse) or a spiritual one (the saying of Nine masses brings rain after "weeks of drought had parched the land" [531]), but these successes only

escalate the fear and suspicion of the people. As Brébeuf writes in his famous letter of recruitment: "There are no natural reasons for a drought / And for the earth's sterility. You are / The reasons..." (769-71). Because the soil is as hard and unyielding as that in which Christ first sought to plant His Word, the task requires similar sacrifices: "On such a soil tilled by those skilful hands / Those passion flowers and lilies of the East, / The Aves and the Paternosters bloomed" (554-56). "Pratt's delight in all flowers" (Djwa, CP xxviii) springs partly from his understanding of their symbolic possibilities; the passion flower, with its white petals and purple fringe, recalls Christ on Calvary, and "the East" signifies both the lilies of Easter and of France. In the garden of New France, the strange words of the liturgy spring up side by side with indigenous language:

And when points of faith  
Were driven hard against resistant rock,  
The Fathers found the softer crevices  
Through deeds which readily the Indian mind  
Could grasp.... (559-63)

Pratt's description of the proselytizing process recalls Crawford's description of Katie's efforts to convert the hard heart of Malcolm to her cause:

A seed of love to cleave into a rock  
And burgeon thence until the granite splits  
Before its subtle strength....  
(Malcolm's Katie I.21-23)

But the Jesuits are not content to attend only to the spiritual needs of their flock. Because Brébeuf shares "the sagamite / And raisins" (476) as well as the Bread and the

Wine with those in need, the Indians believe that his interest in them "could not have sprung / From inspiration rooted in private gain" (451-52).

This apparent progress does not shield the priests from an understanding of the torture that may await them. The Indians are cruel even to each other because they admire the art of endurance. Elements of nature become instruments of torture and mockery in their hands, "crude unconscious variants" of those used against Christ (643). Even the "fresh damp moss" and "soothing balsams" are employed only to revive the sufferer for continued torture. In her discussion of this passage in Survival, Margaret Atwood suggests that "the Indians, being on the side of Nature, are made to represent the senseless destructiveness, cruelty and violence which can be seen also in Pratt's hurricanes and icebergs" (93). Pratt, however, insists that torture is a "rational" art, and that animals in killing prey "had not learned the sport / Of Dallying around the nerves to halt / A quick despatch" (681-83). Moreover, though Pratt acknowledges the harshness of both the land and its people, he also emphasizes the kindness of both in time of necessity. Critics remain undecided as to the exact status of the relationship between humankind and nature in Pratt's poetry:

In Pratt's poems...Nature is both destructive and creative; if Man allies himself with Nature, then he is both too. But, in fact, Man is separate from Nature, and his own destructions and creations cannot chime exactly with those of Nature. (West 18)

D.G. Jones writes: "Fundamentally, Pratt looks on nature and finds it good. His poetry implies that life, especially human life, finds its fulfillment in a partnership with the elemental forces of nature" (112), but with regard to Brébeuf Jones concludes: "The salvage of the savage devolves into a battle to the death between the Church and the wilderness. In fiction, if not in fact, they remain perpetual foes" (61). Despite evidence to the contrary, this latter view predominates. Atwood writes:

Thus Pratt dwells consistently not only on the more disagreeable aspects of Nature but on those of the Indians as well. No blue skies and stately trees for Brébeuf. His experience of the Canadian wilderness is like a city-dweller's nightmare of a canoe trip. (93)

Significantly, the passage Atwood uses to support this negative interpretation details Brébeuf's first encounter with the wilderness. As the poem progresses, he becomes increasingly attached to his wilderness home until the forest becomes his place of inspiration. Following Christ's example, the priests go "to the woods / To be alone" for prayer and meditation (732-33). There they contemplate the trial of a Saviour who also faced a hungry wilderness. Brébeuf "found his tabernacle / Within a grove" (733-34) and there, on a stone jammed in a cedar-crotch, he writes his famous letter inspiring others to come and join him in the harsh but rewarding struggle. The only reward is in the presence of God that pervades the "noble oratory" of nature:

Pratt also shows, through his own imaginative presentation of the Canadian scene, his own affection for the land itself, an affection which

he shared with the Jesuits who are portrayed as finding spiritual inspiration in pastoral settings and in the Canadian forest. (Hunt 79)

Earlier in the poem, Rouen cathedral is compared to a forest, and now the forest itself becomes a cathedral. This "noble oratory" is transformed into actual reality as labourers from Quebec come to build a church, "the first one in the whole Huronian venture / To be of wood" (867-68). Although this wooden chapel, "their Rheims cathedral," is a symbol of permanence, the agricultural efforts of the priests are still limited to the spiritual needs of their community:

Close to their lodge, the priests  
Dug up the soil and harrowed it to plant  
A mere handful of wheat from which they raised  
A half a bushel for the altar bread. (868-71)

In a humble echo of transubstantiation, a handful of wheat becomes the holy communion. Moreover, "the spade had entered soil in the conversion / Of a Huron in full bloom and high in power" (920-21). Tsiouendaentaha is the first of the warriors "lean, lithe, and elemental" (946) to be made "the temple of the living God" (939). The priests now tend an indigenous crop.

In a process reminiscent of the stadial development evident in The Rising Village (from nomadic hunting to settled farming), the Jesuits now call "for a central site where undisturbed / [they] might pursue / Their culture" (961-63). Pratt here exploits the double sense of "culture" as Goldsmith does in The Rising Village, using it to mean both civilization and agriculture. Within the walls of Fort

Sainte Marie, the priests are able to contemplate and write letters to strengthen them for the task of spiritual husbandry, but they seek also to cultivate the land. During sojourns at Sainte Marie, the priests prepare themselves to reach new tribes and plant "larger fields" (1006). The strange new forest presents itself as a labyrinth to Jogues and Garnier, as it had earlier to Brébeuf:

All day confronting swamps with fallen logs,  
Tangles of tamarack and juniper... (1014-15)  
... the stumble over mouldering trunks  
Of pine and oak, the hopeless search for  
trails... [t/o] (1025-26)

The new tribe, the Pétuns, are also a puzzle, filled with hostility and fear. Brébeuf and Chaumonot tackle a similar journey to a strange new field. They also encounter hostility from "the most savage of the tribes--the Neutrals" (1057), but find the wilderness itself a refuge: "they would betake themselves / To the evergreens for shelter overnight" (1123-24). Once again, the forest proves bountiful: "for days their food / Boiled lichens, ground-nuts, star-grass bulbs and roots / Of the wild columbine" (1120-22). In Survival Atwood argues that "Brébeuf in effect refuses to accept the land as it is, and it destroys him" (95). Clearly, the opposite is true. The land sustains Brébeuf in his moments of greatest need.

The priests gain even greater sustenance during these hard winter months from the spiritual visions which appear under a canopy of branches and stars. However, not all these visions are "sweeter than the Galilean fields" (1134);

on his return to the fort Brébeuf relates a darker vision of "a moving cross... 'huge enough to crucify us all'" (1160). Subsequently, Jogues is captured by the Mohawks, tortured and enslaved. The passion flowers have begun to bloom on New-World soil, but, facing death, Jogues shows the compassion of Christ to his fellow sufferers. Though the traditional elements of his priestly art are unavailable to him, he picks from nature's garden a poignant substitute: "with the dew from leaves of Turkish corn / Two of the prisoners I baptized" (1292-93). Jogues survives by becoming as adept at the art of endurance as the Indians themselves, impressing his captors with his fortitude and courage. He bravely plunges into a river "to save a woman and a child who stumbled / Crossing a bridge made by a fallen tree" (1322). Jogues believes that even though the cross he has "planted" on the shores of Lake Superior (1185) may fall, it will become a bridge over which the Indians can cross to a new faith, and this belief sustains him. He, too, retreats to the woods "[t]o pray and meditate and carve the Name / Upon the bark" (1328-29). Like his brethren, he renews his vows "[b]efore two bark-strips fashioned as a cross / Under the forest trees--his oratory" (1382-83).

Slowly, the fear and suspicion of the Indians overwhelm the efforts of the Jesuits, and the toll of martyrs begins to rise. Still, the hopes of the Jesuits are not buried with the bodies of their brethren. Bressani's letter reveals his courage though even the paper on which he writes

has become one with the soil:

I do not know if your Paternity  
Will recognize this writing for the letter  
Is soiled.... The blood has stained the paper.  
My writing table is the earth.... (1485-89)

Only when the Jesuits write their gospel on the earth with  
their own blood, does the spiritual harvest begin to ripen.  
Once "little proof was given of the root / Of faith, but now  
the Fathers told of deeds / That flowered from the stems"  
(1596-97).

This "tenure for the future" (1618) manifests itself  
both in the spiritual and the physical gardens planted by  
the Jesuits. Pratt's description of the latter allows for a  
moment of pastoral calm before the coming storm:

Acres rich  
In soil extended to the forest fringe.  
Each year they felled the trees and burned the  
stumps, [t/o]  
Pushing the frontier back, clearing the land,  
Spading, hoeing. The stomach's noisy protest  
At saganite and wild rice found a rest  
With bread from wheat, fresh cabbages and pease,  
And squashes which when roasted had the taste  
Of Norman apples. Strawberries in July,  
October beechnuts, pepper roots for spice,  
And at the bottom of a spring that flowed  
Into a pond shaded by silver birches  
And ringed by marigolds was water-cress  
In chilled abundance. So, was this the West?  
The Wilderness? That flight of tanagers;  
Those linguals from the bobolinks; those  
beeches, [t/o]  
Roses and water-lilies; at the pools  
Those bottle-gentians! For a time the fields  
Could hypnotize the mind to scenes of France.  
(1618-36)

This passage, "a good candidate for Pratt's finest" (Wilson  
58), achieves a lyric intensity as vivid as the scenes of  
torture elsewhere in the poem. As Collins points out, this



is "no mere pastoral interlude" (105), but rather "a glimpse of the new Jerusalem" (103), the harmonious and fruitful product of Christian civilization. But even Collins, who appears invariably sympathetic to the Jesuit mission, admits that "it is tempting to interpret the pastoral lyric as ironic, Pratt's revealing of illusion and futility" (106). No sooner do the Jesuits establish an Eden than they are expelled from it. The garden they have nurtured and loved is transformed into Gethsemane, a garden of trial where they must prepare for death. Indeed, there are many troubling aspects to this pastoral vision. The willingness to destroy the forest which the priests themselves have found to be a sanctuary raises questions similar to those raised in Malcolm's Katie, although the central scripture passage behind the pastoral scenes in Brébeuf and His Brethren appears not to be Genesis 1:28 in which man is encouraged to have dominion over the earth, but rather Isaiah 35:1 which describes the joyful flourishing of God's kingdom: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."<sup>8</sup> In its bounty, the physical garden the Jesuits create keeps pace with the "apostolic field / Which more than ever whitens for the harvest" (1676-77).

The early sections of the poem reveal that the land is no desert, for it sustains the Jesuits in times of greatest need. Nonetheless, the spectre of famine hovers over the people, threatening the success of the mission and preparing

the way for an eventual Huron diaspora. Phrases such as "the stomach's noisy protest" (1622) suggest not so much that the Jesuits are unsatisfied with the indigenous and seek to impose their own tastes upon the people to whom they minister, but rather that they offer more reliable alternatives. Through the efforts of the Jesuits, the fort becomes "a common granary" (1169) during the long hard winters. Pratt stresses this point both within the poem, and in his writings about the poem:

And it must be pointed out that in the course of their religious endeavours they never ignored the humane and social side of their ministrations.... They taught new methods of cultivation of the land, founding what has been described as the first experimental farm on this continent, and their efforts frequently staved off periodical visitations of famine and death.

(OHLR emphasis added 116)

Evidence of the Jesuit's practical contributions to Indian life counters Sharman's claim that the priests taught only "abstractions that bring nothing to a vast majority of Indians" (115). The Jesuits did not reject what they found but worked to enhance it, learning all the while to appreciate the unfamiliar and the new to the point of acknowledging that the "hermit thrushes / Rivalled the rapture of the nightingales" (1589-90).

This garden, like those in the settlement of Talbot Road, contains "enough for fancy and enough for use" (Burwell 614). Flowers grow side by side with vegetables. The imaginations of the "daring" navigators spurred their search for "jewels, spices, tapestries" (1648), but the

Huronian garden offers humbler versions of the same to the priests who seek their treasure in the soil and the souls of those who inhabit it. They find delight not in jewels but in "silver birches" and "marigolds." They accept "pepper roots for spice" over the exotic spices of Cathay. They transform the land they cultivate into a tapestry, "[a] cres rich" extending "to the forest fringe" (1619).

Moreover, like the gardens of Goldsmith and Burwell, this Eden has no Eve. Pratt has been called a "masculine" poet (West 19), and this poem filled with warriors and celibates goes far in reinforcing that description. The few females that do appear are aligned along the poles suggested by Atwood in Survival, ice women and earth mothers. Atwood bases her discussion of the female character in Canadian literature on The White Goddess in which Robert Graves divides Woman into three mythological categories: the Maiden figure, the Venus figure, and the Hecate figure (199). In Brébeuf and His Brethren, the "Maiden" is represented by nuns, female saints, and the Virgin Mary. The inspiring vision of Mary that appears to Brébeuf, "tender, placid, pure" (1132), contrasts sharply with the hag-like Indian women whom he encounters on his travels. Pratt, like Burwell before him, places these women on par with animals and children: "dogs / And squaws and reeking children" (603-604). These women do not advance the cause of the mission, but rather "violate" (604) its codes and flee from its messengers. Nor are the Indian women less savage than their

male counterparts. Brébeuf sees "the way the women and their broods / Danced round the scaffold in their exaltation" (700-701). Horrifying scenes of torture provide "the sport for children and squaws till the end" (1979). In contrast to Tsiouendaentaha, "in full bloom and high in power," who becomes Peter, "the Rock on which / The priests would build their Church" (921-25) are the "squatting hags, suspicion in their eyes, / Their nebulous minds relating in some way" the elements of the Mass with "vapours, sounds and colours of the Judgment" (952-56). Atwood sees "a notable absence of Venuses" in Canadian literature (Survival 199), and certainly the goddess of love and fertility appears to be absent from this poem. But inspired by memories of France and her "undulating miles of wheat and barley" (1998), the priests transform a corner of the wilderness and call it Sainte Marie: "Rude it was / But clean, capacious, full of twilight calm" (995-996). In these fertile acres so richly dressed in fruits and flowers, the priests plant both their seeds and their dreams. They return from journeys among hostile tribes to be "nourished within the bosom of their home" (1615). As in Richardson's Tecumseh, the land is at once Eden and Eve.

Yet, the possibility that this enchanting garden may only be illusory remains: "For a time the fields / Could hypnotize the mind to scenes of France" (1635-36). Pratt's use of the word "hypnotize" suggests a spell waiting to be broken, and "for a time" indicates a period that threatens

to be ominously brief. The sense of menace that has been building throughout the poem begins to accelerate. The seasons pass, but the priests will not "reset their faces toward home" until "the blood-root was pushing through the leaf-mould" (1688-89). Pratt's language is again carefully chosen, for he selects elements of the natural scene which carry symbolic value. The blood will soon flow around the roots of the Huronian mission. The great pines once used to build churches and homes will provide the ramparts for a fortress. Many Indians seek shelter within that fortress, but the bounty extends only so far though the priests manage "'as it were, to draw both oil / And honey from the very stones around [them]'" (1819-20)--a reference to God's bounty in Deuteronomy 32:13.

On this his last journey, the forest which Brébeuf has laboured to understand becomes a labyrinth once more, but his way is clear because "the blaze of the trail that was cut on the bark by Jogues / Shone still" (1958-59). Two visions accompany Brébeuf along this Via Dolorosa. On the one hand, he sees the captive Jogues stealing into the forest to "make a rough cross / From two branches, set it in snow, and on the peel / Inscribe his vows...", (1962 -64) and on the other, "little tributaries of wayward wish / And reminiscence" enter "the greater artery / Of thought that bore upon the coming passion" (1985-88). Whereas Lalemant thinks of Paris, the Gothic city, Brébeuf's vision is a pastoral one. As on a stage he sees:

...the orchard lands,  
 The cidreries, the peasants at the Fairs,  
 The undulating miles of wheat and barley,  
 Gardens and pastures rolling like a sea  
 From Lisieux to Le Havre. (1996-2000)

This is the gift he has struggled to bring to New France, the vision of harmony and plenty he has sought to transplant, even at the cost of his own life. In his final mass, Brébeuf commits himself to this sacrifice, following the pattern set by Christ. In their torture of Echon, as they call him, the Iroquois attempt to discover the source of Brébeuf's "valour or stamina" and find it is not in various historical and religious sources, not in "the lilies / Upon the Imperial folds," not even in the vows of Loyola, but rather in the invisible glory surrounding "two slabs of board, right-angled, hammered / By roman nails and hung on a Jewish hill" (2069-70). Pratt revealed to E.K. Brown that the whole poem began with a search for "a simile for the Cross which would express alike shame and glory, something strongly vernacular set over against cultivated images and language" (Brown 155). This, too, has been the task of the Jesuits, to find an appropriate simile for the Cross and plant it in the wilderness. Sharman insists that the image of the cross in the poem signifies "the tragedy of illusion" (16), but from the Christian perspective the cross represents both death and resurrection. The seed must die in order to bring forth fruit. Djwa discusses Brébeuf's sacrifice in terms of a fertility myth:

In anthropological terms, the sacrifice of the mass is a civilized transformation or sublimation

of human sacrifice, a connection which Pratt would have known from his early readings of Frazer's The Golden Bough.... In effect, his blood fertilizes the soil for the rebirth of Christianity in New France. (E.J. Pratt: The Evolutionary Vision 106-107)

She goes on to assert, however, that "the undercurrents of fertility myth are ultimately subsumed, as they are historically, into the matrix of Christian belief" (107).

The Brethren have been driven from Eden. Pratt's description of the burning fort resembles the passage in Richardson's Tecumseh in which the soldiers look with longing on a joyous past consumed by smoke, and the passage in Milton's Paradise Lost in which Adam and Eve look back at Paradise "so late thir happy seat, / Wav'd over by that flaming Brand" (XII.642-43). "Inside an hour," writes Ragueneau, "we saw the fruit of ten years' labour / Ascend in smoke, --then looked our last at the fields..." (2105-2106). Among the survivors the old tale is retold "of hunger and the search for roots and acorns" (2110). For the Jesuits, the hunger was both physical and spiritual, as was the search for roots. They had found sustenance in the bulbs and roots of the new world garden, and they themselves became the roots from which the spiritual heritage of a new land would emerge.

In an Epilogue which brings the poem into our own century, Pratt writes: "The years as they turned have ripened the martyrs' seed" (2123). A new harvest is being reaped:

The trails, having frayed the threads of the  
 cassocks, sank [t/o]  
 Under the mould of the centuries, under fern  
 And brier and fungus--there in due time to blossom  
 Into the highways that lead to the crest of the hill  
 Which havened both shepherd and flock in the days of  
 their trial. [t/o] (2125-28)

Sharman interprets the Epilogue of Brébeuf and His Brethren as an indictment of contemporary Canadians: "Twentieth-century Canadian winds can only rouse men to provide a shrine on a hilltop approached by highways" (118). But, as in his poem "The Highway," Pratt surely means more than modern asphalt roads; in Isaiah 6:16 ("There shall be an highway for the remnant of his people") and Jeremiah 31:21 ("Set thine heart toward the highway") the "highway" describes the spiritual path by which man returns to God. Atwood also finds the Epilogue disappointing:

Pratt does all that can be done, but the material he is working with undercuts any attempt to make Brébeuf's death that of a traditional hero: we know that the Mission is, in fact, a sort of tourist attraction, and Brébeuf would probably turn over in his grave if he could see the end result of his ordeal. (167)

Clearly, for Pratt, the Martyrs' Shrine is a place of spiritual renewal because it is built "[n]ear to the ground where the cross broke under the hatchet" (2133). The cross broke, the tree fell but both became a bridge between the past and the present, between man and his God. Pratt is a firm believer in the power of place:

If the monument is directly over the remains, the visitor, pilgrim, worshipper, believer, call him what you like, gets an emotional experience, something akin to the feeling which a parent would receive standing near the soil under which a child had been buried.



So whether one is Protestant or Catholic, one may feel as I did when I stood with the archaeologist, within a few feet of the place where Brébeuf offered up his life. It was indeed sacred ground. (OHLP 121)

Pratt's excitement over seeing the "culture" of the Jesuits unearthed extends beyond the spiritual:

The excavations revealed many interesting finds. One pit was found containing the seeds of several vegetables, particularly squashes, and the shell of a hen's egg.... (OHLP 193)

Upon such evidence of the agricultural pursuits of the Jesuits, Pratt builds one of the poem's most significant and complex patterns of imagery. The martyrs' shrine is "in fact, both the land itself and its history" (Collins 109). Appropriately, the cycles of nature are reflected in the cyclical patterns of the poem. Each planting bears its fruit in season. Djwa notes that the poem begins and ends "with a cross, an altar, and the renaissance of religious faith" (94). The cyclical nature of the content is also reflected in the form which Roberts Gibbs describes as a "musical frame around the narrative proper, a frame which allows the poet a choral role in his poem and a mastery over his narrative and documentary materials" (118).

One troubling effect of this "frame" is to disguise the disappearance of half of the cast. The Jesuits are not the only "brethren" to be driven from Eden. The Indians also have been expelled from the garden, but for them there is no resurrection on the far side of trial. In his Epilogue, Pratt acknowledges that the land the Hurons once inhabited is now "abandoned by human tread" (2118). If there is a

tragedy in the poem it is this. The Jesuits are ultimately victorious as their ashes nourish an old faith in a new land, but the Indians do not share in this victory. Their voices are silenced. Brébeuf and His Brethren closes with the shrine of a great white man slain by Indians. Kidd's The Huron Chief closes with the shrine of a great Indian slain by white men. The wild grape the Jesuits use to make the sacramental wine is the same as that which entwines Skenandow's grave. To be Canadian is to make the pilgrimage to both gardens.

In The White Savannahs, Collin credits Pratt with rejuvenating Canadian poetry: "He has reformed it by turning it away from wilted, sentimental flower-gardens..." (144). Ironically, it is the image of the garden and its powerful hold on those who sought to claim the land which Pratt explores in his masterpiece, Brébeuf and his Brethren. Throughout the long process of Bildung, the dream of plenty sustains the people in times of privation. In both Brébeuf and His Brethren and The Wind our Enemy, another portrait of the garden in crisis, the central figures plant their dreams in the soil, and write their hopes upon the earth. Even when all else is laid waste, the germ of faith endures, as does the word which gives it shape.

## Notes to Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to D.M.R. Bentley for pointing out the influence of Eliot's The Waste Land on The Wind our Enemy (which is elaborated upon by Anne Bailey in her essay "Anne Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy"), and for drawing attention to Marriott's punning use of language, particularly the way in which she often imbeds words within other words (e.g. st[rained] voice).

<sup>2</sup> These images may be inspired by lines such as "riveting sky to earth" (I.iii.4) of Cecil Day Lewis's Magnetic Mountain, (Collected Poems: 1929-1936, 108 ff.), the poem from which Dorothy Livesay took the epigraph for The Outrider.

<sup>3</sup> The first tune played by the Scotswoman is probably the familiar American lullaby that begins: "Hush little baby, don't say a word / Papa's gonna buy you a mocking bird," and continues to describe progressive disappointments until the father, his resources exhausted, can only reiterate his commitment to the one he loves.

The waltz "When I Grow too Old to Dream" was written by Oscar Hammerstein II and first sung by Ramon Novarro in the 1935 film The Night is Young:

When I grow too old to dream  
I'll have you to remember.  
When I grow too old to dream  
Your love will live in my heart.  
So kiss me my sweet,  
And so let us part,  
And when I grow too old to dream  
That kiss will live in my heart.

<sup>4</sup> E.J. Pratt On His Life and Poetry 114. Further references to this work will appear in the text with the abbreviation QHLP.

<sup>5</sup> As Wilhelm Worringer points out in Form in Gothic, the "naturalization" of man-made structures was an aim of Gothic architecture:

The capitals become flowery wonders, there is no end to the luxuriance of creeping tendrils, and the tracery, once so formally and geometrically planned, develops into a marvelous world of bud and blossom. Within the chaos of stiff lines there now develops a chaos of bloom.... Nature, known to scholasticism only as a hard actuality and therefore denied by it, now becomes the garden of God. (176)

<sup>6</sup> The farming practices of the Huron are discussed at length by Conrad Heidenreich in Huron: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1650. In The Children of Aataentsic, Bruce Trigger points out that "production was limited, however, since neither horses nor oxen were available for ploughing. Because of this, the Jesuits' farming, like that of the Indians, was horticultural rather than agricultural" (584).

<sup>7</sup> A Dictionary of Canadianisms defines "girdling" as "the process of cutting a ring through the bark of a tree, thus cutting off the flow of sap and eventually killing it" (293).

<sup>8</sup> In his long poem Hope, William Cowper applies this image to the work of Moravian missionaries in Greenland:

Fired with a peculiar zeal, they defy  
The rage and rigor of a polar sky  
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose  
On icy plains and in eternal snows.  
(461-464)

Cornwall Bayley transposes Cowper's image of missionary endeavour to a Canadian setting in his long poem Canada (1805). See Bentley's "Explanatory Notes" to the Canadian Poetry Press edition of Canada.

## CHAPTER FOUR

"How do you grow a poet?"

The Alchemy and Archaeology of  
James Reaney and Robert Kroetsch

Although the ancient certainties of the scriptural model which inspired the Jesuits have been eroded by the often difficult and perplexing conditions of post-modern life, the garden remains a central image in James Reaney's Twelve Letters to a Small Town (1962) and Robert Kroetsch's Seed Catalogue (1977). Like many of the Bildungsgedichte which precede them, these poems are filled with gardens actual and imagined, but the most fertile among them is the garden of language itself. Both poets attempt a variety of answers to Kroetsch's question "How do you grow a poet?" through portraits of artists as young men in which the garden becomes a model for the growth of the human imagination and the human community. Though the two poems explore "the home place" as a shaping force and demonstrate a concern for process and play which sets them apart from traditional narrative, they spring from different theoretical backgrounds.

Kroetsch adopts an "archaeological" model derived from a variety of sources including Martin Heidegger, William

Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, and Michel Foucault.

Expressing his "distrust of system, of grid, of monisms, of cosmologies perhaps...",<sup>1</sup> Kroetsch opts for "an archaeology that challenges the authenticity of history by saying there can be no joined story, only abrupt guesswork, juxtaposition, flashes of insight" (LW 119). Reaney, on the other hand, resists "the movement from metaphoric to metonymic"<sup>2</sup> which Kroetsch considers to be characteristic of post-modernism:

I merely react--not necessarily in a positive, optimistic way, but with images and metaphors; and to hell with it, I don't care whether they're 'grids of meaning' or not; I'm going to grid away. (Reaney, Long-liners 124)

Through an "alchemical" process adapted from the methods of Northrop Frye and Carl Jung, Reaney is able to transmute personal observations into poetry by finding the mythic significance in the local story. This essentially humanist belief that "words can still redeem the world by reconstituting a whole that has as its explicit or implicit model the Garden of Eden" (Dragland 211) has been dismissed by some as nostalgic illusion. However, even Kroetsch admits that a poet cannot abandon story completely (though his interest is in "the act of telling the story" and not the story itself [LW 120]), and that the long poem "has some kind of (under erasure) unity" (LW 118). Both Reaney and Kroetsch celebrate, not only the particular place which gave them shape, but also the process, whether it be alchemical or archaeological, by which that world is named

into existence. In Twelve Letters to a Small Town and Seed Catalogue, language becomes a sturdy hybrid planted in the vernacular present, rooted in the literary past, and growing into a yet unspoken future.

I.

Reaney's celebrations of language and "local pride" have kept him attractive to younger writers. In an essay entitled "Why James Reaney is a better poet 1) than any Northop Frye poet 2) than he used to be," George Bowering points out that Reaney has finally begun in Twelve Letters to a Small Town "to make myth from local materials rather than spooning it on from the golden bowl of literary materials" (48). bp Nichol lays particular emphasis on Reaney's role as an "explorer and innovator," and his "search for a voice which will be identifiably canadian... a joual of our own" (6,7). However, as Stan Dragland points out, Nichol's assessment "filters out Reaney's drive to explicitness in meaning" (221), a belief in systems that owes much to the criticism of Northop Frye.<sup>3</sup> In a 1959 article in Poetry Chicago entitled "The Canadian Imagination," Reaney wrote:

One can hardly be a poet in Canada without feeling the two books Fearful Symmetry and Anatomy of Criticism brooding over one's literary programme.... Instead of groping his way from lyric to lyric here at last the poet can see what fields there are to plow and what to sow. No one, of course, can show him how to plow and sow, but it is certainly wonderful to know where to find out if one knows how. (94-95 [1959/60]: 188)

In an Alphabet editorial of the following year, Reaney explains how he organizes his own poetry around a concept of myth developed through his contact with Frye:

That's how poetry works: it weaves street scenes and twins around swans in legendary pools. Let us make a form out of this: documentary on one side and myth on the other: Life & Art. In this form we can put anything and the magnet we have set up will arrange it for us. (1 [Sept 1960]:4)

In Twelve Letters to a Small Town, one of the mythological magnets around which the images are arranged is the world of alchemical ideas. In "The Influence of Spenser on Yeats," the doctoral dissertation that Reaney completed under Frye in 1958, Reaney writes: "Alchemy, as we have seen, is one of the shaping disciplines behind Yeats' evolution as a symbolic linguist" (188). The same can be said of Reaney himself. According to Richard Stingle, long-time friend and colleague of Reaney's, a book which was central to Reaney's imagination at the time he was writing Twelve Letters was Jung's Psychology and Alchemy. In this book, which Frye cites in Anatomy of Criticism (146n) and to which Reaney makes repeated reference in his dissertation, Jung compares the imagination which is central to "the process of individuation" (333) to the methods of alchemy: "the centre--itself virtually unknowable--acts like a magnet on the disparate materials and processes of the unconscious and gradually captures them as in a crystal lattice" (Jung 207). Jung's evocative language (which is strongly echoed in Reaney's description of the poetic process cited above) suggests



how alchemical symbolism could become an organizing principle for poetry about the process of Bildung. Jung begins Part III of Psychology and Alchemy with the alchemical epigraph: "For those who have the symbol the passage is easy" (215). The influence of Jung upon Reaney has been well documented (Lee 141), but no one has yet shown how the growth of the poet in Twelve Letters to a Small Town relates to Jung's interpretation of the world of alchemical ideas. Perhaps the immensely wide range of response to the poem has resulted from an inadequate understanding of this alchemical model which unifies its structure and provides its most powerful symbols in relation to the imagery of the garden.

On the one hand are those critics including Ross Woodman, Alvin Lee, and Milton Wilson, who see Twelve Letters as part of a pastoral tradition which, as Joseph Zezulka points out, is alive and well in Canada, despite the crippling blow dealt to it by "the pressures of an Industrial Age" (241). The world of Twelve Letters certainly resembles the familiar literary landscape of the "fair-weather pastoral" typified by "happy love, spontaneous song, and the sympathy of nature" (Macpherson, The Spirit of Solitude 6). Woodman argues that, "like the rustics described by Wordsworth in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Reaney's characters belong essentially to a pastoral world. He, like Wordsworth, is a 'Sylvan historian'" (17). Lee refers to the suite as a "pastoral

fantasia" that is "dominantly idyllic" (51,54). According to Michael Estok, even Reaney's "willingness to experiment is related to his pastoralism, to his achieved innocence" (387). On the other hand are those critics who are uncomfortable with the apparent simplicity of Reaney's recreation of his rural roots. Louis Dudek suggests that "the strange infantilism of Reaney's poetry" may owe something to William Blake, "the first poet in history to offer infantile inanity and childish doggerel as serious poetry" (324-25). Davey warns that only those who are "unperceptive, naive, and sentimental" will be charmed by the poem's saccharine nostalgia: "Twelve Letter to a Small Town is strictly for watery-eyed old ladies" (83). Finally, there are critics such as Michael Hornyansky who try to find a middle ground: "In essence, [Reaney] reshapes the world (or parts of it) in a child's eye, and the result is vulnerable to childish mistakes as well as being capable of childlike truth" (376).

Part of the mixed response to Twelve Letters appears to stem from its form which, in contrast to Reaney's tightly structured Suit of Nettles (1958), is comprised of a series of poems which were first "hurried together for a radio performance in 1961" (Warkentin x). Reaney learned the practice of organizing lyrics into suites which was then "usually poohpooed as being rather mechanical or even rather immoral" (Reaney, "The Third Eye" 25), from the example set by William Blake and Edith Sitwell:

I can remember feeling so envious with regard to one of my own earliest poetic enthusiasms--Edith Sitwell: I envied her the idea of the suite such as Facade represents. I envied because I felt that to imitate it would be to plagiarize. ("The Third Eye" 26)

As in Reaney's other "suites" including Message to Winnipeg and Great Lakes Suite, the poems in Twelve Letters to a Small Town are meant to be read together and to speak to each other, an effect which Reaney praises in Jay Macpherson's The Boatman: "One poem reminds the reader of another poem in a slightly different key: read one poem eventually and you are reading all the poems at the same time" ("The Third Eye" 32). The term "suite," of course, has musical as well as literary implications; a "suite" is defined as "a set of instrumental compositions, originally in dance style, to be played in succession" (OED).

Appropriately, Twelve Letters to a Small Town was first performed on the radio to the music of John Beckwith. Davey argues that "pinned down on the page without the camouflage of John Beckwith's music, the message appears rather trivial" (83). Indeed, reading the poems is a different experience from listening to them.

Eli Mandel writes:

Some of the "letters", fugal intertwinings and repetitions, were obviously dictated by the original form, but they stand now on the page as their own curious music, and they seem to me to define the nature and purpose of the other lyrics, prose poems, notations, dialogues and fables out of which the book is made. ("Turning New Leaves (1)" 279)

Wilson points out that "these letters had been germinating

as poems and looking for a context long before any musical setting or CBC commission was contemplated" (77). Despite the fact that the poems are from different periods they are carefully arranged and integrated. The "letters" of the title are not only epistles directed to the town of the poet's childhood; they are also the letters of a shared alphabet. In an Alphabet editorial, Reaney describes this process of bringing poems together and arranging them to their advantage as "one of the happiest of civilized activities, akin to the proper arrangement of flowers" (1 [September 1960]: 4).

Though the twelve-part structure of Twelve Letters bears little resemblance to the epic tradition of twelve sections so brilliantly adapted by Milton in Paradise Lost, it is tempting to equate the twelve "letters" of the suite with the twelve stages of the alchemical process as described by Jung (including the washing or baptisma, the union of opposites or coniunctio, and the death or mortificatio), but clearly the correspondence is not so schematic. The alchemical model provides a loose framework of images rather than a strictly-imposed structure or pattern, and yet the symbolism is surprisingly pervasive. One of the illustrations that appears in Psychology and Alchemy is the title page from an alchemical text depicting "the principal symbols of alchemy" (214). All of the images, without exception (including sun, moon, king, queen, lion, hermaphrodite, angel, bird, stream,

tree, old man, infant, circle, globe, clouds, coat of arms, two-headed eagle, etc.) appear at least once in Reaney's suite. The technique in Twelve Letters which Reaney refers to as a "series of collages" has become:

not that of a play or a recited poem, but that of the cinema. There is a dance in and out of forms, repeated motifs, varied and modulated, designed to hold attention without necessarily going in for story or cosmology. (Reaney, Long-liners 118).

This apparently "casual" format which Reaney claims for Twelve Letters two decades after its publication should not preclude a close study of the symbolism which gives the suite its shape. In his Foreword to Lyndy Abraham's 1990 study of alchemical symbolism in the poetry of Andrew Marvell, Frank Kermode explains that alchemy, "essentially a set of transformative techniques, applicable to spirit as well as to matter," has always been attractive to poets, becoming in later centuries a part of the occult tradition. As Bentley points out, "[t]exts that suggest the existence of an anterior and mysterious meaning that is available only to the initiated are particularly common in Ontario writing of the Modernist tradition" ("Preface" Canadian Poetry 18 (Spring/Summer 1986): v). Just as the application of Greek mythology reveals the magic behind the mundane in Mandel's "Minotaur Poems" (singled out for praise in Reaney's 1959 article on "The Canadian Imagination"), allusions to alchemy allow Reaney to bring mystery to the world of his childhood.

Twelve Letters is indeed "a visionary recreation of

his home town" (Woodman 29), in that the world of Reaney's childhood is admirably recreated, but it is also a recreation, in the sense of amusement and play. Like Kroetsch, Reaney plays with language, form, and the fragments of memory, both personal and public, which are shaped into poetry by the fire of the imagination, the crucible of alchemical archetypes in which the story is forged. While Kroetsch as archaeologist is content to let the base metals enter the poem in the condition in which he finds them, Reaney as alchemist is always striving for a transmutation into gold. According to Warkentin:

[Reaney] is always preoccupied with a process of transformation or translation, in which the identity of seemingly unlike things is unexpectedly revealed and they are transformed from the voiceless chaos of human experience into the eloquence of metaphor. (viii)

In Seed Catalogue, Kroetsch responds to the question "How do you grow a poet?" with the following: "Start: with an invocation" (VI.10). Reaney begins Twelve Letters to a Small Town with an invocation "To the Avon River above Stratford, Canada." Significantly, the poem is addressed to the river above Stratford, before it has trickled down through the English conceptions of itself. In his title, and throughout the poem, Reaney makes a special effort to differentiate between the Canadian river and the English river after which it is named. "It takes a jolt," he writes, "but you should try and see where you live as the original Adams and Eves saw it and you should try and get inside their bodies and minds too" ("An ABC to Ontario

Literature and Culture" 2). Bowering stresses Reaney's use of "the personal pronoun and the determination to find myth with the senses, the taste of water in cupped hands, not the idea of a sacred Greek or English stream" (49). Wrestling with what Kroetsch has called "the dream of origins" (Long Poem Anthology 311), Reaney searches for the source of the river in the name given to it by the Indians. In an earlier suite A Message to Winnipeg, he has similarly attempted to establish an identity for Winnipeg before the arrival of the white man:

Your hair was grass by the river ten feet tall,  
Your arms were burr oaks and ash leaf maples.  
Your backbone was a crooked silver muddy river.  
(Poems 133)

Here, as elsewhere in his poetry, Reaney is very specific about the flora and fauna of his region, a taxonomy that he insists is necessary if the poet is to be truly rooted in his environment: "There's a great deal of mooning about forested landscapes but precise knowledge shows real love and breeds the same quality. Tree worship is to be encouraged" ("An ABC of Ontario Literature and Culture" 2). Unlike Adam, whose "Tongue obey'd and readily could name / Whate'er [he] saw..." (PL VIII.272-73), the young boy in Reaney's poem struggles to find a name for the stream that laps against the shores of his youth. He is faced with conflicting traditions, a long heritage of naming that has preceded his primary experience with the thing itself. Despite its name, the Avon river that the young boy experiences through his senses, does not seem

English to him:

But rather like the sad wild fowl  
 In prints drawn  
 By Audubon,  
 And like dear bad poets  
 Who wrote  
 Early in Canada  
 And never were of note. (I.14-20)

Reaney wants to give the river a voice that flows not with English accents, but rather springs from a national tradition. Elsewhere, he writes: "I don't believe you can really be world or unprovincial or whatever until you've sunk your claws into a very locally coloured tree trunk and scratched your way through to universality" (Alphabet 4 [June 1962]: 3). But, while the poet disconnects the river from its English origins, the tradition that he accepts is a white rather than an aboriginal one, a tradition already filtered through art, already seen through European eyes--the wild fowl in the prints of Audubon, the voices of early poets. In "Reaney's Region," Bowering explains that the locale Reaney inhabits is already distanced from the aboriginal: "So with the ground itself, the waterways, the farms, the tall trees of the Forest City; nature in Middlesex County is inhabited by the human imagination and social memory" (3-4). According to Bowering, the southern Ontario landscape, in contrast to that of the West, is "knowable" and has "long ago been reshaped by the human community" (4). Nonetheless, the river (Avon) is the first to be crossed by the boy, and thus is the prototype for all other rivers, just as the



other "firsts" in his experience are the law for what follows. To strengthen the sacred aspect of the experience, the examples of nature's grandeur Reaney chooses are all symbols of God's presence in scripture: the first whirlwind (Job 38:1), the first rainbow (Genesis 9:13), the first snow (Psalm 147:16), and the first falling star (Revelation 9:1).

The boy comes to know the river intimately as he moves over, under, and within its metaphorical and physical possibilities. No other river is "so sweet / To skate upon, swim in / Or for baptism of sin" (I.30-32). One of the crucial stages in the alchemical process is the washing or baptisma (Jung 220) which leads to purification and transformation. "The old alchemists," writes Jung, "never tired of devising new and expressive synonyms for this water" which could transform leaden matter into golden mystery (Jung 71). With the help of the river, the young boy is initiated into language. Just as the Derwent's "ceaseless music" composed the thoughts of young Wordsworth to "more than infant softness" (The Prelude I.278), the Avon becomes the boy's muse, inspiring him to song while the flow of his own thoughts supplies the river at its source. He lives forever under the "sentence" of its voice, at once a way of ordering speech and the "light" penalty of remembrance. The voice is a soprano one, imaging the river as female in accordance with the classical image of the muse. But the voice of a young boy

before it changes is also a soprano, and here the river's voice becomes the boy's.

The poet does not know the river's true name, which is as magical and mysterious as the muse herself, but he chooses its coat of arms for himself. Again, he does not choose the river as his totem, but rather as his "coat of arms," a heraldry that harks back to European origins. (In Anatomy of Criticism, Frye associates the "heraldic image" with the "emblematic vision" and the "symbolic apparatus" which appear in depictions of prophets [300]). The boy's blazon incorporates the flora and fauna of a "knowable" region, to use Bowering's term. In this garden of boundary, the wild is submerged in the domestic. Reminiscent of the garden of the Jesuits described by Pratt in Brébeuf and his Brethren (right down to the cresses), the river represents a pastoral and harmonious vision of a world enhanced if not shaped by human hands. The boy chooses the river as his shield, above which is inscribed his earliest wish: "To flow like you" (I.51). Lee has perceptively linked this conclusion to the famous "Thames Couplets" of John Denham's Cooper's Hill.

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme!  
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not  
dull, [t/o]  
Strong without rage, without ore-flowing full.

According to Brendan O Hehir, Denham at last arrived at these lines after "questing for the exact explication of the hieroglyphic meaning of the Thames which continued to

elude him" (198). Reaney too, is searching for the hieroglyphic meaning of the Avon river of his childhood. In Denham's poem, the complete symbol is not the river itself, but rather the harmony between river and hill, and, in Reaney's poem, the complete hieroglyph is not the river itself, but the harmony between the river and those who inhabit its shores. The unifying of the unlike, of river and poet, water and shore, music and memory, is represented by the "hermaphroditic leech" (I.47).

This allusion to the hermaphrodite, which does not appear in the first version of the poem published prior to Reaney's exposure to Jung,<sup>4</sup> is the first and most explicit representation of the alchemical coniunctio or union of opposites which appear throughout Twelve Letters. In classical myth Hermaphroditus was united with the nymph Salmacis while bathing, and the two beings in one come to represent the alchemical union of opposites, male/female, dry/wet, sun/moon, gold/silver, physical/spiritual, etc. (Jung 317-18). The hermaphrodite is one of the most pervasive of all alchemical symbols, appearing in some guise in one hundred of the illustrations in Psychology and Alchemy. Two common representations are the Uroboros, or tail-eating serpent which Reaney mentions in his dissertation with reference to Jung ("The Influence of Spenser on Yeats" 231), and Mercury with his caduceus, a familiar symbol of the medical profession. Both of these images shed light on Reaney's reference to "the

hermaphroditic leech," keeping in mind that "leech" is an archaic word for "physician" (OED). The dual nature of Mercurius, here associated with both the stream and the serpent, is later developed at greater length in the Seventh Letter through the joined figures of the Janitor and Granny Crack. Other common alchemical symbols of the union of opposites which appear throughout Twelve Letters include the King and Queen, the two-headed eagle, town and garden, sun and moon, summer and winter, twin roses, and even the paired wheels of the young boy's bicycle. In alchemy, "the treasure hard to attain" (Jung 162), the philosopher's stone or lapis that has the power to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, is called the rebis (two-thing) or Hermaphrodite because it is complete in itself, a union of opposites in perfect harmony. But as the alchemists were quick to remind unbelievers, the agent of transmutation which allows "the purification of the world of matter so that its golden nature should be revealed" (Burland 46) is not easy to find because it exists everywhere unrecognized.

At the end of the First Letter, Reaney inserts one of his "Thurber-like drawings" (Mandel 279) of a coin. As Browne points out, "at first, the drawings may appear ornamental, but in their own subtle way they comment rather profoundly, revealing a dimension left unspoken in the poems" (101). In discussing the ubiquity of the golden treasure that can be attained only through the

alchemy of the imagination, Jung writes: "It is all part of the banality of its outward aspect that the gold is minted, i.e., shaped into coins, stamped, and valued" (78). Reaney's coin is stamped not with the head of a king or queen, but with a crayfish, an emblem of his beloved river. The boy has been baptized into a new hierarchy of priorities. Childhood chooses its own coinage.

According to Jung, one method of attaining the elusive stone is through the use of the imaginatio:

The imaginatio is to be understood here as the real and literal power to create images (Einbildungskraft = imagination)--the classical usage of the word in contrast to phantasia, which means a mere "conceit," "idea," or "hunch" (Einfall) in the sense of insubstantial thought. Imaginatio is the active evocation of (inner) images secundum naturam, an authentic feat of thought or ideation, which does not spin aimless and groundless fantasies "into the blue"--does not, that is to say, just play with its objects, but tries to grasp the inner facts and portray them in images true to their nature. This activity is an opus, a work. (160)

The first opus undertaken by the boy initiated into the mysteries of voice and mimesis is the building of a model of the town. In Seed Catalogue Kroetsch asks "How do you grow a prairie town?" and finds his model in the gopher. When standing up straight, the gopher suggests all the vertical elements of the town (telephone poles, grain elevators, and church steeples), but it can vanish as quickly as it appears. In Reaney's "Instructions: How to Make a Model of the Town" the garden and the orchard provide the model. One of the most common analogies for

the alchemical process is that of horticulture. The alchemist plants the stone as a seed in the earth that fruit may be born in season (Coudert 120), thus participating in the creative process. Some alchemists went so far as to call God the master alchemist and Creation an alchemical act which they then imitated in the privacy of their laboratory (Jung 235ff). In the First Letter, the boy learns the Adamic task of naming. In the Second Letter, he participates in the very act of creation. In a discussion of the mythical implications of the child figure in Reaney's work, Terry Griggs writes: "Growing calls for a translation of life's gibberish into codes human and encompassing, for instance, into poetry or gardens" (29).

As the dialogue between "A" and his assistant "B" unfolds (represented in the radio performance by the voices of a man and a boy respectively), we learn of the exact method of building, or more accurately, growing a town. This is not just a model of any town, but of the town of Stratford with which the boy is intimately familiar. Therefore, the word "model" operates in two directions; the model "A" and "B" are building is at once a miniature of the original and an organic prototype. "The boys make their model of the town, not according to the preconceptions of their ancestors, but inspired by the possible resemblance of the town to a natural, vegetable order" (Browne 105). The first letter "A" instructs the

second letter "B" to make the spokes of an invisible wheel with "two sticks and two leafy branches" (II.1). The poem makes clear that these branches are not like the streets of the town, they are the streets of the town. Similarly, the blue glass bubbles hung on the ends of the branches like Christmas ornaments, become the Great Lakes at which those streets eventually terminate, and the green glass ball becomes the farms and fields into which Downie Street fades. The construction of the town corresponds to the "squaring of the circle" which was one symbol of the opus alchymicum (Jung 119). The "invisible wheel" created by "A" and "B" corresponds to the magic circle or mandala of alchemy which was often "squared" by a representation of the "four rivers of Paradise" flowing out from the centre. In Twelve Letters the circle of the town is "squared" by the four streets that flow out to lakes and fields.

Transmutation and metamorphosis are possible in the skilled hands of the alchemist who alone has access to the lapis, or philosopher's stone. The wheel and the circle are common symbols for the lapis as are the garden and the tree. The image of the tree, here represented by its leaves, was an ideal symbol for the philosopher's stone because both continually bear new fruit (Coudert 121). "A" suggests to the less imaginative "B" that they use fruit to build the houses and places of business. Critics have advanced several suggestions to support these choices. According to Lee:

the Edward Lear absurdity of having apples for the business places on Main Street contains a grain of common sense, if one is willing to allow that there is some kind of connection between the traditional enticement symbolism of apples and the basic principles of selling. (42)

Browne writes that "houses which usually owe something to their natural setting, are made of wild fruits. The official seats of authority, the two churches and the City Hall are properly identified by domestic vegetables, potatoes and a tomato" (107). Browne describes this child's game as training in metaphor, and the two builders are certainly acquiring a new perspective: "From the air, you know, a small town / Must look like rows of berries in the grass" (II.29-30). When it comes to introducing the human element into their garden, they are not so confident. The task of dressing up lady bugs to represent people is too much for "B," who is distracted by the heat and the music of a band. In order to release themselves from the model they have built they must fall down into it, as they fall down into the actual town. Now they can interpret the reality of the town through the metaphoric garden of their model: "Streets like branches and boughs / Hung with the orchards and pears of / Houses, houses, people, houses, houses" (II.51-53). This ability to move easily between the imagined and the actual is characteristic of the orchardry of childhood before it becomes torn (Reaney, "The School Globe" Poems 25).

The conclusion of the game which results in tumbling down to the refrain "houses houses. / Fall down! Fall



down!" (II.53-54) brings to mind the nursery rhyme "Ring around the roses" which concludes: "Hush, Hush, we all fall down." This circle game, in which the collapsing bodies signal the end, is reflected in the game of creation in which the boys participate. Reaney's poem also echoes "London Bridge is falling down" in which new choices of building materials are suggested in each stanza, though each ultimately proves inadequate: "Wood and clay will wash away...Iron and steel will bend and bow..." and so on (Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes 270-76). Because "A" and "B" have chosen organic materials to transform the town into a garden, their model is rooted in the world that contains it. In the nursery rhyme, the final solution to a bridge that insists upon falling down is the appointment of a guardian: "Set a man to watch all night." Ultimately, a human presence is required to guard the creation of the imagination. Without human beings to make the connection between town hall and tomato, lady bug and "my fair lady," the two remain sadly separate. In Alphabet, Reaney speaks of the belief he "held as a child that metaphor is reality" (1 [September 1960]:3), a belief that was threatened as he grew older and ultimately renewed. In Psychology and Alchemy, Jung refers to the departure from "the children's land" where "rational present-day consciousness was not yet separated from the historical psyche, the collective unconscious" (58) and mourns the inevitable loss of

instinct that ensues:

We must therefore realize that despite its undeniable successes the rational attitude of present-day consciousness is, in many human respects, childishly unadapted and hostile to life. Life has grown desiccated and cramped, crying out for the rediscovery of the fountainhead. But the fountainhead can only be found if the conscious mind will suffer itself to be led back to the "children's land," here to receive guidance from the unconscious as before. To remain a child too long is childish, but it is just as childish to move away and then assume that childhood no longer exists because we do not see it. (Jung 59-60)

Jung also notes that children play a part in the opus alchymicum because "the symbol of wholeness is still under the sway of childlike creative powers" (190). In Everyday Magic, a study of "child languages" in Canadian literature, Laurie Ricou suggests that "the popular equation of child and poet" may stem from the unexpectedness of children's metaphoric usage (7). Because "child language" is a "spoken language" in the "process of being learned" and free from the narrow referentiality of adult usage, it is full of magical surprise (Ricou 4-5). Despite the criticism such an approach entails, Reaney insists upon finding inspiration in the world of childhood:

children's games--all their activity--are potentially very important and perhaps much more worth watching than adult games and activities .... The literary image of the child is not necessarily one of nostalgia and sentimentality. Babe and child represent perfectly sound objective symbols for a part of man's existence that does not, since he can be reborn, always coexist with the actual state of babyhood and childhood. (Alphabet 2 [July 1961]: 1)

Another Canadian poet who found poetic inspiration in children's games was Saint-Denys Garneau, whose poem "Le Jeu" was one source of inspiration for Reaney's poem.<sup>5</sup> In Garneau's story Reaney found an image of Canada, and in "Le Jeu" he found an image of the creative process:

Un enfant est en train de bâtir un village.  
C'est une ville, un comté  
Et qui sait  
Tantôt l'univers. (Garneau 9)

A child is starting to build a village  
It's a city, a county  
And who knows  
Soon the universe.  
(F.R. Scott's translation)

Though this child builds with wooden blocks and playing cards rather than fruits and vegetables, he takes a similar care and possesses a similar belief in the reality of his model. Every tiny detail is immensely significant. In Reaney's "Second Letter" a whole elm tree is represented by one elm leaf. In Garneau's poem: "A supernatural importance is imparted to the leaf of a tree." The playing child cautions the adult unbeliever against entering the room, because one never knows whether he may "crush the favourite among the invisible flowers." Like the invisible wheel formed from branches in Reaney's poem, the elements of the children's garden are both precious and perishable. The analogy between child's play and poetry is clear, and Reaney believes with Garneau in the "Joie de jouer."

Unlike Kroetsch's prairie town, which is plagued by absence, including "the absence of kings and queens"

(IV.27), the town of Stratford is overwhelmed with tradition, including the annual Orangeman's Parade, perhaps the same parade which distracted "B" from his task of building a model of the town. Here the nursery rhyme cadence is continued in the description of King William and Queen Mary. These are, of course, actual historical figures (perhaps represented in the parade by people in costume), just as the Boyne is an actual river in northern Ireland, but the image of the King and Queen are also central symbols in alchemy. The "chymical marriage" between the two symbolizes the union of opposites that results in the lapis. Browne notes the erotic significance of the King and Queen, "with a white horse / In their groin" (III.16-17) and orange lilies against their white skin, a significance which, he suggests, is intuited but not fully understood by the child (108). Many illustrations of the royal pair appear in Jung's Psychology and Alchemy including a 1550 woodcut of a king and queen in coitus as a symbol of the alchemical stage of coniunctio, which Jung interprets as "an allegory of the psychic union of opposites" (316). In another engraving depicting "the sequence of stages in the alchemical process" (272), they appear side by side, the king bearing "a red lily in his hand, whereas the queen has a white lily" (Jung 275). In Reaney's "Third Letter" the lilies are orange, as an emblem of King William, the Prince of Orange. Perhaps these are common tiger lilies, but in the

mind of the boy, they carry the whole weight of secret societies and bloody battles.

[The parade] marks an imposition upon the seasonal, agriculturally-ordered year, of an historically cyclic or artificial year. To the boy, the passage of each year is governed by the shift of seasons, but he is learning that his elders recognize significant dates which derive from their historical past, and that the social year is ordered by memory and imagination.  
(Browne 108)

The boy learns to participate in this process through the repetition of a rhyme he may well have created and through the transformation of a flower into an emblem of history.

The process of conjunction, or the pairing of opposites, introduced through the figures of the King and Queen, sets the pattern for an exploration of Stratford as it lives in the poet's memory. Through a series of thirty-six localizing prepositions, the poet presents many of the contraries that govern the life of the town:

|                                   |                    |                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Up here is the Water Tower,       | down there's the   |                |
| Sewage Farm                       |                    | [t/o]          |
| Down there's the Old Folks' Home, | up here's the      |                |
| Theatre                           |                    | [t/o]          |
| Up here's a pillared house,       | down there is Kent |                |
| Lane                              |                    | [t/o] (IV.1-3) |

Clearly, the contraries Reaney presents share some affinities in the mind of the poet and the reader. The hospital and the graveyard are paired, as are the Dam (read damn) and the Church, sunlight and moonlight, lilacs and loneliness, and the annunciation of peace "just after the war" (IV.23). At the typographical and symbolic centre of the poem is the image of the "two-headed eagle" (IV.9). This image has been variously used as a religious

and political emblem, but in alchemy it holds a special significance as a symbol of the hermaphroditic stone which like the phoenix reproduces itself. In two of the illustrations that appear in Jung's Psychology and Alchemy, the double eagle is represented wearing the spiritual and temporal crowns (192, 452). The town of Stratford also includes these two kingdoms in various manifestations, the most explicit of which is the Christmas angels heralding the end of World War II.

The title of the poem "Voices and Prepositions" is accounted for by the fact that in the radio performance the italicized lines are read by a different voice than that of the narrator, but on the page the poem is filled with images of silence (with the exception of the "recorded ding dongs from a loudspeaker" [IV.21]). The town sits under "the silent Saturday summer sun" (IV.13) and a factory on the weekend is likened to a monastery. In the "First Letter" the young boy learns the voice of the river; now he begins to interpret the voices of the human structures which order his world. It is here through the prepositions that relate the elements of his world to each other, rather than in the "dusty looking glass of grammar" (V.8), that the boy's true education begins.

Similarly, it is in the cloakroom and not the classrooms of his highschool that he learns the most. The highschool is described as "the palace of Merlin and

Cheiron" (V.1), but there are no wise wizards and centaurs to pass on their knowledge and magic to youths preparing to be warriors and kings. Instead the "rule of monotony" reigns, taught by the "cheep cheep cheeping" of radiators (V.4-5), reminiscent of the "small cheeping birds" that represent old age in William Carlos Williams' poem "To Waken an Old Lady." Any element of the natural world that manages to enter this fortress is quickly stuffed, codified and lost under layers of dust. The boy who once found his model in the river and the garden, now has his brain shaped by grammar and numbers. But fortunately, there is a cloakroom in which these established boundaries are subverted, and it is here that the boy's true education takes place. The nature of the room, "high dark, narrow" (V.11), and its very name suggest mystery and magic, disguise and darkness. Here the cloaks are "[s]oft with outside things inside / Burs, mud, dead leaves..." (V.14-15). The pattern established in the preceding letters suggests that the natural external world is the world of childhood, whereas the internal world enclosed by human structures belongs to adults. In the cloakroom, elements of the world of nature which have hitherto provided the raw materials for the boy's imagination have been smuggled through the borders.

The mythical figure who presides over this magical port of entry is "the old janitor" (V.21). In an institution of answers he is a "a curious question"

(V.26), the only surprise in an ordered and dusty world. Like the man "with the face of a bull" discovered in the labyrinthine highschool corridors of Mandel's "Minotaur Poems" (Crusoe 4), the janitor proves to be a puzzle the boy cannot solve, although equipped with all the codes and formulas. A janitor is a "caretaker of a building" but he is also "a doorkeeper" [OED Latin janua=door], the guardian of the gateway into the unknown. He is also referred to as "January man" which reflects the season in which the boy's epiphanic encounter occurs, but also serves to associate him with Janus, "the guardian god of doors and beginnings" (OED). The image of Janus, described as having two faces, one young and one old looking in opposite directions (Hamilton 45), is amplified in the "Seventh Letter" in the image of Janitor and Granny Crack revolving "back to back" as a compound angel looking down upon the town. This hermaphroditic image perfectly echoes the dual nature of Mercurius as described by Jung:

sometimes he was a ministering and helpful spirit...and sometimes an elusive, deceptive, teasing goblin who drove the alchemists to despair and had many of his attributes in common with the devil.... In the alchemical hierarchy of gods Mercurius comes lowest as prima materia and highest as lapis philosophorum. The spiritus mercurialis is the alchemists' guide (Hermes Psychopompos), and their tempter; he is their good luck and their ruin. (64-66)

Though not hired by the town to teach, the Janitor, like Merlin and Cheiron, is capable of initiating the young boy into life's mysteries represented by the white bird unlocked "upon the wave" (V.29). Browne links this image



with the dove of Noah "sent out into the drowned world to seek new earth" (Browne 112) and also associates the white bird with the angel created by summer and winter, Granny Crack and Old Janitor. There are several other associations which come to mind: the white dove that descends upon the waves of the Jordan during Christ's Baptism, the white dove that the magician produces from beneath his cloak in a conjuring show, and the white snow of January that falls like feathers on the town. Not surprisingly, the bird is also a central image of alchemy:

Birds are thoughts and the flight of thought. Generally it is fantasies and intuitive ideas that are represented thus (the winged Mercurius, Morpheus, genii, angels).... Even the lapis, the rebis (compounded of two parts and therefore frequently hermaphroditic as an amalgam of Sol and Luna) is often represented with wings, denoting intuition or spiritual (winged) potentiality. In the last resort all these symbols depict the consciousness-transcending fact we call the self. (Jung 192-93)

The avis Hermetis of alchemy was often represented by the swan, the stork, the goose, the pelican, and the dove (Jung 356n), all possible candidates for the "white bird" of Reaney's poem. Jung's description of the white dove as a "symbol of the spirit freed from the embrace of Physis" (328) is particularly apt, allied as it is with the butterfly (or moth) of Christian iconography.

The town is inhabited by many who would militate against such mysteries, including the maiden aunts with whom the boy lives while going to school. These spinsters live in what was once a garden, but the roses on the

wallpaper have become as repetitious as the life they lead. As in Reaney's poem "The School Globe" (Poems 63) these roses clench into fists, suggesting the sublimated but violent frustration of the inmates of the house on King William Street. The spinsters' hortus conclusus has become a sad parody of the "rose garden of the philosophers," one of alchemy's favourite symbols (Jung 167). Only a few well hidden blossoms have kept their "original blaze" (VI.10)--most have become "yellow," as if sere with age and jealous of the external world. The aunts delight in condemning that which they have clandestinely enjoyed. Because their own lives are devoid of passion, they criticize Haggard's novel She in which an immortal Queen awaits her lover surrounded by cannibals and curses. Like the fowl in the "Chicken Little" beast fable from which their names are drawn, they are prone to sensationalizing. Forever convinced that the sky is falling, they only ever manage to "take another should / Off the would pile" (VI.23-24). Ultimately, nothing changes in their world and no new story is ever told. The one who observes this withering stasis symbolized by the yellowed roses, is the young boy who boards there. This "awkward fool," as in Shakespeare's plays, is wiser than those who reign because he has confronted the "green smothered darkness" (VI.28) behind the cupboard, in the cloakroom, and within the secret kingdom of language. Here the roses remain forever new, like the "happy happy

boughs" of Keats' urn which cannot shed their leaves, "nor ever bid the spring adieu" ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" 21-22).

In Seed Catalogue Kroetsch asks "How do you grow a past?" in a world characterized by absence. He mourns the absence of "books, journals, daily newspapers and everything / else but the Free Press Prairie Farmer and The / Western Producer" (IV.41-43). In the "Seventh Letter" of Twelve Letters to a Small Town, the boy who has become the poet approaches the "tea-coloured files of the town's newspapers" (VII.2) with faith that he will find a past for himself and his community. Just as the cloakroom brought the outside in, the "dark little room" (VII.5) that houses the Archives brings the past into the present. Reminiscent of the roses on the wallpaper, these pages hidden in the darkness remember a younger time. Climbing down this "shaky fading paper rope" (VII.3) into the past, the poet encounters a world governed by seasons and shillings, small comedies and crimes. But at the centre of it all is the vital "flower or is it a seed pod of all the words spoken at the / cross-roads of the town" (VII.34-35). In a discussion of the temenos of the symbolic city, Jung writes:

The inside of the "golden flower" is a "seeding-place" where the "diamond body" is produced. The synonymous term "the ancestral land" may actually be a hint that this production is the result of integrating the ancestral stages. The ancestral spirits play an important part in primitive rites of renewal. (Jung 124)

At the place where the four branches meet to form the

center of the town, there have been turning wheels, footsteps, and voices for more than a century. Kroetsch's poem offers no crossroads loud with history; his prairie road is "the shortest distance / between nowhere and nowhere" (VI.71-72). But here the streets of the town intersect with the past, and blossom into a history at once public and private. As in Kroetsch's poem, it is within the oral tradition that the past survives. The poet's world is inhabited by "figures" about which he has heard "from ancestral voices" (VII.37) and those he himself has seen. Thus the "seedpod" is an image of potential, regeneration, and promise. The motley cast of characters who live out the drama of the town are described (the Indian woman with her flax, the Indian man with his feather, the blind old man who keeps his fiddle singing, and the "blind" old women who stop the church bells ringing), but none so vividly as "Granny Crack" who in "Reaney's Canadian mythology is a spirit of the rural Ontario countryside" (Lee 47).

Granny Crack is a central figure in Reaney's imagination who also appears in the poem "Winter's Tales" (1949), and in the plays The Killdeer (1959) and Colours in the Dark (1967). The phrase with which she is introduced in Twelve Letters, "There was an old woman" (VII.53), is reminiscent of the beginning of nursery rhymes and limericks, suggesting a figure belonging to legend. Indeed, there is something apocalyptic in her

costume of "seven dresses all at once" (VII.54) and in her movements as she walks "the length / and breadth of the country" (VII.54-55) as Satan does in Job. Harlot and harridan, she is at once the crack of doom and the crack of dawn. Browne points out the absence in Twelve Letters of certain localizing details that are present in a similar passage in The Killdeer, including the comparison of Granny Crack's face to "a killdeer's egg" rather than just "a bird's egg" (VII.62). Also absent is the reference to her as a whore who humiliates all takers, including the young boys who have sex with her in the ditch. Perhaps a concession to a radio audience, these changes also serve to universalize the figure of Granny Crack as earth mother. In the alchemical context she comes to represent the dark side of the hermaphroditic Mercurius:

It is of the essence of the transforming substance to be on the one hand extremely common, even contemptible (this is expressed in the series of attributes it shares with the devil, such as serpent, dragon, raven, lion, basilisk, and eagle), but on the other hand to mean something of great value, not to say divine. For the transformation leads from the depths to the heights, from the bestially archaic and infantile to the mystical homo maximus. (Jung 128-29)

The frightened children see Granny Crack

...as an incredible crone  
The spirit of neglected fence corners  
Of the curious wisdom of brambles  
And weeds, of ruts, of stumps and of things despised.  
(VII.65-68)

In their minds, she comes to represent a garden gone wild.

Her own perception of herself is somewhat more lofty:

I was the mother of your sun  
 I was the aunt of your moon  
 My veins are your paths and roads  
 On my head I bear steeples and turrets  
 I am the darling of your god. (VII.69-73)

Granny Crack's name suggests a multitude of meanings, from craziness to casual conversation (Browne 116-117). Like Johnnie Crack in Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood, she is the stuff of song and folk tale. But she is also a "pigsty Venus" and "the crack we all fell out of" (Macpherson, "Educated Doodle" 77). In this aspect she resembles Yeats' Crazy Jane who was called Cracked Mary in early versions of the poems that bear her name. (It is worth recalling that Reaney had just completed a dissertation on Yeats in which he drew attention to the alchemical as well as occult dimension of Yeats' poetry). Crazy Jane, like Granny Crack, has an audacious power of speech, and an audacious sense of self: "I carry the sun in a golden cup, / The moon in a silver bag" (Yeats, CP 302). Her body sings on, though it is "like a road/ that men pass over" (Yeats, CP 294). Balachandra Rajan's comments about Crazy Jane could easily apply to Reaney's Granny Crack:

The essence of Crazy Jane is her derelict dignity in the face of circumstance, a kind of heroic inviolability amid the humiliations of the blind man's ditch.... Again and again Jane expresses the sense of wholeness, the recognition that opposites need each other to complete themselves. (149)

In the final stanza of the "Seventh Letter" the poet

reveals that Granny Crack is only half of the equation that is completed by the Janitor. Body and soul, summer and winter, Luna and Sol are united together in the alchemical marriage, creating a hermaphroditic whole, a winged figure that is at once annunciator and guardian. Together they look down upon the child's garden.

Yeats's series of Crazy Jane poems are entitled "Words for Music Perhaps." In Reaney's next letter, "The Music Lesson," the "perhaps" disappears entirely as the poem actually becomes a piece of music. The world in which the lesson takes place is governed by an eclectic cultural and political heritage which creates a haunting, almost surreal, environment for a child's apprenticeship in composition. As in "Instructions: How to Make a Model of the Town," the poem is a dialogue between two characters who are now specifically identified as teacher and pupil. The rhythm of the poem follows the tick tock of the metronome, an ordering device which Reaney fondly satirizes in his short story "Dear Metronome" (Canadian Forum 32 [September 1952]: 134-37). The "Eighth Letter" shares in the nostalgia of D.H. Lawrence's "Piano" poem, but the overall tone is playful rather than sad. The town that was recreated earlier in vegetable form, is now recreated in musical form (Lee 46). The childish puns that form the composition take on their own reality; the thing named becomes the thing itself: "There was a seedsman whose name was Seed / Fat as a well fed daffodil

bulb" (VIII.31-32). Again, the power of imaginatio has come into play. As one early alchemical treatise phrases it: "what the soul imagines happens only in the mind, but what God imagines happens in reality" (Jung 267).

As the lesson progresses from assigned scales to pieces of music, the boy is allowed to choose the tempo and texture of his music. For "The Storm" (an earlier version of which appeared in The Varsity [January 18, 1960]: 5), the metronome is set at "summer and pink and white and yellow brick / sunlight with blue sky and white feather dumpling / clouds" (VIII.51-53). For the next piece, "Two Part Invention: a Year in the Town," the boy practices the part of each hand separately before playing them together. This contrapuntal effect, perhaps more successful in the radio version of the poem, nonetheless anticipates Kroetsch's use of two columns which can be read in more than one direction. With his left hand, in what Lee describes as a Basso ostinato (47), Reaney evokes the organic happenings that mark the progress of the seasons: from spring buds to summer leaves, on to the bare twigs and branches of autumn, and finally to the frosty blue and white of winter, over which Orion reigns. With the right hand he considers the human response to each season through personal memories that are both animated and auditory. "Spring winds up the town" (VIII.92) like a skein of silk, or perhaps a clock or metronome, so that the special rhythm of the year may unfold. In summer the



lanterns are put out on the porch. And in autumn both the ferris wheel and the rains descend. Nature's music is subsumed in the urban rhythms of "bricks and stones and highway hum" (110). Held captive by Orion, the hunter, the winter town must have its manna dropped from the skies. The final command of the teacher, "Twice as fast next time," reiterates the cyclical nature of the seasons, and provides a commentary on the way in which the passing of time appears to accelerate with each year.

Davey quotes a passage from this "Eighth Letter" beginning with "Twig and branch, Twig and branch..." (VIII.109) to support his conclusions about the suite as a whole: "The work bears a striking similarity to the child's Grade One Dick and Jane reader that has recently received severe criticism for being overly infantile" (83). Davey seems unwilling to acknowledge the orality of this piece as a performance poem in which the sound of the words is as important as their meaning (Kroetsch's extended refrain "I don't give a damn if I do die do die do die do die..." in Seed Catalogue has a similar effect). In "An Evening with Babble and Doodle" Reaney explains the task of writing words for music: "Since the librettist is supposed to write something which the music completes and extends, the lines have to be cleaned and scraped until there is nothing to stop the music flowing around them" (41). The result is one poet's simple but persuasive response to the question posed by H.D. in her poem

"Hermetic Definition:" "Is remembrance chiefly a matter / of twig, leaf, grass, stone?" (29).

In the Ninth Letter "Town House and Country Mouse" Reaney contrasts the rural world of unified wholes with the urban environment characterized by separation. No longer the fruits and berries of the second poem, the houses in town are now old maids, sterile and ancient, mild and weak. Spinsters stiff with history, they live out their narrow lives. In contrast, the rural "here" abounds with fertility: "barn is added to house, / House is married to barn" (IX.12-13); age and youth, "Gray board and pink brick" (IX.14) are one. Children play while animals are slaughtered; life and death go hand in hand. This image of "the farm terrain (seen both as fruitful orchard and neglected garden)" recurs often in Reaney's poetry (Warkentin ix), but now the child must submit to an initiation--the passage from "here" to "there"--a process accompanied by the flowering of language. During his journey into the town, the wheels of the boy's red buggy whirl by "the secret place where wild bees nest" and "against sheaves of blue chicory" (IX.29). In Psychology and Alchemy, Jung discusses the significance of the blue flower:

The dreamer finds a blue flower blossoming aimlessly by the wayside, a chance child of nature, evoking friendly memories of a more romantic and lyrical age, of the youthful season when it came to bud, when the scientific view of the world had not yet broken away from the world of actual experience--or rather when this break was only just beginning and the eye looked back

to what was already the past. The flower is in fact like a friendly sign, a numinous emanation from the unconscious, showing the dreamer... where he can find the seed that wants to sprout in him too. (76-77)

As a symbol of the mandala (Jung 99), the blue flower is associated with all the wheels and circles in the poem, most notably the seedpod of voices of the "Seventh Letter" which is here described as "the million leaning pens of grass with their nibs of seed" (IX.31). The boy is still in the paradisaal garden where to name is to create. Language is still, to use Kroetsch's phrase, "an enabling act." But all of this is "suddenly gone" (IX.33). The garden with its "wild rose bush" is left behind, and the boy finds himself "in another world altogether" (IX.39). Like Alice, he discovers a world in which things are not quite what they seem, and the function of language is ever shifting. The cement lion with its legs like a table evokes no fear. The once eloquent logs, now buried in gravel, "[l]ook dumbly up" (IX.35). The boy's familiar pastoral world has "gone wild and drowned" (IX.47). According to Macpherson, "drowning is almost the standard pastoral catastrophe" (3) which marks the pastoral "fall," the passage from a sympathetic to an unsympathetic natural world (The Spirit of Solitude 10).

Passing from "here" to "there," the young boy is suddenly thrust into an urban environment which both terrifies and intrigues. The town square offers a different geometry from the friendly circles of the world

he has left behind. People sparkle like jewelled stars in a strange new sky upon which a yet undeciphered calligraphy appears: "a huge chimney writing the sky / With dark smoke" (IX.52-53). Nightmarish and chimerical, the town entices the boy's imagination with its own hieroglyphs and emblems, many of which have alchemical significance. "The first person with a wooden leg" (IX.51) finds a parallel in alchemical illustrations of "Saturn, in the guise of an ancient wooden-legged man... shown in the act of watering the sun-tree and moon-tree" (Read 18). (The drawing of the gas pump surmounted by the sun that appears at the end of this poem and its companion drawing of a gas pump surmounted by a moon, bear a striking resemblance to alchemical illustrations of the sun and moon that appear throughout Psychology and Alchemy [331, 387]). The boy also sees "A clock in the shape of a man with its face / In his belly" (IX.55-56). The clock is the time-symbol of the lapis, which Jung interprets as "a three-dimensional mandala--a mandala in bodily form signifying realization" (194). The swans that float in the Avon also attract the boy's attention, evoking both local and alchemical significance. In alchemy, the swan appears as a symbol of "the sublimated spiritus" (Jung 358). Fascinated as he is by this glimpse into a strange new world, the boy journeys backward to the "here" of his childhood, back to the familiar music of nature heard in "the gamut of grass and blue flowers" (IX. 65). As Browne

points out, "a gamut is the name for all the notes on a musical scale" (121). Appropriately, the return to a world as yet unfractured is accompanied by a song replete with all the notes of nature. This return implies that the "pastoral fall" described by Macpherson has not, in fact, taken place. "Once it has come about," writes Macpherson, "the desolated present is seen as the real world and the idyllic past rejected as illusory or a dream" (The Spirit of Solitude 10). Instead, the boy's journey appears to correspond to the alchemical process of circulatio, symbolized by the wheel, and marked by an ascensus and descensus that resemble the rotation of the universe, and the cycling of the year (Jung 157). The wheels of the boy's red buggy carry him "uptown" then back down again to his rural home.

The new uncertain landscape of the town inevitably attracts the boy's imagination. Having entered this strange new laboratory, he must create what conjunctions (coniunctio) he can through the alchemy of the imagination. The title of the Tenth Letter "Voices and Conjunctions" echoes that of the Fourth Letter "Voices and Prepositions." In the former poem, however, the grammatical part of speech to which the title refers appears throughout the poem, while in the latter, "ordinary conjunctions, in the grammatical sense, are not in evidence" (Browne 123). Very likely, then, Reaney is alluding to the conjunctions, or "paradoxical union of

irreconcilables" (Jung 139), that represent a vital stage in the alchemical process. Not only is the young boy paired with the strange people who populate his memory, but the memories themselves symbolize the union of opposites. Each stanza based upon a remembered fragment of conversation expands to include an image of coniunctio, as well as a reference to the alchemical process.

The wise old man is a central figure in alchemy, and here he is seen carrying two canes. In an earlier poem, Reaney describes this figure as "God the Father bearing up his creation / With Adam and Eve the two canes before him" (Poems 117). Adam and Eve as the first male and female represent the first marriage of opposites, providing a model for all the other conjunctions to follow. In the second stanza the sorrowful Mr. Vermeer has two "grave bespectacled" children (X.8). The children are paired as are the lenses on their faces, and their youth is paired with age: "Eighty years old at the age of eight" (X.9), in a pathetic inversion of the alchemical dream of finding eternal youth. The old bookbinder, on the other hand, bridges centuries and countries, bringing his bookbinding skills to his new home. Another pairing of opposites is found in the two boys, one sad and one evil, and in the Gospel mad man to whom even the secular days are sacred. Near the home of the twins are the brick kilns identified as "two huge mosaic roses" (X.25). Well before the Rosicrucians, the rose was the symbol of the divine

essence in the west, as the lotus was in the east (Jung 104), and appears often in alchemical engravings as the birthplace of the philosopher's stone (Jung 77). The final and most fearsome of the conjunctions is the dream figure of a man "With a clock in his belly" (which in alchemy represents immortality [Jung 172]) juxtaposed with babies reaching out from the church yard. Life and death, old age and infancy, come together in an apocalyptic encounter. The italicized fragment that closes this stanza may be nothing more than a description of the location of the church yard, but "on the hill above the dam" recalls another hill where, above the damned, Life challenged death once and for all.

As the boy's imagination matures, the conjunctions which he perceives in the life of the town become more literary than literal. In a 1953 article in The Canadian Forum, Reaney discusses the inauguration of the Stratford Festival and the efforts of the townspeople to connect themselves with their famous namesake:

The tourists were awe-stricken by the street names and the town planted a Shakespearean garden which at one time was supposed to hold not only all the flowers mentioned in the plays but iron labels bearing quotations and standing beside the appropriate flowers. (33 [August 53]: 112-113)

In contrast to the citizens of Stratford, Ontario, who merely plant the floral emblems associated with the various plays in their "Shakespearean Gardens," the poet illustrates how the plays themselves are emblems of actual

incidents in the town. The town itself becomes a garden in which each individual carries symbolic value, as do the various flowers in Ophelia's bouquet. The connections drawn by the poet are sometimes clever, sometimes poignant, but always revealing, as if to say that Stratford, Ontario contains tragedy and romance that are as real and moving as any which inspired the bard. Lee explains the connection between Stratford's "Mr. Upas" and King Lear:

The icon of the fabulous Javanese upas tree, whose poison kills all life for miles around, is just right for the silver-haired Lear who plunges a rational mind, a family, a kingdom, and a cosmos into turmoil. (49)

Even the local armouries are made of the "usual red brick with the / usual limestone machicolation" (XI.34-35). The fact that openings for the launching of arrows and boiling liquids are incorporated into the buildings of a small sleepy town is clearly a source of comic irony. However, coupled with this gentle ridicule is a nostalgic admiration on the part of poet and reader alike for a certain largeness of gesture as a sign of local pride.

In the Twelfth Letter, "a poetic recapitulation of main images and themes from the whole suite" (Lee 50), the boy's bicycle becomes a metaphor for all the world. Like the other vehicles in the suite, from red buggy to shark-fish car, the bicycle is a medium of both transportation and transformation. "More than a hoop but never a car" (XII.2), this particular vehicle captures that fleeting



halfway point between childhood and manhood. It carries the boy back to the rural world of his childhood where nature speaks and legends come alive, and forward to speeding cars "filled with the two-backed beast / One dreams of, yet knows not the word for" (XII.6-7).

Sexuality, here expressed in the language of Shakespeare's Iago, is one of many hieroglyphs waiting to be deciphered, one of many experiences yet to be named into existence.

The turning wheels of the bicycle bring to mind the many other images of circles in Twelve Letters:

The spokes of the bicycle wheels are at once the branches of the town's streets and the branches of autumn in the piano lesson, blossoming out into asterisk shapes. These in turn are the stars, the wild roses, the fall leaves, and the character of the poet, as he cycles away from his childhood towards manhood, taking with him into his career as an adult poet the loved images of his homeland. (Lee 51)

The final letter itself is full of circular images ranging from the explicit (hoop, wheels, burs, and puddles) to the implicit--the hermaphroditic figure of coitus and the cycle of the seasons which echoes the cycle of human life.

As a union of two circles, the bi-cycle is a symbol of the "treasure hard to attain" (Jung 162). Through the alchemy of the imagination, the vehicle becomes the boy's passage into the secret garden of love and language.

Possessed of the rebis or "two-thing," the boy can see into the heart of life and transform what he sees: "for transformation is one of the magical properties of the marvelous stone" (Jung 76). The final stage in the

alchemical process is projectio: "The possessor of [the] penetrating Mercurius can "project" it into other substances and transform them from the imperfect into the perfect state" (Jung 285). The young poet's climactic assertion that "everything was / The bicycle of which I sing" resembles the alchemists' belief that the stone was the "one in all" and the "all in one" (Coudert 152). The alchemists believed that there was not just one lapis, but several, the "mineral" stone that transmutes base metals into gold, the "vegetable" stone which makes plants, flowers, and trees grow miraculously, the "magical" stone that allows its possessor to discover missing persons and communicate with birds, and the "angelic" stone which allows the alchemist to converse with angels (Coudert 152). Through the alchemy of the imagination, the young poet is able to accomplish these things. Possessed of the lapis that is both panacea and sanctuary (Burland 179), the boy is protected in "a world of love and of feeling" (XII.31). Jung reminds us that the lapis is not easily found because it is uncomely and common; only to the believer can it provide entrance into a new creative world. "Reaney's world is fully alive, singing itself into existence all around him, both in spite of him, and because of him" (Browne 126).

The final image to confront the reader in Twelve Letters to a Small Town is a drawing of the bicycle with wheels as seedpods. As has been noted, one of the most

common images in alchemy is the representation of the lapis as a seed that will germinate and bear fruit (Coudert 120). Thus, the alchemist was a gardener who could transform his corner of the world into an island of beauty and joy. Imagination, what the alchemists defined as "the star in man" (Jung 265), is the ability to create, the ability that Reaney celebrates in Twelve Letters To a Small Town. Elsewhere Reaney writes that the task of the poet is to find the world of joy, "the world Yeats is talking about where body is not 'bruised to pleasure soul,' where root, bole and blossom are one" ("The Third Eye" 34). Reaney places Yeats in "the mythopoeic tradition...a tradition that sees poetry and the human imagination as the way back to Paradise" ("The Influence of Spenser on Yeats" 255). According to Macpherson, "the work of the good magician or alchemist tends towards the re-creation of Eden, even if only for instants.... (The Spirit of Solitude 180). Reaney's poetry is an expression of his conviction that Ontario, his home place, is "not just a heap of topsoil, parking lots, mineshafts and stumps, but a sacred place" ("An ABC to Ontario Literature and Culture" 2). Through the alchemy of Reaney's imagination the reader is invited to enter into this garden at once remembered and created.

## II.

Kroetsch's Seed Catalogue and Reaney's Twelve Letters to a Small Town have much in common. The growth of the town and the growth of the poet are central in each. Both poems incorporate and allude to "subtext[s] of low cultural standing" (Davey, Surviving the Paraphrase 186) and both demonstrate a preoccupation with language and play. Through the image of the garden operating as a model for the human imagination and the human community, a personal and communal past is dis-covered. Both poets even acknowledge similar influences. Surprisingly, Kroetsch acknowledges Frye's impact; "[The Secular Scripture] had become a kind of bible to me" (LTW 160). Kroetsch also admits to using Jung as a "source book" for his own writing: "He is something of a goldmine, especially his works on alchemy" (LY 104). However, as has been noted, Twelve Letters and Seed Catalogue spring from divergent theoretical origins. In contrast to Reaney, Kroetsch "writes mandalas towards a cosmology that cannot be located" (LTW 129). His use of the archaeological model celebrates rather than resolves the "basic tension" in the Canadian long poem between "a) the temptation of the documentary, b) the scepticism about history" (LTW 119). In his book The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault writes: "For archaeological analysis, contradictions are neither appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered. They are objects to be

described for themselves...." (151). Kroetsch explains how this model applies to writing:

It is a kind of archaeology that makes this place, with all its implications, available to us for literary purposes. We have not yet grasped the whole story; we have hints and guesses that slowly persuade us towards the recognition of larger patterns. Archaeology allows the fragmentary nature of the story, against the coerced unity of traditional history. Archaeology allows for discontinuity. It allows for layering. It allows for imaginative speculation. (LTW 7)

Kroetsch's collection of long poems is appropriately entitled Field Notes, a title that reveals many of the preoccupations central to the poem Seed Catalogue, which is itself built around one of the "archeological deposits" Kroetsch discovered in his search for "the home place:"

My own continuing poem is called, somewhat to my dismay, Field Notes. Perhaps Olson's field is there somewhere, but more specifically I think of the field notes kept by the archaeologist, by the finding man, the finding man who is essentially lost. I can only guess the other; there might, that is, be a hidden text. Yes, it is as if we spend our lives finding clues, fragments, shards, leading or misleading details, chipped tablets written over in a forgotten language. Perhaps they are a counting of cattle, a measuring out of grain. Perhaps they are a praising of gods, a naming of the dead. We can't know. (LTW 129)

By "Olson's field" Kroetsch means American poet Charles Olson's theory of "COMPOSITION BY FIELD" which Olson describes in his essay "Projective Verse." The features that distinguish "composition by field" are a concern for process and kinetics (the particular energy peculiar to each poem), and a choice of form that is not artificially imposed but rather a direct extension of content (Olson

257-58). Clearly, the poems in Field Notes, including Seed Catalogue, demonstrate similar concerns.

In his Preface to Field Notes, Mandel suggests some other possibilities for the meaning of field: "The field is where (how) it grows, where it dies, where it takes place: ground, open field, field force, field games, the place defined in its telling" (7). (A cognate of the garden, the field as a place of agricultural endeavour is obviously central to the study of Field Notes and will be considered throughout the discussion). Bowering interprets the field in Kroetsch's title as a verb: "I can field a pop-up pretty well, and a grounder as long as it isn't hit right at me.... But how do you field notes?" (Long-liners 131). Bowering's question is not inappropriate because Kroetsch, like Reaney, believes in the importance of games, particularly as applied to language. In an interview with Russell Brown, Kroetsch differentiates between the game theory in which language is treated as a serious game, and the picture theory where language is perceived as identical with reality. As one might expect, Kroetsch himself believes "the fascinating place is that place right in between the two" (Brown 16). The field of the poem becomes a playing field where various theories of language challenge each other.

The most obvious allusion in the title Field Notes is to the archeological model, which enhances all of the other potential meanings. According to Kroetsch, even

"the notion of archaeology and the notion of game are totally compatible" (LV 11) in that things keep changing and the whole must be replayed: "...every unearthing is problematic, tentative, subject to a story-making act that is itself subject to further change as the 'dig' goes on" (LTW 24). The post-modern writer experiences this lack of closure as an adventure rather than a threat:

That is why I think the archaeological model is so fascinating. There's always a further possibility. It never ends. It's like the man looking for Troy--he's always finding one more city beneath the city. I think the very incompleteness is part of what excites us. (LV 9-10).

The record of this adventure is to be found in the field notes, a form which Kroetsch interprets as peculiarly appropriate for Canadians. In the opening pages of Kroetsch's novel Badlands Anna Dawe says:

God help us we are a people raised not on love letters or lyric poems or even cries of rebellion or ecstasy or pain or regret, but rather old hoards of field notes, those cryptic notations made by men who held the words themselves in contempt but who needed them nevertheless in order to carry home, or back if not home, the only memories they would ever cherish: the recollections of their male courage and their male solitude. (2)

The distance between the male and female world is imaged in a "horse: house" dialectic which Kroetsch considers central to prairie fiction (LTW 76). The man moves through a distant field of games, myths, and military manoeuvre, while the woman is fixed within a domestic domain which is characterized by duty, but also by song. Peter Thomas applies this dialectic to Kroetsch's work:

"Put shortly, though I believe not misleadingly, Seed Catalogue is about the male yarn, embodied in the bullshitting father, competing with the lyrical song of love, intimacy, home" (RePlacing 49). According to Kroetsch:

the most obvious resolution of the dialectic, however temporary, is in the horse-house. Not the barn, but whore's-house.... But the hoo-er house of western mythology is profane; against it the author plays the sacred possibility of the garden. (LTW 76)

Between the male field and the female house lies the garden where the two can at last be reconciled.

Not surprisingly, then, the garden emerges in Kroetsch's writing as the most fertile ground for the growth of the poet. Prevented by allergies from working in the male domains of barn and field, and from work in the house "because that was the sphere of female activity," Kroetsch sought refuge in the garden:

...the one place where I found a kind of open field was the garden because a garden is ambiguous on a farm. It involves women's work but often the men help. And so I ended up with a huge garden. I would grow enough for about four families, and I planted trees. My dad, who was a practical man, couldn't understand why anybody would want to plant a tree after he'd spent his life cutting them down. All this has to do with my wrestling with this notion of erotics right now in my writing. I had gone beyond mere role into a kind of human-sexual intertextuality. (LV 21)

Davey suggests that many recent Canadian long poems are built around "a metaphoric strategy, a pre-selected image which simultaneously defines the area of the poem and provides a field of potential recurrence on which the



prolongation of the poem will depend" (189). The "pre-selected image" in the case of Seed Catalogue is the garden which provides both subject and structure:

The vegetable garden is really one of the organizing principles--I realize that looking back. And I used to like gardening so much as a kid, but those vegetables and plants and possibilities of whatever a garden might mean, keep recurring. (Gunnars 61)

By interpreting the garden as an archaeological site in which images from all levels of culture and history are juxtaposed with personal reminiscence and autobiography, Kroetsch is successfully able to adapt the universal to the local. The energy of his text stems from the sudden and surprising connections that emerge between an apparently random selection of images:

My poem Seed Catalogue is about a prairie garden. I actually used the McKenzie Seed Catalogue from McKenzie Seeds in Brandon. This was part of my effort to locate the poem in a particular place and then I expanded the poem outward to whatever other models I wanted--the garden of Eden or whatever--so that I could get all those garden echoes working together. We have an experience of particular garden here. There are certain kinds of things we can grow and certain things we can't grow. The garden gives us shape. (MacKinnon 15)

The very title of Seed Catalogue contains many of the tensions present in the title Field Notes. On the one hand, is the seed full of explosive potential, reaching down and reaching up, and, on the other, is the catalogue, signifying that which is selected and coded, that which is pinned down (OED Gk. kata down lego choose). In Seed Catalogue, Kroetsch writes: "We silence words / by writing

them down" (VIII.1-2). Elsewhere he asserts the importance of cataloguing the names of the dead both to honour their memory and to escape their absence: "they by being written down are indeed written down" (Marshall 44).

As a study of the Bildungsgedicht as garden has revealed, the implications of the metaphor of the seed are manifold. By emphasizing "the kind of unwritten poem implicit in the seed" (Marshall interview 44), Kroetsch carries the image beyond the traditional associations, an enterprise for which he finds a model in the poetry of William Carlos Williams who refers early in his long poem Paterson to "[t]he multiple seed, / packed tight with detail, soured, / ...lost in the flux and the mind...."

(12). Kroetsch expands on his understanding of Williams' use of the image of the seed:

Again it's so different from the metaphoric use of seed that we have, say, in the Bible. I think we are seeing the seed in quite a different way now as poets. Partly because we resist...we resist metaphor. Why the hell use it metaphorically when the-thing-itself is so interesting. (Marshall 25)

The image of the seed is especially attractive to Kroetsch because of its dual potential for upward and downward movement, a "double vision" ingrained in Kroetsch's imagination during his childhood in Heisler which, as a farming and a mining community, provided both surface and underworld metaphors (MacKinnon 3-4).

Just as the structure of The Ledger was determined by an actual ledger kept by Kroetsch's grandfather and

presented to him by his Aunt Mary O'Conner, the particular structure of Seed Catalogue was suggested by the document named in the title. Kroetsch reveals that the similarity between the two poems might well have been more pronounced had he not forgotten his notes in Winnipeg when he set about writing the poem (Cooley 25). Responding to "the archaeological discovery" of a 1917 seed catalogue in the Glenbow archives, Kroetsch set about writing a poem that would bring together "the oral tradition and the myth of origins" (Essays 76):

The seed catalogue is a shared book in our society. We have few literary texts approaching that condition. I wanted to write a poetic equivalent to the 'speech' of a seed catalogue. The way we read the page and hear its implications. Spring. The plowing, the digging, of the garden. The mapping of the blank, cool earth. The exact placing of the explosive seed. (LTW 8)

According to Lynette Hunter, the seed catalogue, "if actively responded to, attains the enigmatic role of scripture: not a didactic and informational text but a text that requires participation, elicits involvement, calls forth other potential" (78). For Kroetsch the seed catalogue was much more than a commercial document: "When my mother died I became the family gardener. So that the seed catalogue was not just a random document. When I found that seed catalogue my whole self was vulnerable and exposed" (Marshall 50). Though Kroetsch expresses a distrust of autobiography throughout his critical essays, he admits that with Seed Catalogue, he "began to let the

personal in" (Marshall 50) through a tale of origins expressed, not as a continuous autobiography but as an archaeological site (LV 207):

The sequence of life-events enters the poem, not to become one of its subjects, as it does in Wordsworth's Excursion, but to occasion its images, and to provide some framework for its language. Life-structure here becomes poem-structure; life-event becomes recurring event. (Davey 187-88)

Fuelled by anecdote and association, Seed Catalogue progresses both "by responding to and resisting" the artifact named in its title (Neuman 115), a process which Davey suggests is reminiscent of William Cowper's long poem The Task, "begun at a patron's suggestion that he resolve his difficulties with content by focussing simply on his sofa, and on the events it witnessed" (Davey 190). Kroetsch has set himself a task, but he refuses to do the work for the reader. Instead, he adopts an authorial stance of "letting be" that is consistent with the archaeological model: "You have simply unearthed something and the reader has the task of fitting this into whatever scheme he wants to fit it into" (Marshall 49). In the original Turnstone edition of Seed Catalogue, the text of the poem was printed over a palimpsest of actual pages from a seed catalogue, an effect which visually reinforces Kroetsch's intertextual technique.

Seed Catalogue begins abruptly with a listing from the catalogue for "Copenhagen Market Cabbage" complete with catalogue number. Davey points out that, in contrast

to the use of subtexts by the Moderns (for example, Joyce's use of the Odyssey in Ulysses or Eliot's use of the grail romance in The Waste Land), "the contemporary poem tends to use a subtext of low cultural standing, to do no borrowing of structure from it, and rarely to use it to subject the main text to ironic commentary" (186). The subtext is just one more fragment in the archeological site/cite, being transformed into a fresh new language by juxtaposition and association. Pamela Banting expresses regret that even those critics most sensitive to textual nuance tend to "privilege the Kroetsch-written sections" over the subtext (Long-liners 290). The passages from the catalogue merit careful attention, both for what they say and do not say. According to Brown, the lesson implicit in the opening lines of Seed Catalogue is that "from the apparently innocent, 'documentary,' past we may inherit imported meaning and ways of seeing" ("Seeds and Stones" 158). A cabbage bearing the name of Denmark's capital is "introduced" into a prairie garden, bringing with it a history and a pedigree. Both the cabbage itself and the language that describes it are inherited stories, and throughout his writing, Kroetsch expresses a distrust of inherited story: "History as I knew it did not account for the world I lived in" (LTW 1-2).

The fact that this peculiar landscape demands new ways of seeing is imaged in the storm windows which are removed from the house and placed on the hotbed. The same

windows offer two ways to defeat the weather, keeping the "flurry" of snow out, and keeping the "flurry" of growth in. Like lenses, the windows provide the double vision necessary to cope with the prairie's unpredictable climate: "Then it was spring, Or no: / then winter was ending" (I.8-9). Brown connects this reversal with the rhetorical device of correctio popular in Renaissance poetry; "we see the commonplace object replaced (corrected) by a less familiar one" (155). The palimpsestic notion of "under erasure" to which Kroetsch refers in "For Play and Entrance" (LTW 118), is also operating: spring is discarded but still faintly visible. Dominated by the extremes of "January snow" and "summer sun," prairie weather does not offer the temperate transition of spring that is so central to the poetic tradition elsewhere in the world. Brown goes so far as to suggest that Kroetsch's rejection ("un-invention") of spring signals a rejection of Frye's structuring of the mythical cycle into four seasons ("Seeds and Stones" 158). This seems unlikely, given Kroetsch's acknowledgement of Frye's influence, but it does draw attention to Kroetsch's desire for a new mythology to interpret a new landscape.

Following directly upon the heels of the poet's rearticulation of the climate, is a letter of response to the producers of the seed catalogue. The inherited vocabulary and cheerful hyperbole of W.W. Lyon's letter resembles the text of the catalogue but stands in sharp

contrast to the poet's efforts to be accurate about his environment. The literary formality of the letter, despite the demotic "Cabbage were dandy," also contrasts with the genuine orality of the mother's voice: "Did you wash your ears? / You could grow cabbages / in those ears" (I.17-19). Her assertion at first appears as exaggerated as those of W.W. Lyon, but as the poem develops it becomes clear that the young poet's ears are, after all, a garden in which language (both imported and indigenous) is taking root. Kroetsch often refers to his early initiation into the oral culture of the prairies through a multitude of voices ranging from relatives to hired men: "I became, profoundly, the listener" (Essays 74). Kroetsch is able to distinguish between the various voices that enter the poem by using a flexible left-hand margin, a technique he learned from Williams and Stevens:

In something as simple as letting go of your left-hand margin the implications for what is ultimately vision are just staggering, they really are. You know, space is interesting on a page and it's funny how long it took us to let the space happen on the left-hand side.... And I wanted that space all over the place because silence is one of the chief sounds on the Prairies. (Cooley 27)

The need of prairie people "to talk [them]selves into existence" (Essays 75), results in a continual insistence upon the reality of memory and anecdote which continues throughout the poem.

The memory that follows the statement, "This is what happened" (I.21), is central to the imagery of the poem in

two major ways. First, it establishes the position of the poet in relation to the dominant myths of prairie life, and, second, it foreshadows a fall from innocence. The stage is set: "We were harrowing the garden" (I.22).

Harrowing, of course, means the ploughing or loosening of the ground with a farm implement equipped with discs or hooks, but it can also mean "to distress greatly" (OED). Since the previous passage establishes the poet's ears as a garden of sorts, the ridicule that follows his fall from the horse may well be a torment to him. According to Kroetsch, the horse in the prairie dialectic signifies the male myth, a designation that corresponds to the traditional associations of the mounted knight. In an interview with Patricia Keeney Smith, Kroetsch refers to his "[m]ocking of the male posture, as the man on the horse" (29), a posture which he himself failed to achieve:

The hired men, in turn, made no bones about telling me I was a disaster, sixteen years old and still reading books, often to be seen in the garden doing women's work when I should be out pitching bundles or working the summerfallow. I couldn't be trusted with a team of horses, partly because of a tendency to day-dream, partly because of a perverse identification with the horses, against men. (Essays 73)

So, the young poet falls from the male world of the horse into the ambiguous garden where new possibilities exist; there his mother invites his participation in the acts of creation and naming. In The Story of an Affinity, Lampman reinterprets the traditional understanding of the fall; Kroetsch, too, rearticulates the fall from grace into



nature as a fall into language and "ground:" "The metaphor of upward is everywhere in our thinking. I feel the connection back to the earth" (Hancock 50). As the hired man points out, "the horse was standing still" (I.32). For the poet, the horse is standing still--the romantic tradition of the male as hero has ground to a halt. But the horse is still standing; the male tradition and the tall tales which celebrate it are still available to the poet as fuel for his imagination. Unlike Pete Knight, "the Bronc-Busting Champion of the World," who falls off a horse into death, the young poet falls off a horse into life, to be rooted in the garden of new possibilities: "Cover him up and see what grows" (I.51).

Much as the mother's gentle whisper intersects the boisterous commentary of the hired man, the blooming of the seed catalogue intersects the winter in which it arrives. Remembering a future season through the magic of language, the catalogue is "a winter proposition" (I.35)--a scheme, an invitation, a truth to be demonstrated. The seed catalogue is itself a kind of tall tale, insisting that "McKenzie's Improved Golden Wax Bean" is "THE MOST PRIZED OF ALL BEANS" (I.38-39). Kroetsch works to undermine this hyperbole through a rhyme which substitutes "virtue" for "toot", thus suggesting that such a notion is the mere passing of wind.

The mother, meanwhile, is ordering her corner of the world with binder twine. Later, it is upon sacks in which

binder twine is shipped that the poet and Germaine become "like/one" (III.39). The female presence is binding up the distances and binding up the wounds. In contrast, the father's tools for ordering his world are fenceposts and barbed wire, items to keep things in and out. He is confused by the gentle intimacy of the garden world, "puzzled / by any garden that was smaller than a / quarter-section of wheat and summerfallow" (I.52-54). He commands a home place defined by the points of the compass and surveyor's math: "N.E. 17-42-16-w4th Meridian" (I.55). In arguing that "geography is geometry" on the prairies, E.D. Blodgett writes: "geometries are not something passively received when gazing at space. We impose them according to need, hence the land becomes a function of our idea of order" (212). Kroetsch is especially intrigued by how people order a particular landscape:

I'm very much involved in the significance of landscape, especially my experience of Western landscape: the kind of undefined vastness of it with points of reference within that vastness-- like a house, for instance, or a river. The Western landscape is one without boundaries quite often. So you have the experience within a kind of chaos, yet you have to order it somehow to survive. I'm particularly interested in the kinds of ordering we do on that landscape. (Brown 2)

As the next passage of Seed Catalogue reveals, the prairies offer what Ian Adam refers to as "a minimal iconography" (16):

No trees  
around the house.  
Only the wind.  
Only the January snow.

Only the summer sun.  
 The home place:  
 a terrible symmetry. (I.59-65)

In his article "Narcissus in the Drylands," Adam considers the difficulties faced by a poet whose environment offers few "streams where his image may be contemplated" (15). However, even in this brief passage describing the prairie as a place of absence, we find allusions to two poetic models, one indigenous and one imported. "Only the wind" echoes the closing lines of Anne Marriott's The Wind Our Enemy, a poem about the prairies in which the appearance of absence is revealed to be a powerful source of presence. The phrase "a terrible symmetry" echoes Blake's (and Frye's) "fearful symmetry:" the prairie landscape may appear always as tyger and never as lamb, but even the tyger is a result of the creative act, the framing hand, the speaking word. Even absence provides a kind of symmetry. Describing his development as a writer, Kroetsch writes:

Where I had learned the idea of absence, I was beginning to learn the idea of trace. There is always something left behind. That is the essential paradox. Even abandonment gives us memory. I had to tell a story. I responded to those discoveries of absence, to that invisibility, to that silence, by knowing I had to make up a story. Our story. (Essays 71)

It is in this context that Kroetsch introduces the first of the questions about growth that echo through the poem as a kind of refrain: "How do you grow a gardener?" (I.66) The catalogue of garden varieties that follows reminds the

reader that the poet is not only referring to the actual gardener, but also to the poet himself who, like Adam, was both gardener and namer. Listed without context, the names of the various vegetables take on a music of their own. According to Olson from whom Kroetsch learned some of his poetic craft, "words juxtapose in beauty" through their syllables (529). "It is my impression," writes Olson, "that all parts of speech suddenly, in composition by field, are fresh for both sound and percussive use, spring up like unknown, unnamed vegetables in the patch, when you work it, come spring" (531).

The "terrible symmetry" of the home place is mirrored by the terrible symmetry of life and death, garden and grave. The road between these extremes, though "barely / passable" (I.76-77) must be travelled by the poet. In The Crow Journals, Kroetsch describes his memory of his mother's death:

I remembered the wake, the crowds of people arriving over muddy roads, the body in the coffin in my parents' bedroom. And I remembered the men who came to my father and tried to tell him of the sorrow they felt: and even at the age of 13 I saw the failure of language, the faltering connection between those spoken words and what it was I knew my father felt, what I felt.... (16)

The passage in the poem that describes his mother's wake is evidence of "the faltering connection" between game and funeral, memory and myth, life and death. Even as the poet remembers the moment in which his mother is planted in the earth, he remembers her invitation to hope through

the newly planted seed: "Bring me / the radish seeds, my mother whispered" (I.77-78). As Kroetsch says in "Excerpts From the Real World:" "Endings have stems and blossoms" (Completed Field Notes 231).

Juxtaposed against the gentle simplicity of the mother's voice that closes Section One is the elaborate mythologizing of the story-telling father in Section Two. What appears to be a tall tale of the contest between man and badger can also be interpreted as an exploration of the confrontation between "talking father" and "writing son," a dialectic which Thomas sees as "a formal mechanism in Kroetsch's novels, where the tall tale of oral tradition is controlled and mediated by a literate author or narrator" (Robert Kroetsch 13). Kroetsch often refers to his father's skill: "My father was quite a famous story-teller. I could never compete in his presence-- maybe that's why I went upstairs and wrote" (Hancock 36). Just as the antics of the badger inspire the father's tale, the father's challenge inspires the badger to extravagant escapes, which parallel the son's literary endeavours. In Kroetsch's poem "The Silent Poet Sequence," the poet describes his clandestine activity: "I go out at night, with my shovel, I dig deep holes / in the neighbours' lawns" (Completed Field Notes 76). Later in Seed Catalogue the father offers labour as an alternative to an activity that he cannot understand: "And the next time you want to / write a poem / we'll

start the haying" (VI.66-68). Similarly, the father cannot understand why "so fine a fellow" as the badger would choose to live under ground. In the opening section, the young poet has fallen off a horse and into the earth: "just / about planted the little bugger" (I.50). The poet, too, looks "like a little man, come out / of the ground" (II.5-6). The poem is Kroetsch's record of his search for the ground from which he came. In an unpublished journal, Kroetsch writes:

Ground. That word so much in use today. What does it mean beyond the dirt that the dirt farmer uses to grow wheat? Some kind of urcondition, existence itself before any naming. The stuff before the stuff that is history or culture or art. That which is before the self, even. The stuff of which "place" is made. By dwelling on place we hope to get back through the naming to the ground. (qtd. by Thomas, Robert Kroetsch 19)

The poet, like the badger, is attracted by "the cool of roots," the solace of isolation, and the violence implicit in the archaeological act (LTW 111). Though the father is puzzled by this downward desire because it contrasts with his own upward desire for building and flight, he cannot, of course, shoot the son. The son, likewise, can never fully escape the father: "They carried on like that all / summer" (IX.11-12). Elsewhere Kroetsch writes: "I certainly was both fleeing and being influenced by the father figure literally in my life as well as in my writing" (LV 22). The twine that binds the two together despite their differences is love. In love, the father threatens over and over. In love, the son repeatedly

stands up to his challenge. In love, the son burrows into the ground that gives rise to the poet. In the end, the father tells a different story, in which a different nuisance (the magpie) is destroyed, while all the while insisting that that was his original intention: "Just call me sure-shot, / my father added" (II.26-27). The story is not the story, Kroetsch reminds his readers, but the process of the story, not the archaeological site but the act of digging. There will always be enlargement, re-invention, and change.

Love is first introduced as a binding element between man/father and badger/son, and in Section Three the notion of love is expanded to include Eros. This new direction is signalled by the sensual language of the catalogue entry for Hubbard Squash. To this point, the vegetables listed have promised pedigree and virtue, but the Hubbard squash rewards mankind's "particular fondness" with sensual delights. As the catalogue writer points out, where there is a need, nature provides. In this context, the italicized phrase: "Love is a leaping up / and down" (III.4-5) describes more than the action of the badger who refuses to get shot and refuses to dig his holes elsewhere. Similarly, "Love / is a break in the warm flesh" (III.6-7), signifies more than the penetration of the father's bullet into the feathers of the magpie. The growth of the sensual squash is described in the seed catalogue, but the young poet must discover the growth of

Eros for himself. He must ask: "But how do you grow a lover?" (III.12).

The "winter proposition" offered (with illustrations) by the priest is not, like the seed catalogue, a promise (with illustrations) of coming fertility, but rather an insistence upon chastity and the fires of hell. The difference becomes painfully clear to the children on only the second day of catechism. Catechism, a method of instruction which proceeds by question and answer, may well be the model for the series of questions that give Seed Catalogue its shape. Many manuals of catechism deal not only with questions of scripture and doctrine, but also with questions of behavior and morality. (Among the questions that appear in Joseph Priestly's A Catechism for Children and Young Persons are "How must we express our love to our fellow creatures?" [21] and "What are the vices and follies to which young persons are most exposed?" [24]).

Against such a backdrop, the poet must consider his own question: "How do you grow a lover?" He had believed that it meant becoming "like/one" as Adam and Eve did in the garden, but he discovers, to his dismay, that Adam and Eve fell out of the garden into sin. They "got caught / playing dirty" (III.31-32). Still innocent, and, like the poet in Reaney's Twelve Letters to a Small Town, not having a name for the union they have dreamed, Germaine and the poet climb into a granary and become "like/one"



(III.39). Only after the priest calls it playing dirty is the thing they have discovered, dis-covered into nakedness and shame. They fall from myth into language, and it is language that transforms a tale of sexual initiation into something deeper. "A lot of my material is profane," admits Kroetsch, "but the telling of the story about that material, the language itself, changes it in some way to what I call sacred" (Hancock 47).

The fact that Germaine and the poet make love on "smooth sheets" of paper from the gunny sacks reinforces the parallel between the sexual act and the writing act, a connection Kroetsch often makes in essays and interviews: "The whole process of creation and the life-force are represented most explicitly by the sex-urge. And I suppose I also connect the act of writing itself with some version of the sex-urge" (Brown 11). Germaine, "with her dress up and her bloomers down" (III.50) is the young poet's muse, both his inspiration and his object of desire. She, as her name suggests, is fertile ground in which he plants the seeds of his imagination. As Louis MacKendrick points out, "much of the poem concentrates on the idea of getting to ground, even in the poet's adolescent 'playing dirty' with his love" (102). But the priest names their world "out of existence" (III.44). Language creates absence as well as trace. The lovers have fallen from the garden, the boy has fallen from the horse, and the poet's understanding of language has fallen

from innocence. Now he must unname it back to the beginning.

In so doing, Kroetsch attempts one more retelling of the Genesis myth, "one meta-narrative that has asserted itself persistently in the New World context" (LTW 31). Apparently, this dream of Eden first entered Kroetsch's psyche through the various tellings of his mother and father--his mother who lovingly learned the names of the flowers and birds of her native Alberta, and his father who "had for all his life an intense Edenic recollection of a lost home," the green pastures of Ontario (Thomas, Robert Kroetsch 11). Kroetsch is fascinated by the story of the Garden of Eden because it invites a variety of tellings that range from ancient myth to child's riddle. In Seed Catalogue, the riddle of "Adam and Eve and Pinch-Me" is given in answer to the poet's question "But how?" How does one become a lover when the priest insists upon abstinence? How does one become a poet when the land insists upon silence? These questions await answers, just as the riddle awaits a solution. The mysteries must be unnamed back into existence.

If the catechism brings a chill to the middle of summer, the seed catalogue promises summer in January (IV.1-2). Mary Hack also arrives from Ontario on a January day, bringing her hope chest, which like the seed catalogue itself, is full of imported elegance and dreams yet to be fulfilled. Kroetsch describes the "travelling

heroes" of Frederick Philip Grove's novels as "caught between the 'silenced' old version of the garden (European in this case) and the not-yet-speaking new one" (LTW 90). This, too, is Mary Hauck's predicament. Only when the contents of her hope chest are destroyed by fire, and her European and Eastern-Canadian inheritance is lost, can she find a place in this new world. Continuing his discussion of Grove, Kroetsch writes:

While the garden myth is often present on the surface of a narration of the ethnic experience, I suspect the concealed story is that of the necessary death--the death, that is, out of one culture, with the hope that it will lead to rebirth in another. (LTW 90)

In this case, "the necessary death" is the fire that burns down the Heisler Hotel, taking with it the Hauck hope chest. The way is now clear for the growth of a prairie town. But, in contrast to the fruits and vegetables arranged by the boys building the model of Stratford in Reaney's poem, the gopher which provides the model for the prairie town's human structures (telephone pole / grain elevators / church steeple) and the human needs they represent (communication / physical /and spiritual sustenance) is apt to vanish as suddenly as it appeared. Still in the process of learning how to grow a past, the prairie town is perpetually threatened by absence.

Unlike Reaney's town which is crowded with ghosts, both old world and new, Heisler is defined by its absences. These are cleverly catalogued in a list that interweaves the cultural and the historical, the public

and the private. And as Ian Adam points out, this catalogue only adds to the absences expressed elsewhere in the poem: absence of achievement, of innocence, of trees, of poetry, of the Heisler Hotel, of the poet's mother (Adam 18). Occasionally advantageous, as in the creation of local heroes like "the Strauss boy" who could piss clean across the Battle River, more often than not, the absences render difficult the re-invention of the self. The books and historical records which might provide models for this endeavour are largely missing. Kroetsch describes the "three or four books" that were in his house while growing up: one about looking after horses, one on wild flowers, and one on threshing machines (Hancock 47). In the absence of the written word, the poet turns to the spoken word: "The oral tradition is the means of survival" (LTW 18). Accordingly, the Heisler hotel is rebuilt and filled "full of a lot of A-1 Hard Northern Bullshitters" (IV.60-61). Through bullshitting, "that socially accepted form of narrative lying" (Adam 20), the men are able to re-invent themselves. Oddly, to ponder the absence is to assert a kind of presence:

If we have nothing to write about, but nothing to write about, that is what we have to write about. We go right back to the naming act in a radical sense; we are in Adam's position, with no beasts out there, we even have to invent the beasts. (LV 145)

The story-telling men confront the silence with their talk which includes both the ranciful and the profane. Even the joke "about the woman who buried / her husband with

his ass sticking out of the ground" (IV.62-63), maintains a continuity with the theme of planting that recurs throughout the poem. According to Kroetsch:

[c]ontemporary writers generally have become skeptical about Modernist poses and they want the bad joke in the poem along with the wise thought, the obvious pun along with the symbol. If they believe in symbols at all.  
(Cooley 29)

When asked about the dangers of working with "temporary linguistic fabrications" such as jokes and slang which tend to date very quickly, Kroetsch responded that the "wonderful energy" in real speech is worth the risk (Gunnars 64). The apprenticeship of the poet, of course, requires more than just a grasp of the oral tradition; it demands an understanding of both langue and parole:

Langue is the great-given, the sum total of words and grammar and literature and concluded speech. Parole is what one of us says, the uniqueness of the speaking (writing) person. If you are unlucky, the great-given swamps you, and even when you speak, you are silent. If you are incredibly lucky, and if you work your ass off, the great-given sounds, not over, but in your unique speaking. If that happens then you have found a Voice. (LTW 19)

The apprenticeship of the young gardener is similarly arduous. His first planting is devoured, and his first efforts to "deliver real words / to real people" are ignored (V.5-6). His father wishes him to become a different kind of "postman," driving fenceposts with a crowbar. Meeting with no success or encouragement, the youth gives in to despair: "I don't give a damn if I do die do die..." (V.9), but even this apparent submission

becomes a kind of song, echoing a line from Ervin Rouse's "Orange Blossom Special" popularized by Johnny Cash. Although each positive (do) is cancelled by a negative (die) (Adar 16), the final word of the incantation is "do" which prepares the way for the next question to be posed, "How do you grow a poet?"

The seed catalogue offers information on how cauliflowers should be grown, but not on how poets should be grown. Where does one begin? There are the classical formulas, the first of which is the invocation of the muse. The young poet turns to the Muses for inspiration, only to be reminded that they are the daughters of Mnemosyne, and on the Prairies Memory has been undermined by fire, forgetfulness, and the fearful symmetry of an empty landscape. Instead of Calliope, or Erato, or Polyhymnia, the poet finds only the girls he has "felt up," "necked with," or fondled in the skating rink shack (VI.20-33). Apparently, the Prairies offer no adequate Muse. Susan Wood points out that "with the exception of the mother, with her understanding and her sweet peas, the rest of the women in the poem are objects of frustrated lust or uncaring" (37). Despite Kroetsch's admission that "it is Prairie to be uneasy about gentleness" (Cooley 30), the tender portrait of the mother that appears in the poem's final pages suggests that she may well be his muse. Nevertheless, in this part of the poem she still represents an absence:

I kept the mother figures, especially, very silent at the center of the writing, partly because my own relationship with my mother was so painful, that I've only recently even put it into print at all. And I think part of my move to autobiography was daring to say that my mother died when I was so young and I was very close to her. (LV 22)

What then of the other opening formula, "Once upon a time...?" The poet attempts to apply it to the home place, only to be stopped by the realization that it is a fictional rather than a poetic device: "--Hey, wait a minute. / That's a story" (VI.35-36). In an attempt to explain his observation that "the prairies developed a tradition of fiction before developing a tradition of poetry," Kroetsch suggests that the realistic mode of fiction lent itself to the "harshness" of the Prairie experience (Essays 74-75). Once again, he is faced with the fact that "story" intervenes with the growth of the poetic tradition. His parents know the formulas for growing a healthy boy (with cod-liver oil and Sunny Boy Cereal) and a competent farmer (with hard labour and haying), but no one has yet devised a way to grow a prairie poet. The father gives form to the land with barbed wire, but clearly this is an inadequate model, as is the prairie road which merely marks "the shortest distance / between nowhere and nowhere" (VI.71-72). If this road is a poem, there is no sign of its maker:

As for the poet himself  
we can find no record  
of his having traversed  
the land/in either direction. (VI.78-81)

This creator, like the one in Klein's "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" is "incognito, lost, lacunal" (Klein I.28). All that remains is "a scarred / page, a spoor of wording" (VI.83-84). However, like the poet's secret shining from the bottom of the sea in Klein's poem, this humble trace of words, this mere "pile of rabbit turds," is enough to reveal "all spring long / where the track was" (VI.88-89). Spring on the prairies, we have been told, is a season that hardly exists. But for that briefest of moments, we can see the path the poet has left behind. The phrase "poet...say uncle" (VI.90) is followed by the italicized question, "How?" This both echoes the earlier questions and implies that the poet either does not know how or is unwilling to give up or admit defeat.

The novelist Rudy Wiebe is now introduced into the poem insisting that the only way to conquer the vastness of the prairie landscape is to "lay great black steel lines of / fiction" (VI.92-93). In this Wiebe echoes the desire of the poet's storytelling father who insists that the only way to give form to the land is "by running / a series of posts and three strands / of barbed wired around a quarter-section" (VI.60-62), and those who believed that the "great black steel lines" of the railway would allow the iron horse to conquer prairie distances. Despite his quarrel with Wiebe's insistence upon fiction as the preferred prairie genre, Kroetsch acknowledges the gifts that Wiebe has bestowed upon him and other writing



friends, including glimpses of indigenous history and inherited language. The word Lebensglied which Wiebe shows his friends, appears only once in Rilke's poetry:

Auf einmal fasst die Rosenpfluckerin  
die volle Knospe seines Lebensgliedes,  
und an dem Schreck des Unterschiedes  
schwinden die [linden] Garten in ihr hin

All at once the girl gathering roses seizes  
the full bud of his lifelimb,  
and at the shock of the difference  
the [linden] gardens within her fade away<sup>6</sup>

One tribe of Indians is "surprised...to death" by another in the "coulee," a prairie word for a deep ravine or dry stream bed. Similarly, the rose gatherer of Rilke's poem takes hold of the "lifelimb" or "life's member" only to be overwhelmed by it. Every garden holds its surprises. Section Six closes with the line "Rudy: Nature thou art" (VI.105). The reader has discovered through the Hubbard Squash catalogue entry that when man has a particular fondness for something, "Nature" provides it. Perhaps the giant "geometry" of prairie geography and prairie fiction is an effort to fulfill humankind's "blessed rage for order." Yet, Kroetsch warns against a simple belief in the convention of the unity of signifier and signified, a temptation to meaning he suggests is attractive to Wiebe (LV 143). In the crucial section that follows, Kroetsch posits several alternatives.

Thus far in the poem, many possible models for the prairie poem have been implied ranging from badger hole to rabbit turd, but the most developed and powerful image of

the poet can be found in the description of Brome Grass that opens Section Seven. Though the passage resembles the previous quotations from the seed catalogue, there are several significant differences. The entry does not begin with the usual catalogue number, nor does it employ the high-flown and hyperbolic language of the earlier entries (with the possible exception of "Flourishes"). In addition, both the common and the latin name are included as if to acknowledge the dual heritage of the Canadian poet. Through a factual description which captures the vernacular simplicity of the spoken word, Kroetsch manages to foreground many of the qualities already highlighted as essential to the development of the poet. "No amount of cold will kill it. It / withstands the summer suns." The poet both withstands and stands with the terrible symmetry of his home place. "Water may stand on it for several / weeks without apparent injury." Though Adam and Eve are "drowned," the poet remains. "The roots push through the soil, / throwing up new plants continually." Delighting in the duality of the border-place, the poet moves downward into the earth and the buried past, and upward into the glory and grief of flight. "...continually." The poet is forever involved in the process of story, of language, of the archaeological dig. "Starts quicker than other / grasses in the spring." Even before the snow has melted, the poet's track is visible. "Remains green longer in the fall." The poet's fall from the horse is a

fall into the garden not out of it; refusing to surrender to absence and death, the poet retains the desire for greenness and growth. "Flourishes un- / der absolute neglect." Despite the absence of "clay and wattles" (as in Yeats' "Lake Isle of Innisfree") and "Aeneas," and the presence of crowbars and mustard plasters, the poet endures his long apprenticeship. He survives the winter to arrive at last at "seeding/time" (VII.8), a phrase which implies both the time for cultivation and the cultivation of time. In explaining his dual allegiance to fiction and poetry, Kroetsch writes: "There's something you can do in a poem that you just can't do in a novel-- concepts of time and of language" (Cooley 31). Freed from narrative chronology, the poet can allow all of the fragments he uncovers to "juxtapose in beauty", to use Olson's phrase.

For the last time Kroetsch asks the central question of Seed Catalogue, "How do you grow a poet?" and again, he provides, not one answer, but many, using a format resembling that of multiple choice exam (Brown, Long-liners 263). Yet here there is no right answer, no single version. "Even in the Genesis story," Kroetsch reminds us, "one discovers that there are three versions, one on top of the other" (LV 118). The palimpsest of prairie poetry implies a similar multiplicity. The poet must learn to respond to life as it is lived around him. Kroetsch describes Al Purdy as an important leader in this

return to the local:

In Canada I think Al Purdy, working out of southern Ontario, would serve as an important example for us. We really have to respond first of all to where we're at. (MacKinnon 16)

In abandoning given verse forms for the colloquial, the prosaic, telling yarns in the oral tradition. Purdy was central. (Cooley 28)

Purdy and Kroetsch reject the "still point of the turning world" offered by T.S. Eliot in Burnt Norton, in favour of the "turning centre in the still world" (VII.13). The power of song allows Purdy to gallop a Cariboo horse through an Edmonton restaurant, to transform a dinner party into a carnival, to surprise an ordered world through language.

The poet must also be open to the experience of life as captured in literature and in art, though these must be defined in the widest possible sense. To illustrate how the seed catalogue is a document as revealing and as valid as any other, Kroetsch shows how the entry for the "Japanese Morning Glory" evokes a variety of possibilities for interpreting the home place. The best-known passage in Sheila Watson's novel The Double Hook are the words of Kip in Chapter Ten:

There's a thing he doesn't know. He doesn't know you can't catch the glory on a hook and hold on to it. That when you fish for the glory you catch the darkness too. That if you hook twice the glory you hook twice the fear. That Coyote plotting to catch the glory for himself is fooled and every day fools others. (55)

A harsh environment teaches the characters of Watson's novel a harsh lesson: to catch the glory is also to hook

the mourning. "The double hook: / the home place" (VII.36-37). In the particular Japanese print to which Kroetsch refers--Hiroshige's "Shono-Haku-u"--the surprise that upsets man's careful plans is also a confrontation with an unpredictable climate. The artist Hiroshige belonged to the Ukiyo-E school:

"E" means picture in Japanese, and Ukiyo (literally "floating world") suggests the transitory, shifting, at times treacherous existence to which man is condemned. Ukiyo-e are the genre depiction of people who, although well aware of the snares and tricks in store for them, still do their best to snatch as much pleasure and enjoyment out of life as they can. (Suzuki 6).

The print entitled "Shono-Haku-u" which portrays "bare-  
assed travellers, caught in a sudden shower" (Seed Catalogue VII.31) perfectly captures the philosophy of the Ukiyo-E. Caught in a storm they could neither predict nor avoid, the men rush forward into the weather with heads bent. For them there is no shelter. Only the rain. Only the wind. A terrible symmetry. Always the double hook, the glory and the mourning, in Japan as on the prairies. The phrase, "the stations of the way" (VII.38), which closes this description refers to the title of the series of prints "Fifty-Three Stations on the Tokaido" which depict many of the stations or post-towns on the Tokaido Highway which stretched a distance of about 300 miles from Kyoto to present-day Tokyo. In the context of what follows, it may also be an allusion to the stations of the cross that lead to "the other garden," Gethsemane. (In a

1976 entry in The Crow Journals Kroetsch's mention of "The Stations of the Cross" on a hill in Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, is followed by an elaborate rejection of the tenets of Modernism [58]). For Kroetsch, as for the pioneers who preceded him, ordering an unfamiliar terrain with familiar forms is a double hook experience. Eden and Gethsemane go hand in hand. While Reaney wishes to "flow like" the river of his childhood, Kroetsch hopes to grow like the Brome Grass of the prairies, to flourish under neglect, to catch the glory as well as the mourning.

In his interviews and reviews, Kroetsch celebrates the prairie pub as a place where the necessary invention of self through talk can occur. In Part Seven of Seed Catalogue, a bar in the Toronto airport becomes a setting in which the tale is revealed as pain delivered to an unbelieving audience. The Bronc-Busting Champion of the World falls off his horse into death, his own death and the death of the male myth of the conquering hero. Both a real cowboy who achieved international success in rodeo between 1932 and 1936, and one of the last representatives of the chivalric order suggested by his name, Pete Knight finds his story coming to an abrupt and unceremonious end. The once epic hero has been diminished out of existence and his myth dismissed as madness ("You some kind of nut / or something?" [VII.20-21]) thus clearing the way for the poet. In his essay "Learning the Hero from Northrop Frye," Kroetsch draws attention to this passage from The

Secular Scripture:

The real hero becomes the poet, not the agent of force or cunning whom the poet may celebrate. In proportion as this happens, the inherently revolutionary quality in romance begins to emerge from all the nostalgia about a vanished past. (LTW 178)

The hero falls off his horse and dies, the poet falls off his horse and lives.

To make room for a new kind of hero does not mean dismissing the heroes of the past, however humble. In Sections Eight and Nine of Seed Catalogue, Kroetsch honours his relatives who refused to succumb to history. He discovers that the best way to grapple with an inheritance of words is to write them down, cover them over, see what grows. The poet remembers the Last Will and Testament of his grandfather who gave "Uncle Freddie" his carpenter tools. This builder who mapped his world with "perfectly designed" horse-barns endures even when the world has no more use for his artistry. Uncle Freddie refuses to say Uncle. Although deeply impoverished, he maintains his rituals and his pride, replacing the coffee he cannot afford with hot water with cream and sugar in it. From him the poet learns how to honour the illusion, how to remember not to forget.

This lesson is reiterated by the cousin who drops bombs on the land of his ancestors. His fall from his plane, reminiscent of the cowboy's fall from his horse, signals a "fatal occasion" (IX.16). He forgets that the land upon which he brings destruction ("It was a strange /

planting" [IX.11-12]) is the land where his family first took root. Forgetfulness is a dangerous muse, burying the past and devouring the future. She has "Blood/ on her green thumb" (IX.35-36). Everywhere about him the poet finds "a terrible symmetry."

This paradigm is even reflected in the opening of the poem's final section in which the double-column format that Kroetsch had earlier used in The Ledger to "express a dual perception" (Thomas 29) is again in evidence. The use of the slash in the left hand column invites a further multiplicity of readings. In the line: "After the bomb/blossoms," the slash allows the word "blossoms" to be interpreted as either a verb or a noun, implying both endings and beginnings. Similarly, in "Poet, teach us / to love our dying," the phrase "our dying" can be interpreted as the process of mortality that we must embrace as a necessary half of the double hook. "Our dying" may also be interpreted as those among us (mother, father, cousins, uncles, great-grandmother...) who have succumbed to "the danger of merely living" (IX.1).

"West is a winter place" characterized on the surface by absence, death, the empty page, but it is also a "palimpsest." Under the erasure, another text can be read. Under the snow, a seed is burrowing. Into the January darkness, the seed catalogue blooms. The harshness of winter may invite a flight, an escape and evasion. But the model of the garden offers an



alternative. Rooted in this fertile soil, the poet can return to ground, to the lessons taught to him by his mother, his gracious muse. The final entry from the seed catalogue for the Spencer Sweet Pea is a price list reminiscent of the passage in William's Paterson where the chattels of Cornelius Doremus are appraised (45-46). But Kroetsch's list reveals that the more you purchase the less it costs--the more you invest, the higher the yield. The sweet peas, like all the other plantings in the poem, are at once upward, "climbing the stretched / binder twine" and downward, rooted in a deep and familiar soil. The poet believed himself to be bereft of models in a world of absence, but he now remembers the simple lessons taught to him by his mother and her garden: the grace of living, the beauty of weariness, the strength of place. "There are two things I would like to keep in my poetry," Kroetsch writes, "one is the ordinariness of life, the beauty of the ordinariness; and the other is the domestic" (Gunnars 61).

"How do you a garden grow? / How do you grow a garden?" Mary, Mary, quite contrary, plants her garden with silver bells and cockle shells. Mary Hauck of Bruce County, Ontario plants hers with silver spoons and English china. But the prairie poet cannot afford to be contrary or ecologically ignorant regarding which hybrids will thrive in his home place. He must plant his garden with varieties as strong and sturdy as Brome Grass, plants that

endure drowning and cold to grow as tall as a horse's hips. The intimate tone of the letter describing "the longest brome grass" in one individual's memory, contrasts sharply with the distanced and artificial voice of W.W.Lyon whose cabbage were "dandy". This letter with its combination of the ordinary and the evocative, like the garden itself, suggests a pattern for the prairie poet. It is signed by "Amie," a real person perhaps, but certainly a friend.

Wood argues that "the world of Seed Catalogue remains harsh to the end. Nothing grows there" (38). This assertion appears to be confirmed by the reprise of the passage in Section One which first established the land as absence, although the echo of Marriott, "only the wind," is now incorporated into a sentence, as if to suggest that the presence of the wind is sufficient to challenge the absence of trees:

No trees  
around the house,  
only the wind.  
Only the January snow.  
Only the summer sun.

In The Crow Journals, Kroetsch writes: "Maybe our landscape finally is our labyrinth" (53). If the land is a labyrinth, the poet has found a line that will guide him through the maze, a line that will show "all spring long / where the track was" (VI.88-89). The land may suggest absence, but the celebration of that absence results in a poem. Kroetsch asks: "Is not landscape an event as well

as a setting? The place of mythology, of story, become action" (Crow Journals 56).

The sense of absence suggested by a landscape with a "minimal iconography" is reiterated by the closing riddle, an element which Kroetsch suggests is central to many poems (LV 82):

Playing with riddles often sounds as if it is a purely verbal game. And yet if we move the slightest bit outside the riddle itself to the context in which it is embedded, it starts to talk about social conditions, human conditions, and to possess philosophical implications. You can start to read a riddle as a great insight into human uncertainty, self-deception and so forth. (LV 81-82)

The riddle in Seed Catalogue that is begun in Section Three and continued in the final lines, is only completed in the mind of the reader:

Adam and Eve and Pinch-Me  
went down to the river to swim--  
Adam and Eve got drowned.  
Who was left?

The poem itself resists closure, but the answer of "Pinch-Me" that arises in the reader's mind establishes a connection of tremendous immediacy between the poet and his audience. A poem which impels the reader to guess, Frye suggests, "attempts to communicate to the reader a private and secret possession" (Anatomy of Criticism 300). According to Kroetsch, "the structuring distance must be broken, violated, for carnival influences to come in to play" (LTW 99). For this kind of poem to succeed there must be complicity between actor and audience, poet and reader, a reaching across the of spaces between people (as

in a pinch). "We must, ourselves, as readers, participate in the archaeologist's quest" (LTW 112). Adam and Eve (the original gardeners, namers, lovers) and the poet's parents may have vanished, but the poet and Pinch-Me who inhabit the dream that is the waking world remain. The heritage of Eden lives on within us all. When Kroetsch was asked what he meant by "I am / writing this poem with my life" (Completed Field Notes 56), he answered:

You write the poem with your life by not creating a safe boundary between poetry and life. It would be nice if there sometimes were a clear boundary, but in fact the two keep spilling back and forth; exchanging.

(Gunnars 67)

This exchange between poetry and life is central to Seed Catalogue. Within the silence, the poet finds a voice; within a vast geography, a home place; within a garden, a rooted self. These pursuits are also central to each of the Bildungsgedichte explored in this study, though each poet speaks from his or her own time and place.

The similarities between Kroetsch's archaeology and Reaney's alchemy have been noted. Both poets return to the familiar soil of the home place:

That we are bound to the earth does not mean that we cannot grow; on the contrary it is the sine qua non of growth. No noble, well-grown tree ever disowned its dark roots, for it grows not only upward but downward as well. (Jung, Psychology and Alchemy 110)

The connections between Kroetsch's poem and the Canadian heritage of the Bildungsgedicht do not end there. Gary Geddes argues that:

Kroetsch and Pratt are not so far apart, after all. They both recognized that the long poem, to hold our attention, must employ every trick in the book and invent some new ones. (Long-liners 175).

And it is possible to argue for connections extending much farther into the past. Both Kroetsch and Crawford replace the traditional garden direction of upward growth, with the more intriguing downward direction of rootedness. In Seed Catalogue and Malcolm's Katie the mother speaks as a voice out of absence, and in both poems the male myth of the conquering hero is questioned and redefined within a garden context. In The Story of an Affinity, as in Seed Catalogue, the garden is where the process of education begins and ends. At its centre is a female who teaches and inspires.

In the catalogue of absences at the heart of Seed Catalogue, Kroetsch includes "the absence of goldsmiths" (IV.45), but Oliver Goldsmith is very much present in the Canadian tradition of the long poem. In fact, The Rising Village and Seed Catalogue reveal some surprising similarities when juxtaposed. Both poems record the development of a community which both resists and responds to Old-World models. Both recognize the home place as double hook, and at the heart of each are tales of young people struggling against control, though Goldsmith criticizes that struggle and Kroetsch celebrates it. Through the story of Albert and Flora, Goldsmith warns against a loss of control and through the story of the

young poet and Germaine, Kroetsch mourns an excess of control. Though these divergent points of view extend into the realm of language (Goldsmith's heroic couplets in contrast to Kroetsch's eclectic mix of syllables and space), both poets are ultimately concerned with a celebration of a land in which they can plant their particular dreams of origin.

In "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy," Kroetsch suggests that "Canadians cannot agree on what their meta-narrative is..." (LTH 21); to argue that the garden is a central presence in the Canadian long poem of formation is not to insist upon such a meta-narrative. The "garden" assumes as many forms as there are poets to cultivate the potential of the topos. Pioneer poets describe an Eden that was passing or one that was being planted. In Crawford and Lampman, the domestic garden receives new attention as a place that is at once imprisoning and empowering. Marriott and Pratt reveal that, at times in Canada's history, the struggle to save the garden from destruction has been spiritual as well as physical. Reaney and Kroetsch dig into the home soil to dis/covers how a poet is grown. A study of the Bildungsgedicht as garden reveals that of the many poets who have wrestled with Eden, not one was able to walk freely away. Regardless of their point of view, they all find its songs echoing in their ears, and its soil clinging to their fingertips.

## Notes to Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> Robert Kroetsch, The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New 118. (Further references to this work will appear in parentheses in the text with the abbreviation LTW).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Kroetsch, Labyrinths of Voice 9. (Further references to this work will appear in parentheses in the text with the abbreviation LV).

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Frye's influence on Reaney see Richard Stingle's "'all the old levels': Reaney and Frye" in Approaches to the Work of James Reaney and Reaney's own essay "The Identifier Effect" in The CEA Critic 42.2 (Jan. 1980): 26-3.

<sup>4</sup> "To the Avon River Above Stratford, Canada" first appeared in Canadian Forum 30 (Feb. 1951): 255. The conclusion to that version reads as follows:

As some day I'll know  
Your name  
Your coat-of-arms I do--  
A shield of reed and crayfishes  
Thin mussel-shells and rushes  
And muskrats and farmers' geese  
And one of my three earliest wishes  
To flow like you.

A reference to river sounding "like old money, / The tiny silver nickles of my childhood..." that has been excised from the later version helps to explain the drawing of a coin that appears in Twelve Letters to a Small Town.

<sup>5</sup> A pilgrimage to Garneau's grave which Reaney describes in Alphabet (June 1963) confirms his admiration of the poet. The internal evidence that suggests the influence of "Le Jeu" upon "Instructions: How to Make a Model of the Town" was reinforced by a comment made by Prof. Stingle in conversation.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to Angela Esterhammer of the Department of English at the University of Western Ontario for her assistance with the translation of Rilke's poem. The German language allows for the invention of compounds such as Lebensglieder. Leber can only mean "life" but glieder has several implications: its primary meaning is "limb" (both botanical and anatomical), but it can also mean "member, part, organ," which can mean "penis" or "virile." Other less common meanings are "link" as in "the missing link" and the biblical idea of "generation" (Langenscheidt's). Such a multiplicity of meanings would certainly have been attractive to Kroetsch.

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