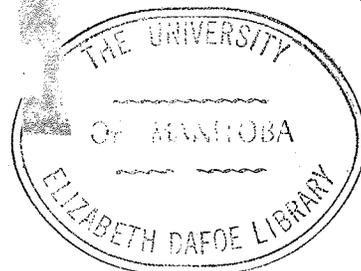


HARMONY AND DISCORD:
A STUDY OF THE TRANSITION FROM OLD TO MODERN
WAYS OF LIFE AS HANDLED BY A GROUP OF PRAIRIE
NOVELISTS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the transition from old to modern ways of life as handled by a group of Canadian Prairie novelists. The theme emerges to a great extent from the immigrant's longing for the beautiful Old World traditions which he has lost and from the sense of chaos he experiences in the New World.

The difficulty and the struggle of the immigrant and farmer in coming to terms with Prairie Nature is considered. The strong belief that Nature is a malevolent force is also noted. Man in the Prairie world must also learn to adjust to the mechanized age in which he lives. In a later chapter of this thesis the change in the nature of the family is considered. The ideal mother figure disappears and a more complex, "real" woman replaces her. The novelist shows the disillusionment of modern marriage and the conflict between parent and child. Also discussed is the ability of the Prairie novelist to give excellent portrayals of the child and the aged. The absence of the well drawn mature individual is also noted. Another chapter considers the unfavourable aspects of the modern educational system and shows that a dedicated teacher might be able to offset such disadvantages. The novelist also

considers the retarding effect of racial prejudice on the development of a Canadian nationalism which is based on a sympathetic understanding of humanity, rather than on self-conscious, flag-waving patriotism.

Thus this study seeks to show the common interest of Prairie novelists in the note of longing, the concept of heroism and the process of maturity. It attempts to show that particular emphasis has been placed on the split between the past and the present and the need to restore continuity between them. Finally, this study contends that the handling of the theme of transition is one of the major contributions of the Prairie novelist to the modern novel.

PREFACE

The object of this study is to examine the fictional portrayal by Prairie novelists of the transition from old to modern ways of life. Only those aspects of the transition which receive the greatest emphasis by selected novelists will be examined. Nor will all Prairie novels treating this theme be considered. The number of books studied has been deliberately limited in order to allow a more thorough examination; the selection, therefore, has been somewhat arbitrary; nonetheless, some attempt has been made to show the development of this theme by considering novels written early in the century, others associated with the World War II era, and one which deals with the almost immediate present. Admittedly, any one of the novels examined provides ample scope for full scale critical analysis. This thesis contends, however, that a comparative study of a single theme, while it curtails the treatment of many other aspects, provides a broader foundation on which conclusions may be based. The examination of this theme leads to a greater understanding of the conflict and tension in the mind of modern man, whether he lives on the Prairies or elsewhere; its consideration, especially in recent years, has

also produced novels rich in texture. For these reasons, further investigation on this topic appears to be warranted. Some material, which does not lie strictly within the defined limits of this study, has been included because it points the way to further research. Some of the terms to be used in this paper demand some explanation. The term modern, for example, generally implies new ways of life, the mechanized, twentieth century world. I have limited the discussion to the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan: the inclusion of Alberta would have necessitated dealing with a different landscape, thus making the scope of the thesis too unwieldy. The term Prairie, therefore, refers to the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan; occasionally, it is meant to suggest the landscape alone, but in these cases the textual context should make the sense clear. The term Prairie novelist is used in a rather narrow fashion, since Frederick Philip Grove, for example, does not confine his writing to one region.

The term Canadian, is used at times simply in reference to a person who lives in that country and at other times with national implications; again, the textual context should make the meaning clear. The term East, means Eastern Canada, and West, Western Canada. The term, immigrant, is not always used in the literal sense of the

word; often it is used to convey a certain mentality. Occasionally, I have distinguished between first and second generation immigrants in order to make my meaning more precise. Use of other terms such as education, nationalism and maturity have been explained within the text.

The author acknowledges her debt to Dean G. L. Brodersen for his criticism, guidance and encouragement in the course of this undertaking.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

To facilitate easy reference, the following abbreviations have been incorporated into the body of the text. The list has been arranged to show the historical and literary development of the Prairie novel and not according to date of publication, or names of authors. Footnotes pertaining to less important sources follow the final chapter.

- V.H. Laura Goodman Salverson. The Viking Heart. New York (George H. Doran), 1923.
- F. Ralph Connor [C.W. Gordon]. The Foreigner. Toronto (Westminister), 1909.
- L.M. E. A. Wharton Gill. Love in Manitoba. Toronto (Musson), 1911.
- P.F. Nellie L. McClung. Painted Fires. New York (Dodd, Mead), 1925.
- Y.B. Vera Lysenko. Yellow Boots. Toronto (Ryerson), 1954.
- D.B. Frederick Philip Grove. Our Daily Bread. New York (Macmillan), 1928.
- Y.L. _____. The Yoke of Life. Toronto (Macmillan), 1930.
- F.E. _____. Fruits of the Earth. Toronto and Vancouver (J.M. Dent and Sons), 1933.
- G.R.7 _____. "Alien Enemy," Grove Papers: Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, Box 20.

- G.P.14 . "The First Day of an Immigrant,"
ibid.
- P.S.D.M. Rudy Henry Wiebe. Peace Shall Destroy
Many. Toronto (McClelland), 1962.
- H.S. Edward McCourt. Home is the Stranger.
Toronto (Macmillan), 1950.
- S. Adele Wiseman. The Sacrifice. Toronto
(Macmillan), 1956.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Not all of the authors and novels to be considered in this thesis are well known; nor is the historical background. An introduction to these matters is therefore warranted. Little, if any, research has been done on Laura Goodman Salverson's novel The Viking Heart published in 1923. In this book, the author describes life in the early Icelandic communities of Manitoba. Only The Viking Heart will be examined, although, Salverson has written many other novels. Perhaps, the best known of these is The Dark Weaver which won the Governor-General's award for the best Canadian fiction of 1937.

Ralph Connor, [C.W.Gordon], also writes of the period of Western settlement. His novel The Foreigner (1909), which deals with the Ukrainian immigrant, will be studied. The book claims to be "a tale of Saskatchewan," despite the fact that most of the story takes place in Manitoba. Connor, who was the minister of Saint Stephen's Broadway, a Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, stresses the moral problems created by the arrival in the West of large numbers of European immigrants. A popular novelist in his day, his better known works include The Man From Glengarry, Black Rock and the Sky Pilot.

E. A. Wharton Gill also describes life in a foreign community. His novel Love in Manitoba (1911), which considers the Swedish settlement near Minnedosa, Manitoba, will be reviewed. The book's little known and less readable sequel is called An Irishman's Luck. In addition, Gill is the author of a lively, autobiographical account, Letters of a Manitoba Choreboy, the value of which, like Mrs. Moodie's Roughing it in the Bush, has been recognized by historians as well as literary critics.

Nellie L. McClung was an ardent Suffragette and Prohibitionist who also writes of life in the Canadian West during the early twentieth century. Like Connor, she considers the moral implications involved in foreign settlement. Painted Fires (1925), which gives a frank, sympathetic account of a young Finnish immigrant, will be studied. The setting for part of this story is Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her novels, particularly Sowing Seeds in Danny, like those of Ralph Connor, were extremely popular in her day.

Vera Lysenko, like Nellie McClung, describes the problems faced by the immigrant in Western Canada. Her novel Yellow Boots (1954), which describes Ukrainian settlement in Manitoba, will also be examined. Her account of the Ukrainian immigration to Canada found in Men in Sheepskin Coats probably provided the historical basis for both Yellow Boots and her other novel Westerly Wild (1956).

Frederick Philip Grove, like Vera Lysenko, describes Prairie life in the second decade of the twentieth century. Three novels, Our Daily Bread (1928) set primarily in Saskatchewan, The Yoke of Life (1930) located partly in the marshy areas of Manitoba and Fruits of the Earth (1933) set on the Manitoba prairies will be considered. In addition, the Elizabeth Dafoe Library, at the University of Manitoba, possesses the type scripts of two short stories "Alien Enemy" and "The First Day of an Immigrant" and one article "Canadians Old and New" which will also be considered.

Len Sterner, a character in The Yoke of Life, mentions that his ultimate aim is to understand all art and literature. The boy believes that such knowledge will help him to understand and express his moods and feelings. Boggled down by other aspects of life, he never achieves his goal. (Y.L., 345.) Len's story, to a great extent, can be applied to Grove himself. Throughout life, Grove too, yearned for the opportunity to read and, if possible, to write great literature. The novelist, like his literary character, however, was swamped by other problems and never attained his goal.

Other novels in this area, which will be examined include: Rudy Henry Wiebe's Peace Shall Destroy Many (1962), which is particularly concerned with the problems confronting a Mennonite community in Saskatchewan during World War II, Edward McCourt's Home is the Stranger (1950), the story of an Irish war-bride which is also set

in Saskatchewan and Adele Wiseman's The Sacrifice which re- counts the problems encountered by a Jewish family in Manitoba.

Having introduced the novels and novelists which will be assayed, a brief report on some aspects of the lit- erary style of these books might be of further assistance. First of all, the authors handle the dialect of a particular racial group with varying degrees of success. Ralph Connor, for example, did not really come to terms with the Scottish dialect in The Man From Glengarry; nor does he do so with that of the Ukrainian in The Foreigner. Vera Lysenko, her- self of Ukrainian descent, adapts more readily to the Gali- cian vernacular. Adele Wiseman treats the 'Yiddish' with humour and insight. The personality of Bassiah, Chaim's wife, comes across by the use of one monotonous, complaining word, "oi, oi, oi!" (S., 99.)

Moreover, the element of irony is usually very strong in the Prairie novel. Adele Wiseman, for instance, portrays the figure of the child with irony. Little Moise is deeply upset by the death of his grandmother. Yet his father Isaac remarks that fortunately the child is too young to be affected by the incident. (S., 143.) In addition, the element of humour, although not particularly strong in these novels, is, nonetheless present. Grove's treatment of the proposal scenes of Kenneth and Isabel, and of Cathleen and Ormond in Our Daily Bread, and Wiseman's description of the Jewish race, reveal a gentle and sympathetic humour. Indeed,

a phrase from The Viking Heart, "Laughter is the sweeter for the tear behind it all," (V.H., 80.) describes the quality of the humour in these novels.

Much of the imagery found in these stories is drawn from the Prairie region. Grove, for instance, describes Cathleen as "a field in eternal fallow." (O.D.B., 191.) Lysenko's homely images have also been drawn from her experience of Prairie life. The talk of the Galician peasant, for example, is as "rich as a mushroom dumpling, flavoursome as a dill pickle, sprinkled with the spice of proverb and parable." (Y.B., 152.)

Furthermore, the history of the era had a considerable influence on these novels. A brief description of the historical framework in which these books are placed will perhaps be of assistance in approaching the thesis problem.

Mass immigration to the Canadian West around the year 1896 was accompanied by a wheat boom. Salverson, Connor, Gill and McClung write of this era. Railways expanded rapidly at this time in order to provide accommodation for the immigrants and also to provide an outlet for the vast quantities of wheat which were being produced. Vera Lysenko devotes an entire chapter to the description of a Railway gang. The workers, in their khaki-coloured or blue denim work shirts, come from a variety of racial backgrounds which include German, Irish, Ukrainian, Scottish, Italian and Scandinavian. (Y.B., 189.) Towns sprang up

rapidly at this time as people poured into the prairies. Winnipeg developed into a city of considerable importance. A variety of racial groups settled there; Connor and Lysenko describe the Ukrainian communities in the North End of Winnipeg; Salverson considers the Icelandic and Wiseman the Jewish group. John Marlyn, in his novel Under the Ribs of Death, which will not be considered in any detail in this thesis, uses the city of Winnipeg as the background for his description of the Hungarian community.

Many of the immigrants who arrived on the prairies were not prepared for the hardship of pioneer life. Clifford Sifton, who was the Minister of the Interior for the Federal Government did, however, make a conscious effort to encourage honest and accurate advertisements about western life. Sifton explained his advertising methods as follows:

The idea was to impress the ordinary farmer with the sense of reality, in contrast with the usual advertising methods in which glowing statements are printed while there is no guarantee of their genuineness . . . Care has been taken moreover, to see that the statements are not too favourable.¹

He thought such accounts would attract the type of person who could cope with the difficulties of prairie life. Sifton, therefore, tried to avoid the grossly exaggerated reports about Canada which Mrs. Moodie attacks in Roughing it in the Bush. Nonetheless, many people arrived whose unsuitability for that region often resulted in tragic dis-

location. The Prairie novelists incorporated such figures in their writing; Gill's Mr. Vale, Salverson's Anna Fjalsted, and McCourt's Norah, are characters in point.

Salverson's novel gives an account of early Icelandic settlers; therefore, a brief comment on the settlement of that group might be helpful. Numerous Icelandic colonies sprang up in Manitoba and other regions of the Canadian West. Indeed, the "New Iceland" district in Manitoba became known as the "Mother" of Icelandic settlements in Canada. By 1900, Winnipeg had an Icelandic population of four thousand. Although that immigrant identified more easily with the British - Canadian way of life than did most immigrants,² he too experienced a sense of isolation. Salverson remarks on the loneliness of young Borga when the immigration officials separate her from her parents. (V.H., 46.)

Wiseman's novel deals with Jewish experience, therefore, a comment on the history of that race in Canada will be of assistance. The Jewish immigrant to America generally preferred to settle in the United States, but many who came to Canada established themselves in the North End of Winnipeg, which was often referred to as the Ghetto. Some of these Jewish immigrants were fleeing bloody persecutions in the Old World; the family Wiseman describes have escaped from such an experience. The Jews usually settled not in the rural, but in the urban areas,

because there they could become merchants or traders, the occupations for which they were best suited.

The Prohibition Movement is another historical matter which has influenced Prairie novels. Often behind the demand for Prohibition in the West lay an Anglo-Saxon determination to encourage foreign immigrants to accept British - Canadian ways. Temperance leader, Ralph Connor, in his novel The Foreigner, powerfully describes the excessive drinking that occurs at a Ukrainian wedding and he carefully points out the evil which he feels is latent in such activity. Although Connor's The Man From Glengarry is not particularly concerned with the foreign element, the impact of Prohibition is also found there. Gill, too, records the uncontrolled drinking of Galicians. Nellie McClung, a Temperance leader like Connor, was active in the W. C. T. U.; the initials she reports stand for the "Women's Christian Temperance Union" and not as many men suggest "Women Continually Torment Us."³ Her Prohibitionist viewpoint also pervades Painted Fires. Despite the efforts of such leaders as Connor and McClung, the foreign groups were not influenced to any appreciable extent by Prohibitionist activities.

Other historical comments, which relate directly to the thesis problem, have been incorporated within the text of this paper. Having presented some remarks on the history of the period as well as on the novels and novelists to be studied, the thesis problem can now be approached with greater precision.

CHAPTER II

THE CRACKING VOICE OF THE OLD WORLD TRADITION

This thesis is a study of the transition from old to modern ways of life as handled by a group of prairie novelists. The discord and occasional glimpses of harmony which emerge from such a study will be stressed. No prior work has been done on this particular problem; nor has there been much earlier criticism on Salverson, Gill, or Lysenko, although their novels have probably been reviewed briefly in the Winnipeg Free Press. In fact, the amount of critical material generally available on Western Canadian literature is small.

Some Western Canadian critical studies, however, should be noted. Desmond Pacey, for instance, has written a book of somewhat questionable value about Frederick Philip Grove. In addition, Edward McCourt has written a valuable but general account, The Canadian West in Fiction, which suggests that enough Prairie literature of sufficiently high calibre is available to merit serious critical analysis. Queen's Quarterly has also contained a number of articles on Western fiction; G. R. Baldwin has written an interesting, but not entirely convincing, article called

"Patterns in the Novels of Edward McCourt," and Thomas Saunders has commented on the importance of the Grove Papers.

J. P. Matthew's book, Tradition in Exile, points out some of the problems associated with the lingering of Old World traditions in the New. In this thesis, however, the study of tradition will be extended to include the heritages of a variety of racial groups, whereas Matthews concentrated primarily on the British; where he deals with nineteenth century Eastern Canadian and Australian poetry, this paper will examine the twentieth century Canadian Prairie novel.

I. THE SOUND OF CONFLICT AND CHAOS

A study of the movement from old to modern ways of life is primarily a study of conflict. Old World traditions are in tension with those of the New. Man struggles against both Prairie Nature and modern ways. Family and human relationships are a source of further dissension; youth misunderstands the aged; husband alienates himself from wife, and child opposes parent. In the midst of such friction, the Prairie dweller is overwhelmed by a sense of chaos. In vain he searches for meaning in life and for his own identity. Sometimes in his struggle to attain order he reveals heroic endurance which is already an established theme in such Canadian works as E. J. Pratt's poem "The Titanic." More often, however, he fails to

recognize the truth embodied in the Book of Genesis that order can be created out of chaos. He ignores the view which maintains that the Canadian West is a mosaic, since that word implies a sense of order and a pre-determined plan. He sees instead a kind of stew into which ingredients consisting of a variety of racial groups have been tossed pellmell; in addition, this stew as far as he is concerned is not boiling in any melting pot. His vision of the disorder inherent in Western life often results not in heroic victory over external circumstances, but in a complete mental breakdown.

The Prairie novelist describes such feelings of chaos. Gill, for instance, regards Sweden as a community with complete understanding of itself because it follows Old World practices; on the other hand, he finds Winnipeg a chaotic place in which cultures clash as members of different racial groups search for their identity. Gill appears to prefer the established, ordered, settlement of the Swedish community. (L.M., 275.) Lysenko too, deals with the confusion of Prairie life and that of Lilli in particular. The song which best expresses her personality and her search for identity ends suddenly "as on a question mark." (Y.B., 143.)

Grove's John Elliot, watching his household disintegrate, is probably the best representative in Prairie fiction of all those who have watched old worlds crumble

around them. Wiebe's Thom, like Grove's John Elliot, experiences his own world falling to ruins (P.S.D.M., 217.) as he begins to seriously question the truth of Mennonite beliefs and practices. Furthermore, McCourt's fearful Norah reacts to the turmoil and confusion of a Prairie storm by seeking shelter in a physical relationship with Brian Malory.

Finally, Wiseman shows that the aged Abraham, like Wiebe's Thom, feels that the traditional Word of God has been lost amidst the bedlam of the modern world; Abraham now believes that, "a man's life moves in a circle. Though he thinks he is moving upward he finds he's back where he started, not knowing, not understanding, waiting for a word." (S., 253.) Although life seems to be "but a walking shadow," Abraham cannot bear "to accept the shadow, to embrace the emptiness, to acknowledge the oneness with the fruit without seed," (S., 300.) which the prostitute Laiah represents for him.

Conflict and feelings of chaos are therefore basic experiences for those living in the modern Prairie world. Such experiences have provided Western novelists with rich material upon which to draw. Perhaps Gill was too close to and too involved in the confusion of his times to be able to describe them well. Grove and Wiseman, however, handle the strife and sense of disorder experienced by the Prairie dwellers with great sensitivity.

II. NOSTALGIA FOR FADING MELODIES

The immigrant sensing the loss of his traditions suffers nostalgia for the irrecoverable moments of splendour in his past. He also longs for the sense of community which has been replaced by the New World spirit of independence. Usually, however, his nostalgia for the past is balanced by his anticipation of the future. This mood is also dominant in Eastern Canadian literature; it is noted, for example, in such short stories as Duncan Campbell Scott's "Paul Farlotte"¹ and in Morley Callaghan's "Last Spring They Came Over."²

In the West, Salverson comments on group nostalgia; the Icelanders have named their Manitoba settlement Gimli or "New Iceland" which reflects a yearning for the land they left behind. This particular form of melancholy also appears in Ralph Connor's novel. Kalmar, a foreigner in his novel, gazes at the snow-covered Manitoba prairie and looks homeward to Russia and to his beloved angel-like wife who died there. Then too, Christian Nielson's home, described by Gill, which is filled with souvenirs of Sweden (L.M., 8.) is itself a symbol of nostalgia for the homeland. Lysenko also describes the painful feelings experienced by the immigrant at the loss of his ancestral rites. She points out the universality of that emotion; Lilli's singing touches the areas of nostalgia buried in the hearts of all people, because if one searches back far enough all

Canadians are immigrants. (Y.B., 306.)

Homesickness, at least in the sense of yearning for a home in another land, is not evident in the novels of Grove examined in this thesis. He does, however, deal with it in some of his short stories. The longing of the German immigrant, Karl Schneider, in "Alien Enemy" is not so much for the beauty of old things, but rather for a sense of continuity with the past. Indeed what Karl remembers of Germany is not its beauty but its ugliness. He reveres that country's customs simply because they are old and therefore linked with the past. (G.P.7, 2.) What repels him in both Canada and the United States is the complete lack of such continuity. This longing for connection with the past links Karl Schneider with John Elliot, the major figure in Our Daily Bread.

Homesickness for Germany, while it is submerged, can also be found in Wiebe's novel. Joseph, a character in the novel, suggests that the Mennonites, homeless for over four hundred years, (P.S.D.M., 30.) identify, rather ironically, not with Canada whose government respects their wish for non-participation in World War II, but with the Germany where they feel their racial origins are to be found.

In addition, McCourt's Norah also exhibits homesickness as she yearns for the hawthorn and plum trees which bloom in Innishcoolin, (H.S., 20.) which represent

for her the richness of the entire Irish tradition. She finds that in this strange and lonely land the little folk or leprechauns of Ireland whom she loves can find no place in which to dwell. Norah, like Grove's Karl Schneider, dislikes the West because she feels that the past is nonexistent there. She too yearns for continuity with the past. Her dreams about her Irish ancestor Captain Anstruther Brandon of the Royal Inniskillings reveal such a longing. (H.S., 148.)

Finally, Wiseman too describes the desire to adhere to old ways; Mrs. Plopler, a well drawn minor figure, and Chaim Knopp, Abraham's best friend, cling to old medical practices and resent the new. Abraham too longs for the old butcher shop which has been replaced, (S., 16.) because it had represented for him the lingering of old ways in a new world. Nostalgia for old ways and for continuity with the past is therefore a dominant theme in the twentieth century Prairie novel.

III. FOLK SONGS AND STORIES

Although many treasured traditions did not survive the journey across the sea, others were more successful. The Prairie novelist often shows that the telling of stories and singing of folk-songs were the means by which many beautiful old customs were preserved. Salverson's Borga (V.H., 96.) and Gill's Mother Berg, (L.M., 220.) for instance, transfer their Northern heritage to Canadian

children by recounting the wild and wonderful fairy tales of Old Norse legend. Lysenko's Lilli also attains an awareness of her racial origins by listening to her mother and grandmother tell magical stories of life in the Ukraine. As the grandmother recounts her stories she wonders whether imps and spirits can exist in Canada, (Y.B., 169.) just as McCourt's Norah wonders if the "little folk" of Ireland can find a home in the West. (H.S., 169.)

Adele Wiseman also remarks on story telling as a means by which Old World customs are passed on to later generations in other lands. Moishe in later years tries to cast off the beliefs embodied in the stories Abraham told him as a child, but finds that he is unable to do so. The final meeting of the two on Mad Mountain, besides pointing out the more obvious theme of salvation, also shows that the Jewish heritage will be continued in different lands throughout the ages.

Prairie novelists stress the role of the folk song as well as that of the story in preserving past traditions. In the East, Thomas H. Raddall in his short story, "Blind MacNair," points out that people who believe that shanties and ballads have no beauty or poetry lack perception.³ In the West, Salverson suggests that the beauty of expression found in the Icelandic folk song should be preserved; this task, however, is not easily

accomplished. As Anna Fjalsted, a solitary figure, clothed in Icelandic dress sings a song composed by one of Iceland's exiled sons, she seems to represent the Icelandic "tradition in exile."⁴ Unable to face the brutality of Prairie life, she suffers a complete mental breakdown. For a time, it appears that the pieces of her "little broken melodies" (V.H., 221.) will never be put together again. The beauty and delicacy which she represents must be submerged during the pioneer period during which Prairie dwellers are, for the most part, completely absorbed in the struggle to survive. Balder gives his mother a brooch in the form of a "tiny bird of beaten gold." (V.H., 285.) His action suggests that suffering is necessary to create a more beautiful and durable song. The Icelandic heritage will not be destroyed, but phoenix-like will rise again. Salverson draws on Norse mythology in her treatment of Balder. Traditionally, he was a prince and hero possessing the qualities of a sun god and was reputed to be so beautiful and bright that a light emanated from him. Salverson, therefore, shows Balder as the candle which relights the sun of Iceland's ancient glory.

Perhaps she is further suggesting that Canadian literature must go through a period of submergence while it adapts to new conditions; the old Viking dragon ships must be replaced by faster vessels which will be better

suites for sailing uncharted seas in a New World. (V.H., 105.) Finally, Salverson indicates that the heroic endurance typified by Hermond singing with an arrow in his breast (V.H., 48.) is also part of the Northern heritage which Icelanders have brought to Canada.

Many other novelists comment on the folk song. Kalman, a character in The Foreigner, for example, shows a youthful interest in Old World customs as he dances and sings to the tunes of Hungarian folk songs. It would have been more appropriate, however, if the boy, a Ukrainian immigrant, had sung and danced to Ukrainian rather than Hungarian melodies, but perhaps this slight discrepancy between racial origin of the child and that of the song is but an oversight on the part of the author. Gill, in his turn, remarks on the pleasure Ludwig derives from hearing his father sing an old Danish song. McClung, too, describes the comfort which Helmi finds in a Finnish melody.

Lysenko also shows that the folk song provides continuity with the past. (Y.B., 304.) Lilli learns that folk songs are immigrants like seeds and people and that songs too are wanderers. (Y.B., 278.) She learns that as songs and stories are adapted from one country to another only their details are varied; the universal experiences they embody remain unchanged. Lysenko, like Salverson, remarks on the difficulties involved in preserving old customs. Matthew Reiner, who attempts through the medium of

his Winnipeg folk-choir to blend together the heritages of many nations, remarks that at times he feels that the woes of the League of Nations are minor compared to his. (Y.B., 231.) The yellow boots which represent the rich and colourful Ukrainian folk culture were made by an Old World craftsman. Like Anna Fjalsted's songs, Lilli's yellow boots are buried for a time but later reappear. Lilli is able to wear them only after she has adapted to life in modern Canada.

McCourt's Norah at first yearns to hear familiar Gaelic folk songs, but is later surprised to find that those of the Americans, such as "The Dying Cowboy," have a similar appeal. (H.S., 154.) Finally, Wiseman's concern with song is revealed by the old grandfather Abraham teaching Moishe a Jewish action song. The prairie novelist has taken great care, therefore, to show the importance of both songs and stories as an expression of the beauty of the past.

IV. LACK OF SYMMETRY

The preservation of the beauty of the Old World traditions gave expansion and symmetry to the new ways of life which were developing on the Canadian prairies. Many old customs survived, however, which contained elements of ugliness and brutality. Prairie novelists are generally agreed that such tendencies should be rejected.

Connor, while recognizing some attractive qualities in Old World ways, places greater emphasis on those which are ugly. Indeed, he appears to be working at cross purposes with himself. At times in, The Foreigner for example, he seems to be explaining the ways of God to the European immigrant and at other times the ways of the Anglo-Saxon to God. In particular, Connor objects to club-knife methods of fighting and to sordid, disorderly homes. He, like Vera Lysenko, believes that the emancipation from serfdom must take place in Canada as well as in Europe. He condemns his villain, Rosenblatt, who by controlling the lives and money of the Galician community in Manitoba, (F., 47.) is continuing an out-moded way of life which Connor feels should be rejected.

In Russia, Rosenblatt had betrayed Kalmar by giving information to the Secret Service. As a result Kalmar is sent to prison in Siberia. (F., 91.) He escapes from there and comes to Canada to seek revenge on Rosenblatt (F., 152.); and what Connor intends to be a dramatic encounter between the two men takes place. Connor, in a moralizing manner, suggests that in Canada only God has a right to be an Avenger, not man. Henry Kreisel in his novel The Betrayal handles a closely parallel situation in a less sentimental more sophisticated fashion.

Connor, Gill and McClung all comment on the violent personality of the European immigrant and of the need to

control his racial passions. McClung, however, remarks that the violence is sometimes more in the mind of the Anglo-Saxon, who resents the arrival of other racial groups, than in that of the European immigrant. McClung and Vera Lysenko both suggest that indications of ugliness are not sufficient reason to reject an entire tradition. At first, McClung's Helmi scorns to sing a Finnish folk-song (P.F., 143.) because it reminds her of unpleasantness in the Old World. Later, however, she learns to appreciate her racial heritage.

When Lysenko's Lilli, disillusioned by the cruelty of some members of her family and by that of her neighbours, decides to leave her parental home, she too for a time repudiates her racial heritage. Before she can arrive at maturity, she must return home for the yellow boots, which represent the beauty of the Ukrainian tradition. She even learns to appreciate the peasant boots, realizing that a degree of the harshness which they represent is necessary, particularly, during the struggle to survive the early years of Prairie settlement.

The problem of the degree of harshness which should be tolerated is perplexing. The excessive harshness demonstrated by the husband of Anna Fjalsted in The Viking Heart, who forces his hyper-sensitive wife to witness and assist in the bloody slaying of an animal, and that exhibited by Abraham's employer in The Sacrifice, who also forces him to

assist in the slaying of an animal in a manner which violates Abraham's religious conscience, must be rejected. Although the comparison between Anna and Abraham should not be carried too far, they both find like Lady Macbeth, that "all the perfumes of Arabia," will not erase the smell of blood from their minds; Anna goes insane, and Abraham eventually ends up on Mad Mountain.

The harshness revealed in the image of Anton's peasant boots stamping on the communion veil of Tamara's dead child, demonstrating his utter disrespect of spiritual values, must also be questioned. Anton and his neighbours believe that Tamara is a witch but only the child Lilli recognizes that, on the contrary, she is simply a superior woman denied creative outlet. When she is driven to her death by members of that community of hate, Lilli discerns the direction she must take. She cannot allow herself to be dragged down by the "little men" of the Ukrainian community, but must rise above their cruelty and pettiness without losing her affection for mankind.

V. REINTERPRETATION OF THE FATHERS' FAITH

Prairie authors as well as describing the need to preserve the beauty and to reject the ugliness of Old World traditions also comment on the need for its re-interpretation. Lysenko, for example, suggests that Lilli's task in life is to infuse the old tradition with new meaning. Wiebe, in particular, is concerned about the modern

generation's need to re-interpret the religious faith of past ages. On one hand, Deacon Block, the head of the Mennonite community, represents the traditional Mennonite viewpoint; on the other hand, Joseph, a Mennonite school teacher, typifies the modern outlook. Thom Wiens is torn between the arguments of the two men, yet feels he must choose between them.

Deacon Block tries to convince the doubting Thomas that the Mennonite faith must be retained in its traditional form. God, Block argues, does not change; nor does Christian morality. The Mennonites possess standards of right and wrong which are absolute, (P.S.D.M., 203.) not relative. He tells Thom that "the great matters of moral and spiritual discipline have been laid down for once and for all in the Bible and our fathers have told us how we should act according to them. They cannot change."

(P.S.D.M., 202.)

Joseph, who is Thom's counterpart, represents a modern interpretation of the Mennonite faith. Although he believes that the faith of his fathers is living still, in order to be true to his conscience and the Christian faith he must object to many Mennonite practices.

(P.S.D.M., 33.) The need for Prairie dwellers to expand their limited horizons is a prominent theme in such Prairie novels as Yellow Boots and As for Me and My House; Wiebe's novel also emphasizes this idea. Joseph tries to show Thom

that many Mennonite customs are both cut-and-dried and inappropriate. (P.S.D.M., 47.) Christianity cannot be equated with "a certain cut and colour of clothes, prayer caps and beads." (P.S.D.M., 69.) Joseph also suggests that the argument for non-participation in war had validity in an age when wars were mere skirmishes, (P.S.D.M., 47.) but cannot be justified in terms of the modern world wars. The irony of the situation lay in the fact that other Canadians, whom most Mennonites believed to be God-less, were fighting for the religious rights of that group. In addition, the Mennonites' claim that they are non-participants in World War II is both invalid and hypocritical because the farmers of that community are contributing indirectly to the war effort by producing food.

Thom listens to the arguments of both men. He begins to doubt the Mennonite faith but lacks the courage to face the "dark night of the soul" involved in such questioning; all too soon, he is "resigned to let tradition suffice." (P.S.D.M., 32.) Other young men who have renounced their faith ridicule him saying, "Oh Thom, he carries on the good traditions of the fathers. He'll be milkin' for quite a while yet." (P.S.D.M., 224.) Through Thom's experiences, Wiebe examines whether or not the Mennonite faith can stand the test of ridicule. Like the Biblical Thomas, "his eyes are open but he cannot see." (P.S.D.M., 160.) He must first see the evidence of a

crucifixion. He must find out exactly what did happen to Elizabeth, a being almost perfect in love, who died under mysterious circumstances, crucified by a so-called righteous man, her father, Deacon Block. Thom must come to terms with the crux of this matter before he is able to understand the meaning of Christianity. He must discover where the responsibility for Elizabeth's shameful death should be placed. The blame for such a tragedy he concludes should not be placed on God but on man. Deacon Block, Elizabeth and Thom himself are all in part individually responsible for her death. Thom understands that he can no longer rely on decisions made for him by other men in other ages but must cast off the security of the "sham slothful peace" (P.S.D.M., 162.) of the Mennonite community. He no longer admires "the fugitive and cloistered virtue," but realizes that he must make a full and personal commitment to Christ in the twentieth century world. Thom must seek for himself the meaning of the "brightest star in the heavens" (P.S.D.M., 239.) which once shone over Bethlehem. Whether he will find it shining over a tension-filled Mennonite community or a battlefield in Europe, only Thom can discover. Whether he participates in World War II or not is a matter of individual, not group conscience. He does know, however, that the Peace of God can only be attained by some manner of battle rather than by retreat from the modern world.

Wiseman's Isaac is also concerned about the truth of his father's religious faith. He believes that the simplicity of Abraham's faith has no place amidst the complexity of modern Prairie society. Abraham is so close to his God that it is almost impossible to distinguish the decisions of One from the other. Darwinian ideas particularly bother Isaac (S., 79.) and by extension his father who resents being considered old-fashioned simply "because he refused to believe he was descended from a monkey! . . . to have his own son turn into a monkey-worshiper in God's eyes was too much." (S., 77.) Yet Isaac, like Wiebe's Thom, finds it difficult to break completely with his father's faith. The fact that he must discuss his ideas with his father in order that they might have the right to exist (S., 90.) implies a subconscious belief in the Hebrew religion. Isaac, like Thom, wonders whether the religion of his father possesses standards of right and wrong which are absolute. He reads Hebrew and contemporary books; he searches the world around him, but nowhere can he find a definite answer telling him: this is right or that is wrong. Isaac resembles T. S. Elliot's Prufrock, only his "overwhelming question" is: Can the Hebrew faith give meaning to life in the modern world? Finally he dares "to disturb the universe" by rescuing the Scroll and Crown from a Synagogue which is being destroyed by fire. As he lies on his death bed, he again becomes an

"honest doubter" wondering if it was "worth it after all." The moods, conflicts and questions expressed at this time by Isaac are similar to those found in Devotions upon Emergent Occasions written when their author, John Donne, was also very ill. Isaac, like that seventeenth century poet also witnesses "the breaking of the circle" only in the modern world. Faith gives way to reason and Isaac appears to his father as a man who possesses the ability to fly, but has "deliberately descended to the earth and declared that he could not really fly and to prove it henceforth he would walk." (S., 258.)

Following the death of his son, Abraham too begins to lose faith. His murder of the prostitute, who herself represents the confusion of Judaism in the modern world, reveals his own mental chaos. The task of re-interpreting the Hebrew faith is then given to Abraham's grandson Moses. He will lead Canadian Jews through a modern wilderness of doubt and confusion to the threshold of a new understanding of their religious beliefs.

VI. A SONG OF LOVE AND ROMANCE

Prairie novelists also deal with the transition of Romantic as well as Religious traditions to the modern world. The influence of the Romantic literary tradition on novelists writing early in the century is obvious. Salverson's description of an Icelandic immigrant who resembles a Greek god and of an Indian whose bronze skin

shining in the sunlight (V.H., 36.) makes him appear as a "noble savage" is unconvincing. As her novel progresses and as the Icelandic immigrant becomes more familiar with life in Canada as it really is, Salverson's character becomes more genuine and she is able to create an Indian who is a truly believable human being. (V.H., 129.) Anna Fjalsted "dreaming pretty things" (V.H., 122.) in a world completely divorced from Prairie experience also represents the Romantic nature and tradition.

Sir Walter Scott's literary style influences Connor's novels and no doubt he shares the enthusiasm displayed by his character Kalman, who is so enthralled with Ivanhoe that he stays up all night reading it. (F., 267.) In particular, the love scenes in The Foreigner, The Man From Glengarry and in E. A. Wharton Gill's Love in Manitoba show the effect of this tradition. The meeting of Gill's young lovers in what he no doubt intends to be a dramatic and moving court room scene borders on the ridiculous:

With a compulsive start the prisoner struggled to his feet and held out his fettered hands, 'Amanda at last!'

'Ludwig, oh Ludwig, my love you are saved,' and Amanda fell half-fainting into Herbert Darcy's arms. (L.M., 300.)

Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that Gill did not further intensify this melodramatic scene by overcoming the practical difficulty involved in Ludwig's "fettered hands," there-

by enabling his heroine to fall into the arms of her lover rather than those of his lawyer.

Nellie McClung in her autobiography Clearing in the West remarks on the need for literature which is true to life. Yet many of the characters and events in Painted Fires lack such realism. Salverson, Gill and McClung all recognize a need for realistic writing but are unable to achieve it. On the other hand, perhaps these writers, Connor included, wrote according to the Romantic literary tradition because they realized that if they were to attain any degree of popularity they must provide momentary escape from the hard, monotonous life of the early years of Prairie settlement.

Vera Lysenko is certainly in favour of the Prairie pioneer possessing an element of romance in life in order to compensate for his difficult life. Yellow Boots is probably autobiographical to a great extent, yet it lacks the realistic quality found in Nellie McClung's autobiographies or Mrs. Moodie's Roughing it in the Bush. The reason for the discrepancy in tone between these works could be that Lysenko considers sentimentalism a virtue and deliberately infuses this quality in her book. Equally, the conventional novel form probably inhibits the realism in her work. Nonetheless, Lysenko firmly believes that the Romantic tradition, slightly altered to suit New World conditions, has a definite place in the Prairie world. Lilli's

yellow boots, a symbol which for Lysenko is as all-embracing as the Hindu religion, also represent romance. When she takes them with her to meet her country sweetheart Vanni (Y.B., 140.) in natural surroundings, she finds romance in Prairie nature. Similarly, when she takes these "fairy-tale shoes" (Y.B., 104.) to the city and shows them to Matthew Reiner, she finds love there too.

Frederick Philip Grove, unlike Vera Lysenko, is not a sentimentalist. His honest, almost painful exposure of life in the West was not appreciated by Prairie readers. They preferred the sugar-coated novels of Connor and McClung which offered a brief respite from Life's hardship. Disregarding the popular demand, Grove, who no doubt was familiar with the works of both Zola and Flaubert, broke away from the Romantic tradition in order to follow the convention of literary realism. He ridiculed those who looked at the West through rose-coloured glasses. Probably he shared the scorn which most of the Elliot girls exhibit towards Kenneth Harvey, a young man possessing both a heart-breaking Byronic beauty and a mind saturated with early Romantic Western fiction. (O.D.B., 40-41.) In addition, Lydia's letters to Len in The Yoke of Life show several stages of development, the first of which is the Romantic. (Y.L., 135-6.) Possibly Grove believed that this was the first stage in Canadian Letters and that as

Prairie society develops Canadian fiction should, like Lydia's letters, go through further stages.

Edward McCourt, like Grove, has little respect for early Romantic Western fiction. Jim, a character in Home is the Stranger, tells his wife Norah that she has read too many poor, out-dated Prairie novels. McCourt is probably suggesting that too many readers of Canadian fiction have also received a false impression of Western life.

McCourt presents in terms of his four major characters, Gail, Jim, Brian and Norah, various aspects of the Romantic personality. At first sight, Gail appears to be the most down-to-earth. She is given the credit for enabling Norah to look at life realistically. (H.S., 219.) The ironic twist at the end of the novel is Gail's revelation of her blind passion for and elopement with Brian Malory; Jim, like Gail, appears on the surface to be practical to the core. Although he criticizes his wife for reading out-dated Western novels, he is obviously caught up in the aura of Romanticism found in such literature. As a young boy, for example, he fell desperately in love with a beautiful cowgirl, Muriel Logan, who was not aware of his existence. She died, taking the Romance of the West with her to the grave. Jim, however, cannot face the fact that respectability and dullness (H.S., 112.) are alive in the West and that Muriel and Romance are dead.

Brian Malory, unlike Gail and Jim, is obviously a Romantic type. He, like Grove's Kenneth Harvey, has a Byronic quality about him. Whether his Romanticism is genuine or assumed (H.S., 101.) is difficult to assess. A blonde talking to Norah in the washroom at a school-house dance comments on Brian's Romantic nostalgia:

I'd call him phony Irish . . . He talks all the time about the hills of Ireland and the fairy glens and the twisty roads and things like that - in between making passes. Why doesn't he go back if he's so crazy about his darn hills? (H.S., 122.)

Like many Western immigrants, he cannot go back without destroying the Romantic illusions about his past which make Western life tolerable. (H.S., 150-1) Grove's Karl Schneider in "Alien Enemy", for example, did return to his homeland and found that his dreams of Germany had no basis whatever in reality. Although this paper cannot do justice to the complexity of Brian Malory without going outside the limits of this thesis, he appears in the final analysis to be a Romantic "hollow man," "a professional Celt in shabby exile trading on his Romantic heritage and the tag-ends of poets for his personality." (H.S., 223.)

Norah, like Brian Malory, is clearly a Romantic type. Her similar nostalgia for Ireland and constant quoting of nineteenth century poets reveal her Romantic attitude. To some degree, she resembles Conrad's Lord Jim constantly dreaming of performing heroic deeds; but

when the opportunity to show courage arises she fails. In the end, however, she accepts her fear realizing that it is an inherent part of her personality. She determines to overcome it, not by running away, but by banishing the Romantic dreams which always "played her false." (H.S., 252.) She resolves to come to terms with the Prairies which have become for her a symbol of Reality. A study of a group of Prairie novels shows, therefore, a development in both character and style from the Romantic to the Realistic.

VII. SUMMARY

This chapter deals with problems concerning Old World traditions which affect life in the New World. The loss, for example, of many well-loved customs results in feelings of chaos in the minds of Prairie inhabitants. Nostalgia for a familiar way of life, for a sense of community and continuity with the past are also considered. Much of the beauty of Old World traditions was preserved by means of the folk song and story. Prairie novelists show an awareness of the ugliness and brutality in some aspects of Old World life. In addition, they deal with the need to re-interpret many of the traditions which survived the journey across the sea, particularly those related to religious faiths. Finally, the influence of the Romantic tradition on Prairie fiction is also noticed.

The chapters to follow will stress the conflict and tension which arise as the old traditions give way to new, or in other words, as the immigrant learns "to dance to the tune of the stranger." (S., 42.) Prairie Nature often intimidates an immigrant who has experienced a gentler mode of living in his homeland. The impact of the Machine Age results in further discomfort. The changing role of the family in modern society also conflicts with traditional views. New educational practices are a source of further dissension. Out of these feelings of conflict and resentment an understanding of a variety of racial groups and humanity in general gradually begins to arise; such an awareness indicates the beginnings of a Canadian nationality in the desirable sense of the word.

CHAPTER III

THE JARRING NOTES OF NATURE AND MECHANIZED MELODIES

Because Prairie dwellers feel and resent the loss of their Old World traditions so keenly, they find it difficult to adapt to Prairie Nature and the modern, mechanized world. This chapter will consider the problem of adjustment to these areas.

I. TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

Novelists describing Prairie Nature early in the century tend to employ terms, which are more applicable to the Old World than the New. The occasional perceptive remarks made by these writers about Nature can probably be attributed to the Romantic literary tradition which stressed detail in the description of Nature. Frederick Philip Grove, although he has many awkward moments, as far as his literary style is concerned, is among the first to present a valid description of the Prairie scene; for example, his sensitive handling of Nature in Over Prairie Trails. By focusing on a single aspect or detail such as "bare clay hills," "rows of scraggy wheat," (O.D.B., 4.)

"tufts of short wiry grass" and "mats of prickly cactus," (O.D.B., 61.) he gradually builds up a composite picture of an entire region. Illustrative phrases such as "the pitiless August sky" or "parching hot winds" (O.D.B., 236.) convey the approach of the Depression era. Indeed, Grove's method of description is reminiscent of Emily Dickinson's poem entitled, "To Make a Prairie it Takes a Clover and One Bee." Furthermore, Grove is able to convey the monotony of an unrelieved stretch of land. He is sensitive to those qualities which are unique to the Prairies. Edward McCourt shows by his account of a Prairie storm, the contrast of Old and New World Nature, and by his obvious awareness of the complexity of Prairie Nature, that he too is able to describe Canadian Nature effectively.

II. HARSH CHAOTIC SOUNDS OR A STRANGE LOVELY MELODY?

Novelists were certainly not alone with the problem of understanding Prairie Nature. Every immigrant encountered the same problem. Feelings of confusion resulting from the loss of old traditions are further intensified by the bewildering new life. Salverson's Anna Fjalsted and McCourt's Norah are both intelligent women who are unable to cope with Prairie life; as the land overpowers them, their personalities disintegrate. Perhaps if they had been less sensitive to the world about them, their mental

breakdowns might not have occurred. Indeed, if John Elliot is the "Lear of the Prairies," Norah is their Hamlet. She finds too many complexities in Nature becoming "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." David Wiens, Thom's father, also is bewildered by Nature in the New World feeling that the Canadian bush has "disrupted the whole order of things." (P.S.D.M., 21.)

As long as the immigrant fails to realize that Prairie Nature itself can provide the basis for a new tradition with a loveliness of its own, he will continue to find chaos in Nature. H. H. G. Herklots, in a humorous autobiographical account The First Winter, suggests that Westerners, despite remarks to the contrary, do have a background which is to be found in their natural environment. He also believes that once a proper understanding of the beauty of Canadian Nature is arrived at, great literature might be produced.¹ McCourt's Norah, however, perceives in the attitude of the Western farmer towards Nature a firm faith in the gods of a new tradition. (H.S., 26.) These gods, however, are not friendly to man, like those of her country, but rather are harsh, cruel and pitiless, like the country itself. Most immigrants like Norah, long for the beauty and charm of Old World Nature and are blind to the harsh, rugged appeal of the prairies.

Grove suggests in "Alien Enemy" that an immigrant

can never truly appreciate the alien beauty of a new land. (G.P.7., 2.) Abe Spalding, however, who is not a first generation immigrant, appreciates particularly the wide open spaces of the prairies which give him room to develop both as a farmer and as an individual. (F.E., 11.) Salverson, unlike Grove, believes that a first generation immigrant can appreciate and even express genuine affection for the prairies. Icelanders, however, adapted more easily to life on the prairies than did other racial groups.

III. NATURAL HARMONY

Although most immigrants fail to appreciate the beauty of the prairies, a few fictional characters, notably Gill's Amanda and Lysenko's Lilli, are in complete harmony with their environment. Yet their ability to blend their personalities with that of Nature is unconvincing because no struggle is involved. The Nature to which they adapt resembles the pleasant English countryside described by Wordsworth, rather than the monotonous, bare stretches of land known to inhabitants of the Canadian prairies. Amanda, Gill's heroine, for example, blends with the various seasons of Nature like a chameleon (L.M., 47.) and Ludwig, the hero, is enabled by his Northern heritage to view Prairie Nature in a more Romantic light. Yet neither of these characters come across as genuine human beings.

Although Lysenko overstates her case, the fact that Lilli identifies with the Prairies and hears harmony in the world around her shows her perfect adaptation to the world of Nature. Lilli remarks "that prairie is me, and I am prairie and everything sings with me." (Y.B., 142.) Lilli, like Gill's Ludwig, finds that she can adapt more easily to Nature because of a consciousness of her racial heritage. Sinclair Ross' Judith in As for Me and My House may be seen as a more sophisticated version of Lilli. They are both, for example, undisturbed by the wind, a symbol of Prairie nature. Nor do they struggle to dominate the wind, but rather move in harmony with it, adapting the rhythms of their songs to those of Nature.

Thom, cut off from the world of Nature by the limited framework of the community, views the Wapiti River for the first time and realizes that he is missing much in life. (P.S.D.M., 44.) He becomes aware of the need to expand his horizon by adapting to the larger world. It should be noted, however, that those who adapt easily to Nature are not first generation immigrants. Such people are too busy fighting it to harmonize with it.

IV. THE NOTE OF TERROR

People often hate and fear the unfamiliar and those

emotions are generally the responses of immigrants to the Canadian Prairies. Finna, a character in Salverson's novel, particularly hates the harsh winters. (V.H., 143.) As she becomes more familiar with the Canadian way of life, however, her hatred changes to affection. Nellie McClung's mother also hated and cursed Western life; she wished bitterly that the land had never been taken from the Indians.² Grove's Ruth also abhors Prairie life and feels that it is comparable to being in prison. (F.E., 46.) Time and again she conveys the impression expressed earlier by Finna and Nellie's mother that "this isn't a country fit to live in." (F.E., 46.)

Such feelings of hatred were often projected to an external force, the Prairies themselves, which seemed hateful and deliberately malevolent towards man. On the other hand, perhaps the belief in Nature as an evil force is not simply a matter of projection but a reality. The sense of evil in Nature is not, of course, confined to Canada but is evident in the novels of Thomas Hardy. It is also found in some Eastern Canadian works such as the poems of E. J. Pratt and the short story "The Heritage" by Ringuet.

The handling of Prairie Nature by Grove and McCourt shows its complexity to an extent which other novelists mentioned in this paper fail to do. The image of the wind in particular is treated with skill. For Grove, it represents the

destructive power of Nature which perhaps nothing can withstand:

This wind, with its onsets and lulls and its sudden cannonading attacks, infuses into the blood a rhythm which defies sleep. Will anything withstand it? Or is it going to level the work of man, turning a slow and gradual destruction into a cataclysm momentary and catastrophic. (F.E., 250.)

McCourt also remarks on the destructive quality of the wind. For Norah it is "alive and full of hate," something which mocks and threatens man. (H.S., 188.) His use of the wind is suggestive of Anne Marriott's "The Wind Our Enemy." The use of the wind as a symbol of evil and destruction is most ironic since traditionally the Wind represents the Voice of God. W.O.Mitchell uses this image in this latter sense in his novel Who has Seen the Wind? Sinclair Ross is no doubt aware of the Biblical interpretation of the wind and uses it with conscious irony in As for Me and My House.

Grove and McCourt comment further on other destructive elements in Nature. Grove, for instance, describes the quick, large scale destruction of a hail storm which leaves panic-stricken sheep, dead chickens and calves in its wake. (Y.L., 60.) McCourt, in his turn, comments on the destructiveness of hail, frost, drought and blistering dryness.

Grove suggests in The Yoke of Life that Nature is attempting to devour man. (Y.L., 56.) McCourt expresses



the same idea when Gail cynically remarks:

Because it grows crops and looks pretty sometimes, people call it the good earth. I don't . . . and the earth is greedy . . . It gives - but it always takes back. That's the real balance of nature. Before you conquer your few acres you pay the price. The earth always wins in the end. (H.S., 42-43.)

Indeed man confronted with Nature appears to be a human Lilliputian facing a Prairie Gulliver.

Grove's Ruth (F.E., 318.) and McCourt's Norah both feel that Nature is threatening them. Norah, in fact, finds in Nature a pre-ordained plan but one which proves the existence, not of a benevolent, but rather of a malevolent universe:

She seemed now to see in the shape of things a deliberateness of intention actuated by malice and directed against herself and all men living in the vast vacuity of the prairies. (H.S., 188.)

Norah nearly submits to the dominating power of the Prairies but acquires the courage to resist it (H.S., 257.) and by so doing restores her mental balance.

Grove and McCourt both remark on the indifference of Nature. Grove in his short story "Snow," for example, remarks that the sun shines "with an almost indifferent air"³ upon the body of a man killed in a prairie snow storm. McCourt observes that the "vast indifference of the universe" has killed Jim's mother (H.S., 108.) and implies that the hyper-sensitive Norah could easily meet

the same fate. These novels show, therefore, that a literary interpretation of Prairie Nature demands great insight and understanding on the part of the novelist.

V. THE FARMER'S STRUGGLE WITH A TRYING TUNE

The interpretation of Prairie Nature as an evil or at any rate destructive force intent upon defeating man has resulted in a struggle. Nature is seen as a test of man's endurance in this struggle. The Canadian poet, E. J. Pratt, deals most effectively with man's struggle against the natural elements in such poems as "The Roosevelt and Antinoe," "The Titanic," and "Towards the Last Spike." Prairie novelists also deal with this theme of struggle against the test of Nature. In fact, Nature's testing quality has a moral significance in that it builds character. Grove, for example, acknowledges the character-building quality of Nature in Canada. (F.E., 12.) Jim's remark in McCourt's novel, "they tell you adversity strengthens character. But it breaks lots of people - nice people - good people," (H.S., 26.) suggests that such a test is not always desirable.*

Man in his struggle with Nature often appears as a heroic figure. The man in Canada who comes to terms with his environment is seen in this light, whereas in the United States, Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn suggests

that it is the man who escapes from his environment who is considered to be the more courageous.

In Canada, the concept of heroism is often revealed in terms of a group rather than an individual. E. J. Pratt's poem "Dunkirk" is an Eastern example of a portrayal of the group hero. Lysenko's railway builders illustrate this idea of group heroism. They fight the rock, swamp and forest. Many of these men have lost arms, fingers or have been physically injured in some other way during their fight. (Y.B., 190.) Grove also gives an impression of the hero as a group, rather than an individual in his description of the men of Abe Spalding's district fighting the elements. (F.E., 76.) The prosperity of the Mennonite farmers in Wiebe's novel also conveys a sense of group heroism.

The prairie novelist also shows the individual farmer in his struggle with Nature as a hero. Lysenko, for example, describes Lilli's father, Anton Landash, as resembling "the hero of some mid-European operetta." (Y.B., 12.) Grove's Abe Spalding is another outstanding farmer determined to conquer the spirit of the prairies. (F.E., 12.) Abe resembles a "harvest god" (F.E., 286.); his success in his struggle with Nature makes him appear as a duke, lord and king to his less prosperous neighbours:

He piped, and they danced; and even though some of them swore at him before they went to his dance-floor, Abe remained a hero and a saga-figure, loved by few, hated by some, but . . . admired by all. (F.E., 95.)

Part of Abe's heroism lies in the fact that he is able to impose order on the chaos of the prairies. His complete self-sufficiency (F.E., 253.) enables him to defy the disorder evident in a Prairie storm, whereas the tense and insecure Norah in McCourt's novel, confronted by a similar experience, falls apart completely. Abe, however, is so absorbed in his struggle with Nature, that he has not got the time to cultivate human friendships; he needs neighbours, not as companions, but simply as means of obtaining better roads, cross-ditches and schools. (F.E., 31.)

The struggle of the farmer is also a way by which continuity with the past can be restored. Grove's John Elliot clearly interprets the farming profession in this light. Thom Wiens in Wiebe's novel is keenly aware that his family is "carrying on their ancestors' great tradition of building homes where only brute nature had couched." (P.S.D.M., 19.) This sense of continuity is often destroyed when machinery invades the farm, making the farming profession an industry rather than a traditional way of life. Industrialization results in a greater emphasis on money values and children are drawn from the farm to the cities,

thereby escaping the struggle experienced by their parents. The younger John Elliot is one of the rare examples of the child who returns to the farm to restore continuity.

The invasion of the machine and particularly the great tractor into ^{the} farming community completely changed the nature of that profession. The sense of struggle which made early farmers appear heroic ceased to exist. McClung, in Clearing in the West, notes, for example, that upon its arrival Sundays were no longer sacred but became the day for taking the machine into town for repairs. Vera Lysenko also comments on the effect of the Machine Age on farm life. She feels that the arrival of the machine is destroying the cultural heritage of the past. A thresher humming through a field of wheat was making anachronistic all that the yellow boots represented. Embroidered linens were being replaced by those which were machine made. Hand-made dresses were being replaced by those from the mail order catalogues. The poetry of a Ukrainian wedding ceremony would be supplanted by a cut-and-dried civil ceremony. (Y.B., 119.) An airplane, which represents for Lilli and her brother the invasion of the modern world into the realm of Nature, frightens a flock of geese. "The symmetry of the wedge" (Y.B., 299.) is broken and the geese in their confusion scatter in various directions.

Grove, too, considers the effect of the invasion of the machine into the farming areas. Ruth, for instance, asks Abe why Prairie dwellers want to buy more and more machinery; he simply replies, "it's the way of the West." (F.E., 52.) Wiebe applies this invasion to the Mennonite community which is trying to get the best of two worlds. Its members do not hesitate to take advantage of the mechanical inventions of the modern world; indeed, the leader of the community, Deacon Block, is the first to buy a radio and modern machinery for his farm. (P.S.D.M., 70.) At the same time, the Mennonites believe they are cut off from the sinfulness of the world. Many of the younger members, realizing the inconsistency between Mennonite beliefs and practices, leave the community in order to move "in harmony with the world." (P.S.D.M., 220.) The test of Nature which once enabled heroic struggle against the elements is no longer possible once the machine has invaded the farm.

VI. CITY RHYTHMS

In addition to a study of Nature, the Prairie novelist places a great deal of emphasis on the treatment of the city. Most of the novelists considered in this paper, and many who are not, such as John Marlyn in

his novel Under the Ribs of Death, deal in particular with that "city of immigrants" (Y.B., 212.) Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The city is often described in terms of Nature. Prairie Nature invades the city of Winnipeg in Yellow Boots in a rather forced, self-conscious way. Lilli, for example, is likened to a flower crushed by someone's boot in the country, which springs back to life when transplanted on city soil; she is a plant removed from a dark corner and placed in the sunshine. (Y.B., 253.) She learns to respond to the rhythms of the city as she had once done to those of Nature. The vitality of her personality survives the transition from country to city and, by extension, from old to modern ways. She hears music in city life just as she had in that of Nature. Earlier it was suggested that Lilli might be seen as an undeveloped version of Sinclair Ross' Judith. This comparison should not be carried too far, however, as the contrast between the two is almost more notable than their similarities. The main difference between the two characters lies in the fact that Lilli is able to adapt to modern society, whereas Judith does not.

Adele Wiseman, like Vera Lysenko, describes life in the city in terms of Nature. Whereas the Nature described by Lysenko was too self-consciously that of the Prairies, the life described by Wiseman has a universal

quality. Like Lysenko, however, she uses the plant image to describe her characters. Abraham intends to send down roots in a New World city where he feels his son, who represents a plant as did Lilli, will have an opportunity to grow. Wiseman, however, deals more with the atmosphere of Nature than its physical reality. Her comparison of Abraham to a farmer who has laboured hard for a bountiful harvest, only to have his crops ruined by an invisible and malignant destroyer, (S., 259.) shows an awareness of the darker side of Nature which Lysenko ignores.

Although Lysenko and Wiseman have shown that city life can be described in terms related to Nature, Prairie novelists also point out that for most city dwellers, Nature ceases to be a hostile force and becomes a place of refuge from the cares and trials of city life. This attitude towards Nature shows the influence of stock post-Wordsworthian Romanticism. Archibald Lampman is an Eastern poet who sees Nature as a place of refuge. Indeed the longing of the city man for the country is an interesting variation on the immigrant's nostalgia for his homeland. Helmi, the young Finnish immigrant in McClung's Painted Fires, flees from the racial discrimination encountered in the city to the flowers and woods (P.F., 21.) of the supposedly Western but seemingly Eastern Canadian countryside.

Nature is also viewed as a place of retreat from the lonely crowds of the city in some of Grove's novels. John Elliot, for example, longs to escape from the superficial city society of which his daughter is a member and return to the peace and quiet of the familiar countryside. (O.D.B., 274.) Len Sterner in The Yoke of Life makes the journey from the farm to the city, but he too yearns to return to his country home.

In addition to the interpretation of Nature as a place of refuge from city life, the universal division between country and town within a regional framework is also taken into account by Prairie novelists. Raymond Knister's short story "Mist Green Oats" is an Eastern work which illustrates such city-country tension in terms of a farm boy, who resents the long hard hours he must work and yearns to go to the city to obtain an eight-hour-day job.⁴ In the West, Grove, in particular, portrays such division. When young John Elliot learns of the forthcoming visit of Cathleen's city beau, he determines to out-dress Woodrow and teases his sister about using such words as "jake" in front of her beau. (O.D.B., 16.) This attitude reveals the rivalry which exists between country and city. Furthermore, the doubt whether Margaret's room will be good enough for the city professor (O.D.B., 16.) shows the feeling of inferiority experienced by a country man unfamiliar with the city way of life. John Elliot senior,

who resists all change, further disapproves of the city man because he is not rooted in the soil. (O.D.B., 77.) The tension between city and country inherent in Grove's novels is never resolved.

Since immigration to Canada was accompanied by a movement towards industrialization, it is only natural that Prairie novelists echo this development in their treatment of the city. In the same way, the growth of factories and the increasing power of the Labour Movement, are side-echoes of this process treated in the Prairie novel.

Many European immigrants who had been Social Democrats helped to spread the Labour ideas in the New World and by extension in the Canadian West. Nellie McClung presents a delightful and humorous portrayal of Anna Milander, a young immigrant completely caught up in the enthusiasm of such ideas. This young Union member, impressed by labour talks in the "wage slaves when will you wake up?" (P.F., 10.) spirit, hurls a stone at a policeman as a blow for the Cause of Freedom. Her "civil disobedience" results in what she considers to be a delightful night in jail. Indeed, the Golden Age has arrived, for tomorrow someone else will make her breakfast and her bed. (P.F., 15.)

Factory conditions in the mechanized city are considered in a more serious vein. Indeed, the attacks

on the evils of factory life may be interpreted as the beginnings of the novel of social protest which emerges from a study of Canadian Prairie fiction in the twentieth century. Salverson, for example, criticizes the evils of Winnipeg's factories by attributing the death of Kate Hafstein's husband to unhealthy working conditions. (V.H., 127.)

Nellie McClung describes in her autobiography, The Stream Runs Fast, an unsuccessful attempt to obtain social reform by almost literally dragging the Premier of the Province, ^{SIR} Rodmond Roblin, to see for himself the harmful working environment of Winnipeg factories. Ly-senko, with her usual optimism, finds work for her heroine in a bright, cheery factory in which the working conditions are ideal. Grove, on the other hand, criticizes the evils of Canada's "dark satanic mills" in The Master of the Mill. The locale is probably Keewatin, Ontario, and because the mill is grinding Prairie wheat, that book too, with a little stretch of critical definition, can be classified as a Prairie novel. In it, Grove shows that in the mechanized world man has become dehumanized, a mere cog in a machine. Man is a slave to the machine which he should have mastered. Joyce Marshall in her short story "The Old Woman"⁵ reflects the same mood as Grove's novel when she describes a man who has fallen in love with and is a slave to his machine; he is unable there-

fore to love a human being. Wiseman also deals with the injustices of factory life. Isaac, for example, is over-worked in such a place and loses his job defending an old man who is being ill-treated. Isaac feels that he is being degraded by such work and that the vulgarity of his fellow-workers is rubbing off on him. He wants to become something better, to teach, for example, and resents his work:

Zip zip - five cents - zip - seven cents - zip, zip - another dollar. Another bundle. Was this what he was made for? . . . he wanted to do something, he didn't know what, to work at something that would lead him somewhere, to discover, to create - not just pocket facings day after day . . . (S., 81.)

Just as Nellie McClung writing at an earlier period described that with the invasion of the machine Sunday ceased to be sacred, Wiseman also shows that the Machine Age interfered with man's religious life. Isaac remarks that the Sabbath of the Jewish immigrant is no longer respected by factory owners. The irony of this situation is realized by considering ^{SIR WILFRED} Laurier's sunny invitation to the Jews in which he promised that if they would settle in the promised land of Manitoba, the Federal Government would grant them a degree of self-government so that they could make their own by-laws which would replace Sunday with Saturday.⁶

VII. LOW NOTES

The mechanized world which invades both farm and city life results in a strong emphasis on material values. McCourt, through Brian Malory, comments on the over-emphasis on such values. Brian remarks that if he were a composer he would create a symphony called "The American Dream" and he uses the word "American" in the sense of "North American." For his symphony Brian intends to borrow the tunes of other composers; for example, he will use that of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" to represent the Pilgrim Fathers, "Land of Hope and Glory" to suggest The United Empire Loyalists, "Yes, We Have No Bananas" to convey the era of big tycoons and "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" to sum up the pride, ambition and greatness of the North American Continent. (H.S., 157.) Brian's original contribution to the symphony, his main theme expressing the soul of America will be the sound of "water. Water flushing down a toilet bowl! ... The American Dream. Indoor plumbing in every home!" (H.S., 158.) Although the irony of Brian's account is stretched almost to the breaking point, McCourt, without moralizing, puts across with unmistakable clearness, the idea that material values should not be man's ultimate goal in life. The fact that the most materialistic society on earth is being developed on the Canadian Prairie

and consequently as a part of the North American Continent (H.S., 158.) should be a cause for concern. For McCourt, Canada's symbol of unity is not a railroad, a river system or a maple leaf but the sign of the all-powerful dollar.

Grove, in a more subtle manner than McCourt, suggests that modern man's emphasis on material values is too strong. Brian Malory, however, when describing his symphony had no intention of being subtle. Grove points out that the idea of Canada or North America possessing a classless society is an absolute myth because the Old World "aristocracy of lineage" has been replaced by the "aristocracy of money." (O.D.B., 180.) John Elliot is upset by the "cocktail party" society which has resulted from the emphasis on material values. The old man can only laugh at the absurdity of a society in which the mistress of the house must live up to the expectations of her servants. (O.D.B., 172.) With the wisdom and experience of the very old he strips away the masks of members of modern society. His feeling towards the modern world is expressed when he remarks: "the spirit of the times! The spirit of nonsense! . . . The spirit of the times is to hunt the most pleasure while dodging hard work." (O.D.B., 177.) His children, however, are unconvinced and continue to indulge in the nonsense he abhors.

Abe Spalding in Fruits of the Earth depicts the

force of materialism; the Prairies, on the other hand, represent spiritual powers and the fundamentals of life. The struggle which ensues between Abe and the Prairies or the two sets of values is universal. Grove contrasts Abe and Nicoll; Abe is the man who fights Prairie nature and the spiritual forces they embody and Nicoll is the one who accepts them. Abe becomes dehumanized in the pursuit of materialistic goals. His lack of humanity might, therefore, have been the author's intention rather than a sign of Grove's inability to present a genuine human being.

Many materialists are described by Prairie novelists. Grove, for example, describes Fred Sately whom people predict will be a millionaire, (O.D.B., 17.) and Mr. Diamond whose name and gold-filled teeth (F.E., 17.) typify him; Adele Wiseman describes Polsky and Chaim Knopp's son Ralph, the manufacturer, and John Marlyn in Under the Ribs of Death describes Sandor. Grove's final comment on the materialist is that "the time is bound to come when he will turn his powers against himself and scoff at his own achievements." (F.E., 128.)

VIII. SUMMARY

The Prairie dweller living in the twentieth century world found it necessary to adjust to both Nature and to life in the Machine Age. The Prairie novelist

was confronted with the problem of presenting a valid description of that region. Man usually hated and struggled against the harshness of the land. Sometimes the Prairies were considered destructive or malevolent; at other times, they appeared to be merely indifferent; and occasionally they were considered benevolent.

The Prairie novelist places considerable emphasis on the city; he describes it in relation to Nature. He also echoes the Labour Movement and the growth of factories in the Prairie city. Finally, he considers the importance Prairie dwellers are placing on material values which have been brought into a sharper focus due to the impact of mechanization. A study of the adjustment to New World Nature and to the mechanized city and world, reveals two of the major areas involved in the transition from old to modern ways on the Canadian Prairies.

CHAPTER IV

THE HARMONY OF THE HOME DISRUPTED

Just as the impact of the mechanized age caused changes in modern society, such alterations were reflected in the nature of the family. Some emphasis will be placed on Grove's handling of this theme as he considers it in more detail than the other prairie novelists.

I. THE VOICE OF HISTORY

The sense of community which the traditional family offered was no longer desired by many inhabitants of the Canadian prairies. The Mennonite community which Rudy Wiebe considers, especially resented the new spirit of independence which was threatening its existence. Although that community tried to remain an "island entire of itself," the invasion of modern ways of life resulted in the breakdown of its traditional village system. The Depression years, which hit the Prairies particularly hard, resulted in further tension in family relationships, a point clearly illustrated by As for Me and My House. The War years resulted in the necessity for re-adjustment in family life. This period of social disorganization within the

family was followed by a less obvious one of reorganization on a new basis. Once again novelists draw upon the social and historical background of the Prairie region in order to discuss another universal theme, the family.

II. THE SYMBOL OF THE HOUSE

Grove uses the image of the house to illustrate both the break down in family relationships and man's longing for a sense of order and continuity. Grove is aware of the symbolic potential of the house image as early as Over Prairie Trails when he remarks that "a house has its physiognomy as well as a man, for him who can read it."¹ The decay of John Elliot's house reflects the disintegration of relationships between the members of his family:

The windows were broken without any exception. The greater part of the floor had been torn up. Black spots on the prairie about the house, covered with charcoal, were evidence of the fact that camp-fires had been lit there ... The room in which their father lay was open to the winds; and everything in it was coated with dust and chaff.
(O.D.B., 389.)

Paradoxically, the house is also a symbol of order (O.D.B., 378.) and of continuity between generations. Elliot's endurance in his pilgrimage across the prairies to his house and home is reminiscent of that shown by Grove himself in his journeys over prairie trails to visit his wife and child. John Elliot's longing to return to

his Prairie home is a variation on the immigrant's yearning for his Old World habitat. All of the old man's children with the exception of two, who probably represent the lost tribes of Israel, gather around their father as did those of ^{JACOB} Abraham, thereby restoring at least temporarily the traditional family unit.

The house image is also dominant in Fruits of the Earth. Abe's ultimate goal in life is to build on the Canadian prairies a house containing all the modern conveniences money can buy. Abe achieves his goal but finds no fulfillment. He has built his house on the sands of materialism and like the Biblical foolish man sees his house destroyed by Natural forces embodying spiritual powers "and great was the fall of it." Abe's house is somewhat comparable to that described by Ross in As for Me and My House which serves not the Lord but Baal. Although this section has concentrated on Grove's treatment of the house image, other novelists, such as Edward McCourt (H.S., 132.) and Margaret Laurence in The Stone Angel,² use this same image.

III. THE SWEET SOUND OF "MOTHER" SILENCED

During the late nineteenth century the Suffragette Movement acquired considerable influence. This Movement did much to change the status of woman in the modern world. On the Canadian Prairies, Nellie McClung was an ardent

advocate of woman's suffrage. During the War years women were encouraged to assume greater responsibilities than ever before. The role of woman was changing; she was beginning to emerge as a member of an equal but different sex. Women were able to make their way into professions which had previously been closed to them. They were leaving their knitting and comfortable rocking chairs in order to seek a more fulfilling life amidst the turmoil and confusion of society. The modern woman in fiction changes as well. She ceases to be subservient and romantic and becomes more sophisticated and "real."

The mother is another notable figure in Prairie fiction. Usually the focus is on her death as a figure of sainthood; she becomes a "stone angel" who is being replaced by the more vital woman of modern fiction. Salverson's Gudrun is one example of the mother exhibiting the traditional motherly love, but she dies early in the novel. Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mrs. French in their concern for Kalmar's children, like the minister's wife in The Man From Glengarry, also represent the mother in her traditional role as an ideal, almost super-human figure. Amanda's mother who sacrifices her own ambitions for those of her child represents the conventional concept of motherhood.

Lilli's mother, Zenobia, is first seen as the Old World Mother; her children attempt to modernize her and her

home with factory-made clothing and modern conveniences. Zenobia realizes, however, that these changes do not suit her, but only Lilli can appreciate her mother's clinging to old ways. The death described in this novel is not of the mother but of the grandmother. Lilli realizes that this death foretells that of the Old World tradition. In the figure of Tamara, Lysenko presents a mother who also happens to be a superior human being; she goes insane when her children die because the limited framework of the Ukrainian community offers her no interests to occupy her mind. Lysenko is obliquely suggesting the need for a changed status in the lives of women who possess great potential in the hope that it will not be wasted. Lysenko's implied criticism of the treatment received by Tamara is another illustration of the Prairie novel as one of protest.

Grove's Mrs. Elliot at first sight represents the peace and love which the traditional mother image typifies. Her name, Martha, itself suggests the Biblical Martha who devoted herself completely to household tasks. When she dies, her family falls apart. Although this event occurs at the end of the first book of Our Daily Bread, her presence pervades the entire novel. Young John tells his father that he would never have left the parental home if his mother had lived and Henrietta, years after her mother's death, asks:

'How old are you father?'

'I? I am seventy-four.'

'Yes, that would be right. If Mother had lived she'd have been sixty-eight, last fall. There were six years between you.'

This way of reckoning was the usual one in the family. Everything was referred to the mother. (O.D.B., 323.)

Although Mrs. Elliot represents, for the most part, the conventional mother image, there is evidence that she deeply resented the role she was forced to play. Mrs. Elliot confesses to her daughter Gladys, shortly before her death, that she had not wanted to have so many children. Indeed, the only one of them for whom she feels any genuine bond is Gladys. Mrs. Elliot insists upon dressing up in her black silk dress and going to a dance in town urging those who were there to dance with her. This act of rebellion, however, occurs when she is out of her mind with cancer and could never have happened under normal circumstances.

Again, in Wiebe's novel the mother is the conventional Mennonite woman whose place is in the home. The younger women, with such tragic exceptions as Elizabeth Block, tend to leave the community and the traditional role of motherhood they would have to fill if they remained there.

The loss of a mother's love early in life is shown by McCourt as the cause of much of Norah's need for security in later years. When she becomes a mother faced

with the crisis of her child's illness, she is completely unable to cope with the situation because she herself is still a child.

Wiseman also focuses to some extent on the death of the mother figure. Sarah is grief-stricken by the sacrificial death of her children in the Old World and therefore does not want to be a part of the New. She withdraws from life so that she might rejoin her dead children. Unlike Abraham, she is unable to place all her hopes in her one remaining child. Both her son Isaac and her husband Abraham fight and struggle within themselves against her death, but lose. The modern mother, such as Ruth, Isaac's wife, casts off traditional ways; she insists on her child being born in the hygienic atmosphere of the hospital, rather than in the home. The modern mother also wants a doctor, rather than a rabbi, to perform her son's circumcision.

Wiseman's Laiah appears to be the fictional modern woman who has denied motherhood by deliberately choosing not to create. (S., 262.) After Abraham has murdered her, the authorities who have taken him into control notice that for some reason he is confusing the dead prostitute with his dead children. (S., 327.) Later, it is suggested that he sees her as their mother. Laiah, the Winnipeg prostitute, becomes Leah, the Mother of Israel. The Biblical Leah, although she was less favoured by God than her

sister Rachel, was nonetheless the mother of six sons or six of the twelve tribes of Israel. Together Leah and Rachel built the house of Israel. After the murder, Abraham fuses the two in his mind and Laiah becomes Rachel weeping for her lost children. He tells Moïshe that "in her voice there were the voices of children. Do not harm her, lest you hear them weeping." (S., 344.) Leah is reputed to have tender eyes and to have expressed sympathy for man. The name Leah is believed to mean "wild cow"; this term when applied to The Sacrifice ties in with Abraham's earlier butchering of an animal. It was also an act of murder, not sacrifice. Abraham, by killing Laiah, has destroyed the divinity of the mother figure in the modern world:

Even as his arm leaped . . . the Word leaped too, illuminating her living face, caressing the wonder of the pulse in her throat, flinging itself against the point of the knife. (S., 304.)

Finally, Margaret Laurence's novel The Stone Angel also shows the importance of the mother's death. When Hagar's brother Dan was only four, his mother died and that occurrence deeply bothered him, just as young Moïshe was upset by the death of his grandmother. Young Dan, however, used to wrap himself up in his dead mother's shawl and sit for hours. When Dan is eighteen, he becomes fatally ill. Hagar is asked to put on the shawl and comfort him. She refuses to try to replace the meek

and gentle mother who has died and her brother dies comfortless.³ Hagar apparently possesses the defiant spirit of the Biblical Hagar and, like her, she cannot replace the lawful mother figure.

IV. MARITAL DISCORD

When the traditional mother ceases to exist, she is replaced by a very different kind of woman. The emergence of the modern woman affects the marital relationship. Connor's Paulina represents the traditional subservient attitude of the wife towards her husband, particularly as she kneels before him begging to be beaten.

The Icelandic group in Manitoba were among the first to demand Woman's Suffrage. Salverson appears to be sympathetic to that cause. Fru Haldora, a character in The Viking Heart, who is an Icelandic Prairie wife, blazes the trail for other women to take jobs outside the home despite the criticism she must bear for doing so. Nellie McClung's novel, as one might expect, deals with the need for a changed status of woman. With an admirable degree of feminine psychology, Nellie has the husband, rather than the wife, advocating the idea that the woman should take up a profession outside the home. Dr. St. John suggests that both he and his wife would be better and happier people if she would become a working wife instead of spending her days playing cards and gossiping

with a group of frivolous women.

That Helmi would not put herself in the position of Connor's Paulina is evident by the anger she once expressed towards a Finnish folk song which advised a young husband to keep a stick handy for beating his wife. (P.F., 144.) McClung also protests the inferior status bestowed on Helmi by the supposedly well-bred English magistrate who performs her marriage ceremony. He considers her inferior both because she is a woman and because she is a foreigner. When the judge realizes that Jim has been educated at Queen's University and comes from a good Anglo-Saxon background, he offers him a fake certificate so that he may cast off this inferior being when he wearies of her. Jim, however, refuses because he is deeply in love with Helmi. To wipe out the ugliness of the civil ceremony, the young couple in Hardy-like fashion invent an out-door service of their own in which Nature purifies their love.

Lilli's mother, Zenobia, whom Lysenko describes, is the traditional subservient wife accepting the authority of her husband. Lilli, whose father offers her hand in marriage in return for some land, (Y.B., 145.) refuses to be a mere chattel in the marriage relationship. She realizes the conventional role she would have to play in marriage if she remains in the Ukrainian community and it goes against her grain. Although she loves her country

sweetheart Vanni, she leaves him to go to the city where she meets and decides to marry Matthew Reiner. Lilli realizes that with him she will continue to grow to maturity and find her identity. Although many Ukrainian women did not want suffrage and criticized those who were advancing ideas concerning the emancipation of women, Lysenko clearly aligns herself with Salverson and McClung on this issue.

So far it has been implied that the woman who accepts the modern interpretation of the female role will live "happily ever after" with her husband. Grove presents a more realistic picture of the effects of the changing role of women upon marital life. At first it would appear that Grove is rather biased against this "new woman," as it is easy to identify the author with his major characters. It does not necessarily follow that because John Elliot resents the modern woman Grove does also. On the contrary, it is the over-emphasis on ^{THE} Suffragette point of view on the part of Salverson, Lysenko and especially McClung which presents a biased picture of the "new woman" who will go out in the world to make order out of the chaos men have created there. Grove presents an objective view of the "new woman" as she really is: her strengths, her weaknesses and especially her frustrations. The fact that he was able to appreciate the position of the married woman who takes up a profession outside is evident in Over Prairie

Trails which reflects his deep admiration and affection for his wife who was herself a member of the teaching profession. Grove's attitude towards the modern woman and world is probably close to that of Len Sterner who "did not criticize. He accepted it all as a fact; such was the world." (Y.L., 281.)

The disillusionment of marriage in the modern world is evident in Our Daily Bread. In this novel, Grove almost painfully exposes man putting asunder what God has joined together. Mrs. Elliot's confession of dislike for her husband and her erection of a barrier between them (O.D.B., 128.) forewarns the unhappiness which her children will find in marriage.

When Gladys learns of her mother's disillusionment with marriage, which might never have come to the fore had her mother not been suffering a terminal illness, her own marriage disintegrates even more. There is no indication of the existence of the spirit of love between her and her husband; in fact, John Elliot refers to both them and their farm as "dispirited." (O.D.B., 82.) Mary, another daughter, explains in a condescending manner to her somewhat shocked mother that as far as sex in marriage is concerned it is possible for the modern woman to have her cake and eat it too. (O.D.B., 24.) Despite the fact that she has rejected the old-fashioned ways of her mother, Mary finds that the benefits of modern

society will not give her marital happiness. She feels not like a wife but simply a housekeeper who has a bachelor boarding in her home. (O.D.B., 22.) Only when her husband becomes financially destitute is she able to find any satisfaction in married life. For the first time he is able to share something with her; that this something is disgrace does not matter. Her father cannot understand why she wishes to remain with her husband.

The estrangement between Henrietta and her husband is perhaps the most tragic of all. Henrietta's marriage, on her part, is strictly a business arrangement. She obviously does not love her husband or her children. When John Elliot, her father, asks where the children are; Henrietta replies harshly, "The children? Why don't you say, the brats?" (O.D.B., 200.) Her father perceiving the unhappiness she has brought upon herself by demanding money and a car in return for housekeeping and the use of her body can only pity her. Her bitterness and lack of affection utterly destroy her husband's spirit. He dies because he wishes to end their marriage.

Cathleen and Woodrow are too caught up by the social pressures of the "cocktail party" society in which they move to take the time to put aside their masks and get to know each other. Cathleen tells her father that she would love to return to a small, peaceful country dwelling and get away from the social and academic pressures^{of} the society

in which they live; she tells her father that she remains in Winnipeg for Woodrow's sake. Woodrow, in turn, tells John Elliot the same thing only, he adds that Cathleen would miss her social life. The old man just laughs at the self-deception of these young contemporaries. Elliot is angered at the sterility of modern life which his daughter represents. When a married woman at a party in his daughter's home declares her ambitions to write, he discourages her with the command: "Go . . . and attend to your duties as a wife and mother!" (O.D.B., 183.) Fortunately for the future of Western Canadian fiction, writers such as Patricia Blondal, Adele Wiseman and Margaret Laurence paid no heed to the traditional viewpoint which opposed female authors.

One of John Elliot's daughters, Margaret, who by the end of the novel is a university lecturer, vows that she will never marry. Her father realizes that a girl with such "perverse" (O.D.B., 57.) ideas would have offers and feels that chaos is inherent in the non-married female state. Margaret, although unafraid to dwell in the "brave new world" of modern woman, is reluctant to enter the disillusioning world of modern marriage.

John Elliot's glimpse into the cursing, quarrelsome relationship between his son Norman and his wife (O.D.B., 304.) utterly sickens him. The marriages of

his other children, Isabel and John, are also unhappy, but at least they show forbearance and tolerance in their relationships.

Len, in The Yoke of Life, is unable to see Lydia as a human being living in the twentieth century world. Lydia is described in terms similar to those used by writers of the Courtly Love Tradition. She resembles Stella, and he, a lowly Astrophel. She is both angel and witch, Eve, before and "after the fall." (Y.L., 162.) Len realizes the discrepancy between the real and ideal woman but is unable to accept the fact. "'There are two of you,'" he tells Lydia, "'One has so far only lived in my imagination; the other has lived in a mistaken dream of the world.'" (Y.L., 312.) He rejects the conventional form of marriage, but in Hardy-like fashion believes that in the eyes of God and Nature, Lydia is his wife. (Y.L., 340.) Len's failure to see the real world as anything more than a "mistaken dream" results in a nightmare of insanity and death.

Grove in Fruits of the Earth stresses the need for the formation of new relationships in modern marital and family life. The disillusionment of marriage is evident in the relationship of Abe and Ruth. The name Ruth is probably used ironically; she certainly does not possess that spirit of willingness to give, love and understand implied in the "whither thou goest" attitude of the Biblical

Ruth. Grove applies the universal theme of the failure of communication between individuals to the marriage relationship. A "habit of silence" (F.E., 183.) has established itself between the two, and "as in the case of many marriages, the lines of Abe's and Ruth's lives had neither merged nor diverged; they had run parallel." (F.E., 180.)

The city-country tension also enters their marriage as Ruth pulls towards the city, and Abe roots himself firmly in the country. The emphasis on material and physical values brought into sharper focus by a mechanized age, also affects the marriage relationship. Abe, for example, when choosing his wife, completely ignores her spiritual or intellectual qualities; he is only interested in her physical appearance. That they have not achieved a spiritual union is, therefore, not surprising. It seems only natural when problems do arise that Abe offers Ruth a materialistic solution: "'Next time I go to Somerville, I'll open an account for you at the new bank. I'll deposit a couple of hundred.'" (F.E., 47.)

Out of their disillusionment with marriage a quality approximating love develops, a respect and forbearance of one another. The new relationship they form is based on a mutual recognition of the right of each to live his, or her own life. Because the idea of the woman possessing equal rights in marriage is relatively

new, Grove's acceptance of the changing role of women in the modern world is noteworthy. It would appear that marriage like many of the Old World traditions has survived, although not without some modifications.

Edward McCourt also evaluates the modern woman. He contrasts the hardy, pioneer wife who lived on the Prairies in the early years of settlement with the tense, hypersensitive Norah. The early settler's wife coped with pioneer conditions year in and year out; Norah, however, confronted with the same situation for a week has a mental breakdown. The change in the nature of women within the early and later years of the century is apparent. The pioneer was simply too busy struggling with her household tasks to contemplate the implications of everything around her. The modern woman, however, with the assistance of mechanical household aids has acquired more leisure time in which to think. The Prairie makes the modern woman, such as Norah, "think too much." (H.S., 198.) As Brian Malory points out, the modern woman is "more complex, more highly strung," (H.S., 197.) than the stolid pioneer. Because she is living in a larger, more frightening universe than did her grandmother, she often seeks security rather than love in marriage. Norah finds that true security can not be found in others; she must base her sense of security on her own inner resources. Once she attains this realization she ceases to use her

husband as a shelter from the bombs exploding around her in the Old World during World War II or from the frightening reality of Prairie life, and acknowledges her love for him.

V. LACK OF UNISON BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD

The break-up of the family unit is reflected in the relationships between parent and child, as well as in those between husband and wife. Salverson's novel stresses the harmony in family relationships. Her novel is primarily one of settlement, and as the family was the unit of settlement, it had to cling together, out of necessity, in order to survive. As the Prairie novel moves away from a consideration of the earliest stages of settlement, discord in family life becomes more evident.

Connor, however, describes the parent and child moving in opposite directions; Kalmar clings to Old World ways, whereas his son Kalman refuses to avenge his father's wrongs. Nor does the boy accept the slow, sloppy mannerisms of his stepmother Paulina. He chooses instead the Canadian way of life.

Lysenko, also, shows the split in family relationships. Lilli yearns to be a part of her family circle, (Y.B., 65.) but is considered too strange and unattractive

to be accepted there. Lysenko, with her ever-present symbolism, describes Anton tearing Lilli out of a family photograph and dropping that piece on the floor. Yellow Boots is, in fact, the story of The Ugly Duckling in human terms. Once Lilli has changed into a beautiful swan she is accepted into her family. But before she can emerge as a beautiful creature, she must break away from her family background which is dragging her down. Her father treats her like a piece of property rather than a daughter. To obtain the money to buy himself a horse, for example, he hires his daughter out to work. (Y.B., 145.) Lilli struggles for her freedom, refuses to let her father dominate her and feels she must leave the parental home in order to grow and search for her identity. The fears instilled within her in childhood are shrugged off in the city, whereas they would have defeated her had she remained within the framework of the Ukrainian community. Lilli appears to be in perfect harmony with old people. She has a deep affection for both her grandmother and grandfather. Her relationship with them reveals an appreciation of Old World cultural values which most Prairie children fail to recognize.

Grove places a much greater emphasis on the discontinuity between parent and child. The breach between parent and child represents for John Elliot the break between the present and the past; "he had always felt him-

self to be continuous with his ancestors. With anxiety and sinister forebodings he began to see a break in that continuity." (O.D.B., 12.) He feels that if he could understand the mystery of life, continuity could be restored; as far as his children are concerned, however, the old man sees "through a glass darkly." He describes his children in terms of the development of a photograph:

Thus his children appeared to him. The developing solution was life itself. They had been mere blanks, more alike in the lack of distinguishing features than differentiated by the small deviations in texture. Like those first patches on photographic prints, certain peculiarities had asserted themselves in each of them, mysterious in their significance. Perhaps, if a person had been able with his imagination, properly to interpret them, he might have changed the picture that was to appear by and by. Development went on; and suddenly character and fate became readable as the features connected themselves to each other. (O.D.B., 135.)

Discontinuity results because the parent is unable to comprehend the individuality of his child. He is unable to tear aside the veil which prevents him from communicating with his children. The photographic image is developed further:

Correct them? How can you correct what you do not know. Blame them? The picture on the blank sheet appeared because the hidden chemistry of the underlying strata had been influenced in some incomprehensible way. Only that appeared which was already invisibly traced into layers. There was some thing uncanny about it. We can but become what we are ... (O.D.B., 135.)

The mystery of human nature is not the only source of division between parent and child. The greatest thing in the world for John Elliot is the building of a family; the ultimate goal for most of his children is material success. The completion of Grove's epigraph on the title page of the novel "and his sons walked not in his ways" with the words "but turned aside after lucre, took bribes, and perverted judgment" suggest that Grove considered the emphasis on material values exhibited by John Elliot's children as the main cause of the division. John Elliot, for example, cannot understand why his son needs three or four suits when he himself can manage quite well with one. The old man is stunned when he learns that his daughter has a deeper affection than ever for her husband who has become a "common swindler." (O.D.B., 105.) She calls her father old-fashioned because he is upset about such things and fails to realize that as Grove's epigraph suggests there is nothing particularly new in man's chasing after "filthy lucre." What is new is the impact of mechanization which has intensified man's thirst for money. Norman, another of Elliot's sons, has no greater ambition in life than to take machines apart and put them together again.

Grove places emphasis on the aged parent. The old man represents the parental tradition, the body of which is drying up and becoming hollow. (O.D.B., 266.) Just as

John Elliot is unable to understand his children, they in turn are unable to comprehend him. Grove reveals the child's lack of understanding and his own sympathy for the aged in the remark: "this morning he had simply wanted to be coaxed to stay, that was all. Had Henrietta coaxed him, he would have stayed, perhaps for the three o'clock train." (O.D.B., 208.) In one brief phrase, "perhaps for the three o'clock train," (O.D.B., 208.) Grove has captured the impatience of the aged.

The insensitivity of youth towards the loneliness of their elders further widens the gap between them. He hears so seldom from his children that he leaves unopened the occasional letter he does receive in order that he might finger it tenderly for a few days and anticipate the message of love he hopes to find inside, but never does. (O.D.B., 244.) His unrecognized loneliness is again noted in Grove's moving description of the old father dressed in his Sunday suit waiting on the highway for the arrival of one of his children to take him to his home. (O.D.B., 259.)

The breakdown in John Elliot's mental faculties is an anesthetic against the modern world, a self-induced reaction against the younger generation. (O.D.B., 283.) His mental deterioration results in his living in the past where he can mend the break in the continuity of tradition, which he must do, in order to understand his own identity -

and perhaps that of Canadians as a group:

... he was conscious of curious lapses in his mental activities; as if the continuity of time were broken; as if some heart, not of his body, were missing beats ... he concentrated all his mental effort on the task of preserving his own identity. (O.D.B., 302-3.)

Mental and physical deterioration lead to thoughts on death. Death, for John Elliot, is a symbol of continuity with both past and present. In death, he will rejoin his wife, parents and ancestors. His approaching death re-unites him with his children who have gathered around his death bed. Grove shows that while "crabbed age and youth cannot live together," they can be united in death. Grove also connects his story with Shakespeare's play, King Lear:

Woodrow waved his arms in a significant gesture meant to express what he felt. 'Lear of the prairie!' he said.

And, for a moment, a hand of steel seemed to close about Cathleen's heart. (O.D.B., 258.)

Phrases such as "a significant gesture" and a "hand of steel" tend to force the comparison between John Elliot and Lear. Indeed Lear of the Prairie was to have been the original title, but it was dropped when Grove came across another work with a similar title Lear of the Steppes. The association between Shakespeare's play and Grove's novel intensifies the division between parent and child. Many

similarities are noted between Shakespeare's Lear and John Elliot. Both are old men with violent tempers. Lear seeks affection in the homes of his children and Elliot does the same. Both are rejected by their children, although the cruelty of Elliot's children is not as intense and deliberate as that of Lear's. Grove does not excuse Elliot's children for their lack of sensitivity:

The Sedgeby folk reported that John Elliot was aging and getting to be 'queer.' In fact, he was sixty-two years old, white of hair and beard and gruff of speech. It seemed to occur to nobody that, perhaps, he needed looking after. (O.D.E., 231.)

Since any bond at all existing between John Elliot and his children is based on a sense of duty, rather than on affection, no clear-cut Cordelia figure emerges in Grove's novel. Although he probably had no intention of writing a novel of social protest, his concern for the treatment of the aged allows the reader to interpret his novel along these lines. The story of the old person, who clings to past ways of life, is a universal theme.

The dichotomy in the relationship between parent and child is also treated, but to a lesser extent, in Fruits of the Earth. Abe Spalding's farm, which he has built for his children, is a symbol of family unity. When he realizes that his children do not wish to remain there, his life seems meaningless. (F.E., 159.) Abe's absorption

with material goals which separate him and his wife, also divide him and his children. "The more lordly his own domain grew to be, the less in keeping was his house." (F.E., 44.) The death of the child Charlie in Grove's Fruits of the Earth represents the break between parent and child. Charlie has tried to show Abe the beauty, wonder and mystery of life; "the child is the father of the man." Charlie's death is almost a sacrifice, (F.E., 178.) the ransom Abe must pay for a bountiful crop. His death marks a turning point in Abe's life. He realizes that he has loved this child and there is more to life than material success. (F.E., 113.) Rather ironically, Abe realizes that he has been pursuing one of the false felicities and turns to his children for comfort, just as they are about to enter that material world he has rejected. (F.E., 44.)

The fact that Abe is an autocratic father also harms his relationship with his children. One daughter, when refused permission to marry, determines to elope. Frances' pregnancy is partially a reaction against the conflict of her father's stern views against modern ways. Abe must learn, like Lilli's father, Anton, in Yellow Boots that the father in the twentieth century must relinquish some of his old authority; he can no longer completely dominate wife and children in a world influenced by democratic ideals.

The problem of parental authority as a source of

disunity between parent and child is also found in Wiebe's novel. Elizabeth Block's rebellion against her father's stern religious and moral standards results in tragedy. She appears at first to be simply the woman accepting her traditional place in the Mennonite home. (P.S.D.M., 41.) Indeed, "as far back as Thom could recall, she had appeared exactly as now, dumpy, uninvolved, oddly wasted." (P.S.D.M., 25.) Later, Thom learns that Elizabeth had once been involved with a young Mennonite boy whom she loved deeply and wanted to marry. Her father refused to grant his permission. Elizabeth, a very loving person, has no place to channel her love and it is therefore wasted. Later, when she learns that the boy she had loved has married a half-breed girl, she goes to a half-breed hired hand on her father's farm and begs him to make love to her. Her action is one of indirect rebellion against her father. Like most Mennonites he considered sexual immorality to be "the nadir of sin; it was equivalent to murder." (P.S.D.M., 180.) Her action also attacks her father's discrimination against the half-breeds who live near the community. In an indirect way she is united to a man whom her father has forbidden her to marry. Elizabeth's relationship results in a pregnancy, and despite her years of service on her father's farm, she dies damned and disowned by him. Block's cruelty towards the half-breed hired hand (P.S.D.M., 184.)

appears far more murderous to non-Mennonite eyes than Elizabeth's action.

Thom also opposes his father. He considers his father's excessive acquiescence with the Mennonite leaders in any crisis to be a fundamental weakness of character. (P.S.D.M., 68.) Thom's loss of respect for his father causes a break in their relationship. In fact the War itself causes a splintering of relationships in many Mennonite families, as the younger people rejected the pacifist tradition of their fathers.

The clash of generations is most evident in The Sacrifice. Wiseman, like Grove in Our Daily Bread, criticizes the ill-treatment of the aged. Chaim Knopp appears as a Lear figure representing banished Hebrew traditions. His job, the slaying of animals as a sacrificial act in accordance with Jewish ritual, ceases to have meaning in the modern world. No longer is he called upon to perform circumcisions by Jewish parents. Like John Elliot, or Lear, he is also rejected by his children. His son Ralph, a successful business-man who is forcing his way into the money-class, asks his father to stop working, not because he loves him and is concerned about his welfare, but rather because he is embarrassed when his rich friends see his father walking down the street with a chicken in his arms. Ralph is disconcerted because his friends might wonder why he could not afford to take care of his

father. The slain chicken represents the Jewish heritage which Ralph must minimize if he is to be accepted by the wealthy Anglo-Saxon society. Chaim is put in an Old Folk's Home simply because his own children do not care enough to take him into their homes. The old man's pretence that he does not mind being placed in such an institution is almost heroic; "I have friends there. I know the superintendent personally." (S., 257.) Indeed, the fact that he does have friends there suggests that Chaim's position is universal. Only the shrewd butcher, Polsky, seems to know how to avoid the Lear situation. His advice to the aged is "just keep the property in your name, and they'll love every senile part of you." (S., 236.)

The imperfect relationship between Ruth and her mother-in-law suggests that Wiseman, like Grove in Fruits of the Earth, uses that name with intended irony. The bond between Ruth and Sarah is certainly unlike the mutual admiration existing between Ruth and Naomi. Sarah, for instance, resents Ruth's usurpⁿtion of her household tasks; she is hurt because Ruth does not seem willing to share her son, Moishe, with her.

The division between generations is also evident in the relationships between Abraham and his son and daughter-in-law. After Isaac's death, Abraham does not hear the welcoming voice of the Biblical Ruth saying, "where thou lodgest, I will lodge"; he feels that Ruth is

planning a home for herself, Moishe and probably some other man, and that she does not want him to share her home. As a result of their misunderstanding, he turns to the prostitute, Laiah, for the companionship he would normally have found in the Hebrew home. Ruth has no understanding of the loneliness of rejection which has led to the murder-sacrifice. She considers Abraham's deed to be a crime of passion.

The relationship between Abraham and his son is never completely severed, but it is stretched almost to the breaking point. The tension between the two is based chiefly on the fact that Abraham clings to old ways of life, whereas Isaac is trying to come to terms with those of the new. Abraham, unlike Tennyson's Ulysses, feels that it is "too late to seek a newer world:"

It's not that I feel I am an old man; I feel I could build worlds yet, if only I could make them stand. But that is what shows I am old. A man is young while he thinks he knows. The old . . . can only crouch in their corners and pray. (S., 283.)

Abraham places the task of building a new world on the shoulders of his doubting son Isaac who finds the strain of this responsibility almost unbearable. Isaac and his father fight about their conflicting ideas but a reconciliation always follows.

The act of sacrifice can destroy or restore unity between parent and child, past and present. Isaac's

saving of the Scroll and Crown represents an unsuccessful effort to understand his father's way of life. He appears prophet-like as he runs from the burning temple. His doubt about the value of his deed is reminiscent of the Biblical prophets, who for the most part, rejected the sacrificial cult. Perhaps Isaac's doubts and questioning about the nature of sacrifice are intended to illustrate the non-traditional viewpoint of some Jews that sacrifice is simply not meant to be understood.

Abraham realizes that his son's faith has been destroyed by modern ideas. He hopes to be re-united with his son by sacrificing Laiah who represents these new ideas which have destroyed his son's faith. The sight of her blood results in the realization that he has not restored continuity, but rather has destroyed the life and soul of a member of the modern world to which his son belonged.

The original act of sacrifice, however, did restore continuity between past, present and future. The image of the circle is used by Wiseman to represent the perfection of such a "timeless moment."

You are right when you say that it is like a circle - the completed circle, when the maker of the sacrifice and the sacrifice himself and the Demander, who is the Receiver of the sacrifice are poised together, and life flows into eternity, and for a moment all three are as one. (S., 178.)

Grove and Wiseman have considered the aged in terms of the break between parent and child. The naming of the child, for example, expresses continuity with past generations. The name of the first generation immigrant Lilli is passed on to the fourth generation in McClung's Painted Fires; the name John is passed on from father to son in Our Daily Bread, and the name Len, from an older brother who had died, to a younger brother in The Yoke of Life; finally, the names Isaac and later Moses in Wiseman's novel are meant to convey the same impression.

The emphasis placed on the child as a symbol of hope for the future balances the stress which is placed on the aged and old ways of life. The child will perhaps restore the greatness of the past which the present generation is unable to do. Continuity between past and future is restored by means of sacrifice in the present. Mrs. Swanson sacrifices her personal ambitions so that her daughter Amanda might have a better life in the future. (L.M., 24.) McClung's Helmi feels that she will be the stepping stone on which her daughter Lilli can climb to higher things. McClung believes that the picture of the worn old woman dressed in old-fashioned clothing, welcomed at the station by a well-dressed, successful and loving daughter, embodies the dream of every immigrant. (P.F., 226.)

Lysenko's Lilli is a symbol of promise for future

greatness. Her parents do not make a sacrifice to help her succeed; rather, she pulls herself up by her own yellow boot-straps. She is also seen as a Messiah figure. Three Wise Men, or newly arrived immigrants, visit her on Christmas Eve; they sing carols and exclaim how exceptional she is. Obviously, Lilli is the saviour of the Ukrainian heritage.

The second Leonard, born at the end of the Yoke of Life, is also a symbol of hope for the future. The first Leonard was too much a child of the first generation to restore the greatness of the past. Rudy Wiebe, like Vera Lysenko, also associates the child with the Messiah figure; the child, Jackie Labret, leads the way to the manger in a nativity play thereby, making religion in the present as vital as that of the past.

Abraham, in Wiseman's novel, like Mrs. Swanson and Helmi, places his hope for greatness in his child. (S., 11.) His son Isaac, like Grove's Len Sterner, is too harrassed by the problems of the first generation immigrant to attain such success. When Isaac dies, Abraham transfers his hope to his grandson Moses whom he believes will make music. (S., 204.) Abraham, during his visit with Moses on Mad Mountain, appears to believe that Moses is the promised Messiah. Continuity is restored with Abraham and with the past:

And for a moment so conscious was he of his grandfather's hand on his own, of its penetrating warmth, of its very texture, that he felt not as though it merely lay superimposed on his own but that it was becoming one with his hand, nerve of his nerve, sinew of his sinew, that distinct outlines had disappeared. (S., 345.)

VI. SUMMARY

A consideration of the family as described by prairie novelists shows a change in the nature of this institution. The ideal woman embodied in the mother image disappears and a more human, complex female replaces her. In addition, the modern Prairie marriage tends to be a disillusioning experience. Family divisions are especially reflected in the relationships between the aging parent and his child. An examination of family relationships in the modern Prairie world further illustrates the conflict and tension involved in the adjustment to life in the modern world.

CHAPTER V

THE UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

A study of discontinuity between parent and child has revealed that the Prairie novelist has been able to portray two figures very well indeed. The middle-aged individual, particularly one who has developed his mental, physical and spiritual resources to their fullest extent, is either poorly developed or absent from the Prairie novel. Unlike Schubert's unfinished symphony, it is not the finale, the figure of old age, which is missing, but the main movement. Whereas the last movement was missing from Schubert's unfinished symphony, the main movement is missing from the Prairie novel; the overture is present in the figure of the child; the finale is present in the figure of the aged; the main movement or the mature, fully developed individual is missing. This chapter will consider some of the excellent portrayals of youth and old age and suggest reasons for the absence of the mature individual.

I. OVERTURE: THE CHILD

The child, the prelude to greatness, is most con-

vincingly drawn. Although Salverson, Connor and Gill do not present particularly illuminating portrayals of childhood, Nellie McClung's Clearing in the West presents a delightful picture of the author's childhood. Lysenko's Petey is another "real" child especially as he asks his mother:

'Who is that girl?'
 'She's your sister.'
 'Why is she so green?'
 'She is sick with fever.'
 The boy looked longingly at the stove and sniffed:
 'May I have a mushroom dumpling?' (Y.B., 16.)

Lysenko also conveys the meanness of children as a group of them tease and terrify Lilli, an oddly dressed out-cast, by calling her "Snake Hands," "Onion Eyes." (Y.B., 75.)

Wiebe also presents an interesting picture of the Mennonite child whom he uses to create an ironic effect. He describes a group of children playing war games within the framework of a community which does not believe in war. He ironically contrasts the carefree child wishing for spring so he can go looking for frogs' eggs (P.S.D.M., 238.) with the serious, disturbed attitude of the adult Mennonite confronted with the question of his moral responsibility to others in the modern world.

Marlyn in Under the Ribs of Death gives an excellent portrayal of the Hungarian child in Winnipeg's North End; and Wiseman presents an admirable glimpse into the

life of the Jewish child living probably in the same area. Moishe, for example, exhibits the child's misconceptions about complex religious ideas as he remarks; "Donald Gregory knew all about haunting. His church had a Holy Ghost." (S., 240.) Margaret Laurence gives a delightful description of the child, Vanessa, and also the aged in her recent Canadian short story "The Mask of the Bear."¹

II. FINALE: THE AGED

Laurence also gives a memorable illustration of old age in her novel The Stone Angel. Laura Goodman Salverson, writing much earlier in the century, presents an appealing picture of old age in her character Sjera Bjarni, a minister almost as lovable as the priest described by Gabrielle Roy in Where Nests the Water Hen. Indeed, it is interesting to compare Salverson's courageous, old minister with the weak, frustrated one of the Depression years described by Ross in As for Me and My House. Lysenko, in her turn, visualizes the aged in terms of the poetic heritage of the past which will soon die; Lilli's old grandfather reflects, for example, "What is life? ... Like the brief flame of a candle or the song of a bird; or a blossom in spring." (Y.B., 198.)

Grove's description of the physical decay of the

aged conveys a sense of the universal tragedy of humanity. (F.E., 246.) He describes Mr. Suddaby, who is bald but for a few wisps of white hair and toothless but for [^]"single, long, yellow tooth projecting between his lips as if he were pointing it forward." (O.D.B., 94.) He also remarks on Mr. Harvey's failing eyesight and twitching muscles. (O.D.B., 160.) It is quite evident that the prairie novelist possesses the ability to give convincing portrayals of two stages in the life of man. For some reason, the fully developed, middle-aged person is not well portrayed.

III. THE MAIN MOVEMENT: MATURITY

Why then is the mature, middle-aged individual not handled as well as the child and the aged? Perhaps he is not treated as successfully because he is too wearied by his work on the farm to have developed into a rich enough figure for the Prairie novelist to describe. As a result, prairie dwellers grow old before they have experienced real maturity. John Elliot, for example, has a white beard and hair when he is still in his middle years. (O.D.B., 134.) McCourt's Norah also remarks that the Prairie dweller's struggle with the land forces him into old age before he has had time to mature during his middle years. (H.S., 134.)

Perhaps the emphasis on the virtues of childhood, as opposed to the disillusionment of adulthood, has minimized the need to portray the fully developed individual. Salverson, Lysenko and Wiseman all describe fulfillment in life in terms of childhood rather than the adult. Lysenko suggests that the years of childhood are more desirable than those of adulthood:

What a wonderful huge world of discovery was the child's! And how the world shrinks in maturity as everything becomes familiar and dulled!
(Y.B., 57.)

Grove's John Elliot, as he gazes at his grandchild, thinks of the Biblical passage recounting man's need to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. (O.D.B., 169.)

Abe Spalding's son Charlie also appears to be "the father of the man." Indeed, McCourt's Brian Malory thinks at times that "nobody should live beyond the age of eighteen" (H.S., 69.) so that they might avoid the final disillusionment.

True maturity also involves the acceptance of responsibility. Many of the characters in these novels such as Abe, Norah, Thom and Isaac, while they are adults well-handled by the Prairie novelist, fail to emerge as mature individuals until they have accepted their responsibilities as individuals or as parents.

IV. SUMMARY

The excellent portrayals of the child and the aged, arising out of a consideration of family relationships, draw attention to the absence of the fictional character who is fully developed physically, spiritually and mentally. The novelist apparently prefers to portray the process of acquiring maturity, rather than maturity itself.

CHAPTER VI

THE NATIONALIST REFRAIN

A study of the need for maturity in family living, which takes into account the development of the spiritual, mental, physical and cultural resources, leads into a consideration of the emergence of Canada as a mature nation. This chapter will show, first of all, the role of education in the emergence of Canada as a nation and then reveal how overly self-conscious, and discriminatory attitudes can retard the growth of nationality.

I. "LABORIOUS DAYS" LEAD TO "MELODIOUS SOUNDS"

The right path of a virtuous and noble education, laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else . . . so full of . . . melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.

Milton, On Education.

Education has always been an important part of Prairie history; indeed, the Manitoba Schools Question which was a political crisis at the turn of the century is still raising its ugly head in the nineteen-sixties. It is not surprising, therefore, that Prairie novelists

deal with education and the figure of the school teacher in their novels. The variety of racial groups which settled on the Prairies created an educational problem. The 1897 amendment to the Public School Act created considerable confusion with its "bi-lingual clause" primarily intended to apply only to the French and Mennonite groups. Immigrants from a variety of racial groups claimed the right to separate schools, which would enable them to preserve their language and racial heritage. The Anglo-Saxon, however, wanted the school to be used as an agency of assimilation to the British-Canadian way of life. In 1906, for example, Sir Rodmond Roblin introduced that inescapable Canadian issue, the flag, into Provincial politics. He pushed a bill through legislation insisting that school trustees fly the Union Jack over the schools during school hours in order to inculcate proper nationalistic feeling. Ralph Connor, who was living in Manitoba at the time when Roblin was Premier, shows in The Foreigner that he shares his viewpoint about the role of the public school. The school on the Prairies had a mission and a duty, not just to educate, but to create a sense of unity as well, by giving a common educational experience to children from a variety of racial groups. Attempts to force such unity rather than to let it emerge naturally only led to bitterness and dissension.

The right of the Mennonites to separate schools was

generally respected. The Mennonites wanted such schools so that they might pursue their policy of withdrawal from the world. Investigation showed that in many of them no English whatsoever was being taught and that often the teaching of Canadian history was entirely neglected.¹ Deacon Block in Wiebe's novel is obviously in favour of separate Mennonite schools and is unhappy when the war situation makes it necessary for him to hire a non-Mennonite school teacher who is obviously quite familiar with the ways of the world.

Novelists, such as McClung, Lysenko, and Grove comment on the fact that Prairie parents often deprived their children of their educational opportunities. Sometimes, as in the case of McClung, Lysenko's Lilli and Grove's Len Sterner, such deprivation made the child more anxious to be educated. One of the main reasons why the parents did not allow their children to go to school lay in the fact that the child was needed to work on the farm; McClung, who was a teacher, refers to this problem in terms of herself in Clearing in the West and of her students in The Stream Runs Fast; Anton, Lilli's father, in Yellow Boots does not want her to go to school because he needs her to work for him. (Y.B., 48.) Later, when he has become more firmly established on his farm, he takes more interest in formal education and even sends his son to Agricultural College. Sometimes, the parents resent formal education

because they feel it will draw their children away from the home and the farming profession; at times their fears were justified. Pete Harrington, in Our Daily Bread and to a lesser extent, Abe Spalding, fear the break in the farming tradition.

Prairie novelists also express the opinion that life is a better educator than the school teacher. John Elliot's daughter, Mary, in Our Daily Bread, for example, is so disillusioned by what she considers to be education that she does not allow books or magazines in the house. She encourages her children to marry early so that life's responsibilities will anchor them. (O.D.B., 265.) Although such an attitude may lead to the external security of her children, she is not providing them with the resources on which to base their inner stability. Even the child occasionally prefers life as his teacher. Abe Spalding's son Jim, an intelligent young man with a good deal of intellectual potential, wants to drop out of school. He talks it over with his father:

'All decent boys leave school. Only the sheiks stick it out.'

'What's a sheik?'

Jim laughed. 'A boy that runs after girls and thinks more of the way his necktie is tied than of what he wants to do in the world.' (F.E., 275.)

That a superior young person such as Abe's son feels he must leave school in order to be "decent" is probably

Grove's way of criticizing the school system of his day.

Grove's attitude towards modern education is based on his own experience as a Prairie teacher and as a principal of a school in Gladstone, Manitoba. His criticism is constructive and based on a genuine concern for the needs of the student. Grove's novels also contain an element of social protest against the educational system of his day. He is not attacking education which develops all aspects of the child's individual personality, but modern education which is geared towards utilitarian goals.

Grove disapproves of Henrietta's limited interpretation of education. She wants her sons to become engineers or bankers, (O.D.B., 327.) so that they will have the necessary tools for making money. Yet she deprives her children of the opportunity to develop as human beings by discouraging them from helping their very sick father to lift a heavy plow; homework is more important than humanity. Len Sterner, in the Yoke of Life criticizes his fellow students who are more interested in passing exams, as a necessary pre-requisite to getting a job, than in pursuing knowledge for its own sake.

The imposition of Grove's views on education seems to create some inconsistency in the character of Abe Spalding. Abe, whose dream is to achieve material success, sees "a library table covered with books. Of these he picked up one or two and, finding that they were poetry, dropped them

again, resuming his walk." (F.E., 9.) One would not expect Abe, with his interest in material success and ^{LACK OF} ~~dis-~~ interest in cultural development, to be a staunch advocate of education in the true sense of the word. Nonetheless, Abe shows a genuine concern for education. He is concerned that the school in his district gets an older, more experienced teacher rather than one who is less experienced and less well trained. Abe's strong stand against consolidated schools shows a genuine concern for the need of a proper education; he remarks that:

the scheme was in keeping with the spirit of the machine age: the imparting of information would be the paramount aim, not the building of character; spiritual values were going to be those of the intellect only. (F.E., 187.)

Abe believed that consolidation would lure children away from the home and parental authority into situations with which the child would not have the maturity to cope.

Grove also shows the disadvantages of this system through the eyes of the student, as well as the parent. Abe's daughter Frances, when asked to write an essay on "Why I like Consolidation," begins by saying that she does not like it at all. She must take a long ride in a stuffy bus filled with dirty, noisy, garlic-smelling children and is therefore exhausted before she has even begun her school-day. After another long ride home, she is expected to sit down and do a couple of hours of homework. (F.E., 220-21.)

Grove's criticism shows the concern and sympathy of a dedicated teacher for his student.

Abe resents a system which derides the farming profession with such remarks as, "he's got no brains . . . he'll never make anything but a farmer." (F.E., 276.) Abe shows concern about the drinking and dancing that go on all night in the Prairie school, which at the time of Grove's writing was also the center of social activities. In addition, he receives reports from Somerville High School complaining that his son Jim was a disrespectful trouble-maker. (F.E., 207.) Abe learns that his son had dared to question a fact put forth by his teacher and, out of intellectual curiosity, had tampered with the apparatus for a science experiment. Abe and probably Grove consider the complaints of the school to be against the interests of true education. The school is encouraging conformity and stifling individuality. Since the development of a nation is to a large extent dependent on the maturation of its individuals, the growth of Canadian nationality is also being retarded. Indeed Abe's criticism of conformity in education is reminiscent of Thoreau's question: "What does education often do? It makes a straight-cut ditch of a free meandering brook."

The fictional school teacher often has a broad understanding of education. Ian MacTavish, in the literal sense of the word education, does draw out the personality of his

student, Lilli. As a teacher, he is concerned with the need to communicate with his students. The problem of communication was a particularly crucial one for the teacher in the early part of the century, as his students came from homes where languages other than English were spoken. Indeed, MacTavish feels that he would have been much more prepared for Prairie teaching had he studied modern European languages, rather than Greek and Latin. (Y.B., 35.) MacTavish certainly did not share the belief of many school authorities that the speaking of the English language alone should be respected in the Prairie school. His sensitive alertness to any improvement, no matter how small, in both his students and the farms of their parents (Y.B., 178.) is a further indication of his excellence as a teacher.

Whereas MacTavish supervised Lilli's growth in the farm environment, Matthew Reiner, her music teacher, influences her growth in the city. Reiner believes that a certain social distance based on respect must be kept between student and teacher, if the student is to find his own way of life and identity. (Y.B., 267.) Reiner realizes that Lilli, in her present stage of development, needs a teacher's guidance and understanding more than a man's love as she gropes for meaning in life. He does not confess his love until she has found for herself the road which will lead to "melodious sounds."

Grove's Mr. Crawford, like Ian MacTavish and Matthew Reiner, represents the ideal teacher. Crawford believes the teaching profession provides the greatest opportunity in which to make a contribution to the growth of Canada:

Once in a life-time a teacher meets with a boy or girl who convinces him that he is destined for the highest things if he is given a chance . . . To give it would be the greatest service any man can do his country. (Y.L., 53.)

He encourages Len Sterner to aim high despite the discouragement he may receive from others; (Y.L., 80.) he teaches Len the meaning of endurance. (Y.L., 218.) On the other hand, he does not allow Len to become too confident; when, for example, Len learns that his scholastic standing is ranked first in the province, he remarks exultantly, "I shall be a university professor yet!" (Y.L., 184.); Crawford's reply has the sobering effect of an Old Testament prophet, "You will be the spokesman of the humble and poor in spirit!" (Y.L., 184.)

Wiebe also places some emphasis on the figure of the school teacher. Deacon Block, of course, wants his school run in strict accordance with Mennonite traditions. His teachers, however, tend to cause a break with such traditions. Joseph, a Mennonite teacher, accepts Christianity but has rejected many of the strict Mennonite customs. Since he finds the boundaries of Block's community too bind-

ing, he leaves. His replacement, Razia Tantamont, is not a Mennonite. Deacon Block, who like Abe Spalding prefers the older experienced teacher, is surprised when Razia turns out to be "a snip of a girl: skirts almost to her knee, face whitely smiling." (P.S.D.M., 124.)

Razia, an attractive, gay, young girl is anxious to teach the deprived Mennonite children about the joyful ways of the world. Block soon makes it clear that he would not appreciate efforts along these lines. Razia proves her ability to put educational techniques into practise by producing a play for the community. She lacks, however, any genuine sympathy and feeling for her students and the moral fibre which Grove feels is essential in a good teacher is missing. The irony of Deacon Block congratulating the agnostic teacher on her competency, at a time when she is outside making love to a member of the audience is most striking. Patricia Blondal, in a recent novel, shows the continuing significance of the Prairie teacher in her novel A Candle to Light the Sun and the level of educational standards are shown by Prairie novelists to affect both the development of the child and the nation.

II. FALSE PATRIOT LOVE

Nationality exists, and has nothing in the world to do with race. Nationality . . . is a product of the human soul and will; it is a spiritual product.

G. K. Chesterton:
Heretics (20th century)

Until racial prejudice, a concern of many Prairie novelists, can be recognized and eliminated, "true patriot love," or a genuine Canadian nationalism is an impossibility. A mature nation can not emerge until prejudice based on inexperience and childish ignorance is rejected. The child's search for his identity within the framework of the school system is extended to the Canadian search for identity. Only through a sympathetic understanding and respect for the variety of racial groups on the Prairies and the rest of Canada can ~~in~~ a sense of unity and national identity arise. The protest against racial prejudice is by no means confined to Prairie fiction; it is noted, for example, in Morley Callaghan's short story "Last Spring they Came Over." Prairie novelists are generally more concerned about treating the prejudice against immigrants than that against Indians; Nan Shipley's latest novel Return to the River is an exception.

Having considered the importance of education in the development of Canadian nationality, it is interesting

to note that racial prejudice is often an inherent part of the make-up of the educated person. Indeed, if educated people have not yet been able to rid themselves of their prejudice can the uneducated members of society be expected to show more sympathy? Salverson, for example, describes the prejudice based on ignorance of an Anglo-Saxon school teacher, Miss Wake, who comes to teach in the Icelandic community. She expects that her students will all smell of garlic, although most Icelanders had never heard of it. She confuses the habits of the Eskimo and the Icелander, believing that it is the latter who loves whale oil; she therefore plans to reform the community's eating habits. She is surprised and probably disappointed to learn that such reform is unnecessary:

. . . Most of humanity dislike above all else to have their prejudices dispelled, especially where they concern another race. It has a disagreeable way of diminishing one's esteemed superiority and that is not a pleasant thing. (V.H., 137.)

McClung also shows that it is the prejudices of the educated person which are the most harmful. It is the magistrate who speaks with the cultured voice of the well-bred English-man who displays the most intense hatred for immigrants. Grove's Len Sterner, who had been given an excellent start in acquiring his education, is disillusioned by the uninterested, prejudiced Mr. Pennycup,

whom he had hoped would help him further his education. After listening to him expose his prejudices, Len "drew the strange conclusion, that this educated man was a fool." (Y.L., 239-40.)

Salverson's Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter and some aspects of The Viking Heart point out with a degree of bitterness the prejudice that confronts the immigrant on the Prairie. The terrible smallpox epidemic which actually broke out among Icelandic settlers in Gimli, Manitoba, might have been prevented, Salverson suggests, had a Canadian immigration official been less prejudiced towards foreigners. The official had been told of the spreading disease, but passed it off simply as an "itch" which would not have occurred had the Icelanders been less dirty in their habits. (V.H., 43.) The immigrant simply had to overcome by means of endurance such suspicion, contempt and hatred. (V.H., 107.) Ironically the Icelander, once he has become established in the land, discriminates against new immigrants; one Icelandic mother is quite indignant at first when she learns that her son is returning from the war with a foreign wife.

The Icelander does overcome discrimination by a recognition of the common humanity which links him with other racial groups. Bjorn remarks, "when you come right down to it . . . folk are pretty much alike whatever their nationality." (V.H., 319.) Salverson believes that preju-

dice should not be allowed to crowd out racial heritages which can enrich the Canadian nation. (V.H., 294.)

Double loyalties are not necessarily a bad thing in the early stages of the development of the nation; loyalties can be reconciled. The sacrifice of a son in World War I draws his mother, Borga, closer to Canada. An English minister conducts a memorial service; "he was an Englishman and she an Icelander, but they looked into each other's soul and found they had a common heritage." (V.H., 322.)

Ralph Connor, while he attacks those who discriminate against foreigners, is obviously unaware that his offensively British-Canadian bias is itself discriminatory. Canadianism for Connor means British-Canadianism. Connor's nationalism is the kind Stephen Leacock satirizes in the chapter entitled "The Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias" from his Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, which describes a community boat ride and picnic. Leacock remarks, "I think that it was just as they were singing like this . . . 'O - Can - a - da,' that word went around that the boat was sinking."² The sinking boat probably represents the effect of overly aggressive nationalism on Canada's growth as a nation. Connor's self-conscious nationalism is reminiscent of that of the Canada Firsters, particularly Charles Mair's noisy request to "Open the Bay." Connor's enthusiastic nationalism is evident in the Introduction of The Foreigner:

Out of the breeds diverse in traditions, in ideals, in speech and in manner of life, Saxon and Slav, Teuton, Celt and Gaul, one people is being made. The blood strains of a great nation will mingle in the blood of a race greater than the greatest of them all.

The race referred to in this last evocative sentence is probably the Anglo-Saxon. Connor suggests that force should be used if necessary in order to assimilate other races, no doubt believing the means will justify the end. One of his characters remarks that the Galicians "must be digested and absorbed . . . They must be taught our ways of thinking and living, or it will be a mighty bad thing for us in western Canada." (F., 255.) Connor's prejudice based on pride is evident in his assumption that the moral standards of the immigrant are much inferior to those of the Anglo-Saxon. (F., 24.) That Anglicization is deemed to be a necessary step in the hero's development is suggested in Kalman's letter to his sister in which he remarks:

. . . everything and every one about me are English, English, English. The hounds, the horse, the cattle call in English, the very wind sounds English, I'm beginning not only to speak but to think and feel in English . . . (F., 265.)

Connor also seems too quick to portray the foreign priest as "small, dark and dirty" (F., 274.) and the English Christian as dedicated, decent and honest. (F., 275.) He mentions the drunkenness of a foreign priest who performs a

marriage ceremony so inadequately that the young couple did not know whether they were legally married or not. (F., 275.) No mention, however, is made of corruption among English clergy.

Despite his own unconscious prejudices, Connor criticizes the discriminatory attitudes of others. He disapproves of the doctor's wife being annoyed because her husband is spending so much time among the Galicians. (F., 135.) He also is critical of the abuse thrown at little Kalman as he sells newspapers at the corner of Winnipeg's Portage and Main; the tough little lad is well able to hold his own in his struggles; he tells his sister "he called me a greasy Douk, but I showed him I'm no Doukhobor. Doukhobors won't fight." (F., 177.) Marjorie, the Romantic heroine, is also prejudiced against foreigners; she claims that she could never love such a person. (F., 384.) Marjorie's change of heart shows that prejudice can be dispelled once knowledge of the individual is gained. Connor also criticizes the polite prejudice of church committee members who bury delicate nostrils in perfumed handkerchiefs, as they investigate foreign living conditions. (F., 160.) He does try to show that through the kindness of such men as Brown, who teach the immigrants how to speak English and how to cook, ill feeling between the two racial groups can be overcome; he fails, however, to present a convincing argument that genuine reform is being

accomplished.

Gill, like Salverson, feels there is a need for Canadians to learn to respect the racial origins of groups other than their own. (L.M., 19.) Gill criticizes the condescending attitude of Anglo-Saxons towards immigrants displayed by Connor himself in The Foreigner. Unlike Connor, he does not believe that the immigrant is morally inferior. He disapproves of Roland's attitude that because the Swedish "hired girl" is not his social equal he feels no qualms about taking advantage of her; he would not dream, however, of such an action with a girl from his own social level and of Anglo-Saxon heritage. (L.M., 104.) His Anglo-Saxon superiority is evident in such a remark as, "'Amanda! Good heavens, what a name for a dairy-maid. I suppose she wears short petticoats and paddles around in bare feet.'" (L.M., 46.) Roland, like Connor's Marjorie, reverses his opinion when he gets to know the foreigner involved. Roland learns that the axiom "there are no social distinctions in Manitoba" is simply a matter of the Anglo-Saxon protesting too much; social distinctions do exist in the West. There is a vast difference between a hired girl from the Swedish community and a girl who is the grandchild of the Dean of Chester; (L.M., 64.) between a dirty, rough Galician and a boy whose aunt is married to a "Gold Stick-in-Waiting to the House of Lords." (L.M., 106.) Gill, although

sympathetic to the foreigner, looks at the Indian through jaundiced eyes; Black Hawk as the name suggests is a villain with no redeeming qualities.

Nellie McClung, like Salverson, believes that unity between racial groups will arise out of a recognition of their shared humanity. The fact that Mrs. Kalenski is a good Christian, though she is a Jew, (P.F., 209.) shows a Christian's recognition of the kindness of another human being; that she is a Jew does not belittle her in any way. Occasionally McClung is somewhat guilty, as was Connor, of a nationalism which is too forced; Helmi, for example, states that she would fight in the war for Canada if she were a man. (P.F., 189.)

McClung is deeply concerned about the prejudice which the young Helmi must face. When she is seeking work she is interviewed by a number of condescending housewives who do not hire her primarily because she is an immigrant. She eventually finds employment with another immigrant, a Chinese man. (P.F., 232.) Mrs. Kalenski also discriminates against Helmi because she is of a racial origin other than her own. She remarks that Helmi could have received aid from the Hebrew Association of Women had she been Jewish, (P.F., 263.) but cannot receive their help because she is from another racial group. McClung, like Connor, criticizes the church committee which gives no real assistance to the immigrant, in this case, Helmi.

The young girl does receive some help and friendship from the minister and the Canadian Girls in Training group at Young Methodist Church, the Stranger's Church. (P.F., 35.) Further prejudice based on ignorance is evident in the baseless rumours which spread throughout the entire West that Helmi was a "hot socialist" who had spent a term in jail. (P.F., 141.) Helmi spent time, not in jail, but in the ironically named "Girl's Friendly Home of Winnipeg" for a crime she did not commit. The judge feeling that foreigners were threatening the monarchy considered them guilty until proven innocent. Anna Milander, herself an immigrant, discriminates against Helmi because she feels the arrival of new immigrants is a threat to her own job opportunities. Mrs. McMann, who employs Helmi for a time, protests her proposed marriage because her immigrant background makes her inferior to Jim. (P.F., 136.) Helmi, who has heard so much about Canada as the land of golden opportunity, remarks that such information is but a "painted fire." All she has found there is prejudice:

. . . the land of the maple leaf where there is room enough and work enough for everyone . . .
'Oh, the liar! how could he say there is work in Canada for everybody? There's nothing in Canada but heartbreak.' (P.F., 236.)

Helmi, however, overcomes her bitterness and does not blame the country for the ill-treatment she has received.

Even Vera Lysenko, the Pollyanna of the Prairies, delves into the problem of prejudice. She points out the subtle, civilized discrimination of the Canadian. Lilli tells a group of women about her Ukrainian heritage; one of the ladies remarks, "My dear, how quaint! These peasants do have some picturesque customs. Like a picture of Van Gogh 'The Potatoe Eaters' I think." (Y.B., 305.) This supposedly cultivated woman is thereby cutting herself off from a cultural heritage which might have enriched her understanding of life. Lysenko also comments on the prejudice based on ignorance and fear within the Ukrainian community itself, which directs its hostility towards such a woman as Tamara. Lysenko, however, conveys the unity of Canada by her description of the railway builders who come from a variety of racial backgrounds, but are joined by that obvious symbol of Canadian unity, the railroad. Grove too, comments on the subtlety of Canadian prejudice in his short story "The First Day of an Immigrant." Prejudice is conveyed more by a tone of voice than the actual words which are spoken. The fact that Canadian prejudice is harder to pin-point than that in the United States makes it more difficult to cope with.

Wiebe is also concerned with the development of Canada as a nation. Thom wonders whether he will best serve his country by fighting overseas or fighting for the advancement of mankind in Canada. He decides that if he

does remain in Canada he must escape from the narrow boundaries of the Mennonite community which would inhibit him from making contact with other races. He must break away from the Mennonites' belief that they are superior to all other people because they are God's elect; they point to their prosperous prairie farms and to the Biblical passage that the righteous man shall prosper to prove it. (P.S.D.M., 33.) Thom learns from Joseph to be sympathetic toward the half-breed population. Joseph points out that it is unfair to expect the half-breeds to respect the Mennonite tradition, when members of that group fail to respect the Indian heritage. (P.S.D.M., 83.)

McCourt comments on the suspicion and distrust which Norah must face when she arrives on the Prairies. Wiseman, however, places a much greater emphasis on this problem. As in the novels of Salverson and McClung, the earlier immigrant discriminates against the later. Mrs. Plopler, once a Jewish immigrant herself, treats Abraham and his family in a patronising manner; (S., 29.), Chaim's wife discriminates against the unsuccessful immigrant; (S., 74.), and finally the Jewish girls usually ignore the newly arrived Jewish boy. (S., 75-6.) The Jew is also discriminated against by the Anglo-Saxon. Ralph Knopp, Chaim's son, finds that although he is wealthy the "goyim" resent his moving into the residential area of River Heights.

(S., 100.)

Wiseman considers the ill-treatment received by the Jews in the old World. Abraham's sons were killed by Christians on Good Friday and Wiseman remarks with bitter irony, that after several days of slaughter "Christ is sated." (S., 57.) The remainder of the family had received refuge in the home of a Christian, whom they later learn had taken part in this bloody persecution. Isaac cannot understand such a man as Nikolai who could both love and murder his Jewish neighbour.

III. SUMMARY

A study of education in the Prairie novel shows that it can either develop or retard the growth of Canada as a nation. An examination of racial prejudice as described by Prairie novelists reveals that a sense of unity in a national tradition can not be attained so long as racial divisions exist. A consideration of the growth of nationalism reveals that much racial conflict is experienced in the transition from old to modern ways; and that modern ways, such as the Prairie educational system, are in themselves a source of division.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

A study of the transition from old to modern ways of life, as handled by a group of Prairie novelists, reveals much conflict and discord and a few brief moments of harmony. The loss of many Old World traditions causes the immigrant much heart-break, which the sight of the harsh Prairie landscape only intensifies. The impact of the mechanized age makes adjustment to the modern world even more difficult. The mental turmoil in the minds of Prairie people, who are striving to adapt to life in the twentieth century world, creates tension and disharmony in family relationships. The educational system, which emphasizes utilitarian values, tends to draw the child even farther away from the family unit. The fact that the educational system does not appear to be developing all aspects of the child's personality suggests that the child will not possess adequate inner resources to cope with life in the larger world. If he shows no respect for Canadians with racial origins other than his own, he will lead his country away from, rather than "towards, a national tradition."¹

Yet brief glimpses of harmony illuminate this study suggesting that some adjustment to the twentieth century world has been accomplished without ill-effects. Some of the beautiful Old World heritages have been retained; they enrich the life of the Prairie dweller and the Canadian citizen. There is a growing awareness of the beauty of the harsh Prairie landscape. The ability to live in the mechanized world and still be able to recognize spiritual values is further evidence of successful adjustment. For example, some outstanding teachers were described who encouraged their students to develop all aspects of their personality. Such teachers will help to create the mature individual who is free from destructive racial prejudices. As this process develops, a growing sense of unity among citizens will lead to the emergence of Canada as a mature nation ready to accept its responsibilities in the world.

This study also reveals that a concentration by the novelist on a particular region leads to an expression of the universal. Human nature remains the same, regardless of locale. Men like Grove's John Elliot or Wiseman's Abraham and women such as McCourt's Norah are "real" humans who can be found in any region of any country.

The failure of communication between individuals, a universal theme, emerges as a major concern of the Prairie novelist. The immigrant has difficulty communi-

cating with other Canadians because of the barrier of language. Sometimes he appreciates the barrier as it preserves the traditions of his race. Within the family, husband and wife, parent and child, often lack the ability to communicate with and understand each other. Then too, the country man cannot understand the city dweller. The school teacher is concerned about the need to communicate with his students. In addition, many authors imply that unless the barriers of prejudice are broken down between members of racial groups the growth of a true Canadian nationality will be retarded.

Nostalgia appears as a dominant note in Prairie fiction. The Prairie dweller longs for many things; for home, whether on the Prairies, or in the Old World, for the religious faith now being replaced by doubt and above all for a better life in the modern world. In addition, the immigrant longs for his lost traditions and the city dweller yearns for refuge in nature.

Emphasis is also placed by Prairie novelists on the city which reflects the Prairie world. The urban areas lure the country lad away from the farm and they typify the spirit of the Machine Age. They also provide opportunities for development which cannot be achieved on the farm. Cities, especially one such as Winnipeg, enable the mingling of members of different racial groups, which is a prerequisite for the eventual emergence of a

Canadian individuality.

The novelists emphasize certain figures in their fiction. Among them were the immigrant, the farmer, the materialist and the teacher; within the family framework, the mother, father, wife, child and aged parent or grandparent. In the same way, Prairie novelists take great care in naming their characters. Often the names are chosen from the Bible and require, on the part of the reader, a knowledge of the Biblical character for a total appreciation. Occasionally, the same name is given to more than one character in the same novel; this procedure may have been intended to suggest a link between past and present generations.

A concept of heroism also develops from a study of these novels. Salverson describes a group heroism which the Icelandic immigrants attain through their suffering. Gill and Connor present the superhuman Romantic hero and heroine. The aged often appear as tragic heroes; such as in the endurance of Grove's John Elliot walking over miles of Prairie land to reach his home. That Wiseman's Abraham is a tragic hero is implied in his final habitat, Mad Mountain; he scales great heights during his life, but his final vision of evil in that which he first considers to be an act of heroism leads to madness.

Struggle is involved in the attainment of heroism; Abe Spalding and Anton Landash appear heroic in their

struggle for achievement on the Prairie farm. Wiebe's Thom must reject the killings associated with the national hero in war-time and display moral courage by remaining in Canada. Norah's potential for heroism is evident in her keen sensitivity to the world around her; it does not become an actuality, however, until she is able to trust herself. Isaac's struggle with himself, in order to distinguish between true and false, appears even more heroic than his dramatic saving of the Scroll and Crown. The struggle of women for emancipation, typified by such fictional characters as McClung's Helmi and Lysenko's Lilli, also is heroic. The young person's struggle for knowledge typified, by Grove's Len Sterner or Lysenko's Lilli, displays courageous determination. On the other hand, the middle-aged person appears as an anti-hero perhaps because he is disillusioned with marriage and by the rat race for money.

Another of the outgrowths of this study is an awareness of the emergence of the Prairie novel as one of social protest. Racial prejudice, insensitivity towards the problems of the aged, the evils of factory life and an education system geared to utilitarian ends are all areas of protest.

An emphasis is placed by the prairie novelist on growth and development, particularly that of the child, which is a necessary prelude to the maturity of both the

individual and the nation. The fact that the emphasis is placed more on the need to grow and build, as in The Sacrifice, and on the process of development, as in Yellow Boots, indicates perhaps that the actual attainment of individual and national maturity has not yet been achieved.

The Prairie novelist often describes life in terms of music. Salverson's Anna is a singer and her son Balder is an outstanding musician. Connor's Kalman sang and danced; McClung's Helmi and Lysenko's Lilli remember their racial heritage by singing folk-songs; Grove's John Elliot found a sense of order in the sound of his children's voices singing a hymn for their dying mother. McCourt's Norah finds beauty in American folk-songs and Brian interprets North American life as a symphony. Wiseman's Abraham sings a Jewish song with his grandson. Music, therefore, is a means by which Old World heritages are preserved in the New World; harmony suggests that order might be found amidst the chaos, and that the soul of man will not be destroyed by materialism. The sound of music will inspire people like the Lillies of the world to acts of heroism.

Finally, this study shows that the twentieth century man, if he is to attain spiritual, mental and cultural wholeness must make a two way journey. First he must follow the ways of the modern world and experience for him-

self the almost inevitable disillusionment of those who place their faith in material values alone. Then, he must turn aside and walk in his father's ways. He must put on his "Sunday best," an outward and visible sign of his reverence for the past, and for the changeless human soul, and join old John Elliot scanning a Prairie highway, as he waits, similarly clad, for a child of the modern generation to welcome him.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

¹John W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton: In Relation to his Times, p. 141.

²S. J. Sommerville, "Early Icelandic Settlement in Canada," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, (1944-5), pp. 25-43.

³Nellie L. McClung, The Stream Runs Fast, p. 66.

CHAPTER II

¹Duncan Campbell Scott, "Paul Farlotte," in Canadian Short Stories, ed. R. Weaver, p. 15.

²Morley Callaghan, "Last Spring They Came Over," ibid., p. 156.

³Thomas H. Raddall, "Blind MacNair," ibid., p. 140.

⁴This phrase is the title of a book by J. P. Matthews.

CHAPTER III

¹H. H. G. Herklots, The First Winter, pp. X-XI.

²Nellie L. McClung, Clearing in the West, p. 79.

³F. P. Grove, "Snow," in Weaver, op. cit., p. 140.

⁴Raymond Knister, "Mist Green Oats," ibid., p. 156.

⁵Joyce Marshall, "The Old Woman," ibid., p. 283.

⁶B. G. Sack, History of the Jews in Canada, p. 327.

CHAPTER IV

¹F. P. Grove, Over Prairie Trails, p. 2.

²M. Laurence, The Stone Angel, p. 36.

³ibid., p. 25.

CHAPTER V

¹M. Laurence, "The Mask of the Bear," Chatelaine, (Feb. 1965), pp. 26-54.

CHAPTER VI

¹E. K. Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 157-174.

²Morley Callaghan, "Last Spring They Came Over," in Weaver, op. cit., p. 156.

³Stephen Leacock, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, p. 48.

⁴From the title of Chapter VII of J. P. Matthew's Tradition in Exile.

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