Transoceanic Canada: The Regional Cosmopolitanism of George Woodcock

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ABSTRACT

Through a critical examination of his oeuvre in relation to his transoceanic geographical and intellectual mobility, this dissertation argues that George Woodcock (1912-1995) articulates and applies a normative and methodological approach I term "regional cosmopolitanism." I trace the development of this philosophy from its germination in London's thirties and forties, when Woodcock drifted from the poetics of the "Auden generation" towards the anti-imperialism of Mahatma Gandhi and the anarchist aesthetic modernism of Sir Herbert Read. I show how these connected influences—and those also of Mulk Raj Anand, Marie-Louise Berneri, Prince Peter Kropotkin, George Orwell, and French Surrealism—affected Woodcock's critical engagements via print and radio with the Canadian cultural landscape of the Cold War and its concurrent countercultural long sixties. Woodcock's dynamic and dialectical understanding of the relationship between literature and society produced a key intervention in the development of Canadian literature and its critical study leading up to the establishment of the Canada Council and the groundbreaking journal *Canadian Literature*. Through his research and travels in India—where he established relations with the exiled Dalai Lama and major figures of an independent English Indian literature—Woodcock relinquished the universalism of his modernist heritage in practising, as I show, a postcolonial and postmodern situated critical cosmopolitanism that advocates globally relevant regional culture as the interplay of various traditions shaped by specific geographies. I account for the relationships that pertain between this cosmopolitanism and the theories of the other most prominent Canadian cultural critics of the period, Northrop Frye and Marshall McLuhan. Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism, advancing a culturally and politically confederate country as first established by Canadian Aboriginal civilizations, charged the ascending Romantic nationalism of the period with imperialism. As a theory of "common ground" fostering participatory agency for the post-national global village, regional cosmopolitanism offers an alternative to multiculturalism and Western humanist models of organization associated with neoliberalism.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

to the memory of my grandparents,

Anne and Joseph Hiebert

Chapter 1

Introduction

Pass through the glass doors of the Walter C. Koerner library, descend one level deep, and there, within the roots of the University of British Columbia you will find on display perhaps the greatest riddle in Canadian culture. On the left side of a plywood cabinet sits a portrait of George Woodcock. Assembled near to it are his ramshackle mechanical typewriter, his editing instruments (pencils, a magnifying glass, a glue brush) and two of his early pamphlets side-by-side, *What is Anarchism?* and, as if in answer, *The Basis of Communal Living*, propaganda he wrote for London's Freedom Press during the Second World War. To the other side of the display, we find a globe with South Asia turned facing us, the Proclamation of "George Woodcock Day" from the Office of the Mayor for the City of Vancouver, and the "Freedom of the City" medal, Vancouver's highest civil honour. On the occasion of its bestowment, May 7th 1994, a day before the laureate's 82nd birthday, writers from across Canada gathered in downtown Vancouver to celebrate. Margaret Atwood read the acceptance speech of Woodcock, whose declining health would grant him less than a final year of work. It was a remarkable life, that of a poet who fled England, was expelled by America, and became something of a national symbol in Canada by speaking on behalf of its writing.

Fanned out beside these things are three of his books, each concerning a political figure of the nineteenth century. The first, *Gabriel Dumont: The Métis Chief and his Lost World* is a

study of Dumont and the prairie rebellions he lead against an "Ontario imperialism masquerading as Federalism" (*Gabriel Dumont* 19); the last, *Amor De Cosmos*, is a biography of the Nova Scotia photographer, extravagantly self-named, who came up from California and confederated British Columbia, changing the political face of Pacific Canada. Placed between, resting on the edge of *Dumont* and supporting *De Cosmos*, is *From Prince to Rebel*,[1] an intellectual biography of Peter Kropotkin. Through his geographical expeditions to Asia, Kropotkin revealed that European cartography had completely misrepresented the continent's physical features; his pioneering biological research proclaimed the fundamental role co-operation, or "mutual aid," played in the evolution of species, including human. Kropotkin had once reflected, during an 1897 journey by rail through the prairies to the Pacific, that perhaps in this new country, the unjust social conditions of Europe which had driven immigrants from their origins, might not be reproduced. For in the Western Canadian settler communities Kropotkin visited, he discovered that human migration itself "has widened the circle of ideas, it has opened to thought newer horizons, it has shattered many traditions" (qtd. in Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Prince to Rebel* 275).

These then are the items which constitute the foreground of the "George Woodcock Virtual Display," donated by Ingeborg Woodcock, ever George's reticent collaborator, even after his death. As for the background, perceived behind and through the juxtaposed objects, it is a staggering collage of dust jackets, representing some 120 titles authored or edited by Woodcock. There are books in anarchist history, Canadian criticism, studies in imperialism, the biographies of diverse intellectuals and travellers, poetry, his own travel writing in Asia. Woodcock took a certain pride in that the vastness of his corpus was a "nightmare" for scholars. Strained attempts by his contemporaries to critique his work he regarded with "a certain delight." Such a dispersion of intellectual activity within a milieu of rigid disciplinary strictures and theoretical methods left Woodcock, he perceived in the early seventies, "outrageous to the academic mind" ("Letter to Robin Skelton" 1). From the array of titles in

[1]First published in 1950 as *The Anarchist Prince*.

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that wall of books appears thus, a single riddle in want of an answer. What unites them? Among Woodcock's books, there is no single text which can be said to encapsulate the range of his philosophy, his criticism or theory. If we search for footholds of the kind providing a sense of security within the oeuvres of his most important Canadian contemporaries, we discover no *Anatomy of Criticism*, no "the medium is the message." When asked in a interview towards the end of his life for some summative statement of his contribution, Woodcock attempted to dodge the question as follows: "Frankness is a fatal *Saxon* virtue . . . Evade, do not co-operate, burrow as quietly as moles" (Gibson and Woodcock 32). We cannot expect to unearth a static Woodcock in taking on his mosaic. The display itself might lead us to believe, as Peter Buitenhuis did, that the writer it honours had an "almost sacerdotal devotion" to print (13). But that does not provide direction in solving the enigma, for Woodcock was also a prolific radio broadcaster and dramatist, and it was in radio that his efforts to transform Canadian culture began.

Few critics have sought to deny the significance of Woodcock to Canadian culture. He held five doctoral degrees from Canadian universities, a Fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada, and was offered the Order of Canada, graciously declined because of its feudalist associations. L.M. Findlay has observed that Woodcock became both "synonymous with West Coast culture and politics, and with the flourishing of Canadian letters" (Findlay 1224). John Rodden summarizes Woodcock's literary range and the popular reputation it garnered in illustrious terms:

> Critic, journalist, biographer, historian, poet, polemicist, political essayist, editor,
> even playwright and translator: Woodcock is today justly celebrated as "a
> Renaissance man," "a national literary asset," "Canada's Ranking Man of
> Letters." (Rodden 169)

Not included within the display, but among the primary reasons for its being, are the eighteen years of the quarterly journal *Canadian Literature* Woodcock edited from its inception at UBC in 1959. That fact immediately raises the questions: why and how did a former British

anarchist pamphleteer come to edit a journal dedicated to the study of contemporary Canadian literature at a time when the field did not even exist?

In his three-part interview series on *Ideas* for CBC Radio, "George Woodcock: Gentle Anarchist," producer Don Mowatt suggests that considering the disciplinary and geographic range of Woodcock's thought, it is "not a surprise that, with the exception of a slim fifty-page volume in the *Canadian Writers' Series* twenty-five years ago, no biography or major study of Woodcock's work has ever been attempted" (Mowatt and Woodcock 1). The book to which Mowatt refers is *George Woodcock* (1974) by Peter Hughes, part of McClelland and Stewart's New Canadian Library series, published when Woodcock had two decades of writing still ahead. The study emerges out of the long sixties, a time when anarchism experienced global resurgence and Woodcock was the philosophy's leading historian in English. Hughes conceives anarchism as the basis of Woodcock's eclectic oeuvre, rather than an aspect of it, accounting for Woodcock 's literary diversity, irreducible to his critical and historical interest in anarchism, by additionally imputing a free-floating "imaginative reason" in the tradition of Matthew Arnold. Hughes also suggests, not unproblematically, that Woodcock "virtually created Canadian literature through the journal he founded under that name" (49). More recent critics have missed the role of *Canadian Literature* in the emergence of Canadian literature as a body of work and field of study; but Hughes, writing at the height of Woodcock's Canadian reputation, overstates the journal's position within the cultural field. Hughes seeks to show that ideas from the history of anarchism operate throughout Woodcock's writing, but the misattribution of anachronistic influences to Woodcock precludes conceiving an organic relationship between his criticism in *Canadian Literature* and his writings on anarchism. I believe Woodcock's seemingly eclectic interests arise out of a common set of dynamic philosophical attitudes.

A more comprehensive study of Woodcock's work was undertaken by Jack Robinson for his 1983 PhD dissertation "George Woodcock: Romantic Idealist." Robinson combines biographical treatment and a thematic New Criticism in making the case for Woodcock as a

"romantic idealist" in both literature and politics. This characterization was suggested first in passing by William H. New in his introduction to a collection of essays by Woodcock on Canadian writing published in 1970. Woodcock would subsequently seek to more explicitly clarify the distance his work had maintained from romanticism. An examination of his writings within the context of his contemporary theoretical influences shows his oeuvre equally far removed, and indeed highly critical of, idealism in all its European variants. Applying thematic criticism at its apex during the seventies to an interdisciplinary oeuvre of an author that himself explicitly rejected that mode of criticism cannot but trouble Robinson's readings of specific works. The biographical treatment of Woodcock by Robinson was necessarily limited as well, as Woodcock's first volume of autobiography appeared only in 1982. In 1998, after all three of Woodcock's autobiographies had been published, George Fetherling would produce a fine biography, *The Gentle Anarchist: A Life of George Woodcock*. Alan Twigg, also a friend of Woodcock and responsible for establishing the *BC Bookworld* "George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award," more recently published *Tibetans in Exile: the Dalai Lama and the Woodcocks* (2010). It provides another biographical perspective on the Woodcocks, emphasizing their connections to India by recounting the histories of their two charities.[2] Again, the focus here is on Woodcock's personal life and professional involvements, rather than his intellectual life or the explication of his writings. A major study devoted to understanding Woodcock's work remains long overdue.

My interpretation of the enigma presented by Woodcock's oeuvre begins with a remark he made in 1994 upon receiving Freedom of the City, less than a year before his passing:

> I think the conjunction of the literary arts and the concept and practice of freedom
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> is an essential one; in fact, I believe it is the key to my own work, which has
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> always moved between the poles of imagination and liberty.

Culture and social freedoms are intimately related within Woodcock's work, but it would be a mistake to read romanticism into "imagination," or idealism into "liberty" and "freedom." In

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[2]For my review of the book for *Canadian Literature* see Hiebert.

aesthetics Woodcock became inclined to Surrealism, and in politics to anarchism—two movements which became aligned in London's forties through his magazine *NOW*. Anarchism and Surrealism have very different histories and trajectories than romanticism and the variants of idealism, as I will show. But perhaps the most important phrase in Woodcock's sentence above is "always moved." His writing moves between the anarchist's vocal concern for protecting freedom—freedom from imperialism of any kind—to the interest of the artist and critic to develop literary arts that best instantiate this freedom. The freedom of the literary artist seeks the freedom of others, on Woodcock's view. The practice of freedom, through print or in other non-violent action, is dialectically related to aesthetic form, each giving shape to the other. The philosopher to whom Woodcock is most indebted to for this understanding of the grass roots relationship between art and the anti-politics of social freedom is the British philosopher of art Herbert Read, the "last modern" as James King has appositely titled him. Woodcock produced what has remained the only comprehensive study of Read's work. Robin Skelton noted that shortly before his death, Read worried that a study of his oeuvre might never be written on account of its apparent eclecticism:

> in dissipating my talents in half-a-dozen fields I have made it difficult for my
> contemporaries to recognize the underlying unity of my purpose and my practice.
> I am left with the hope that someday someone will take the trouble to trace 'the
> figure in the carpet.' (Skelton, *Herbert Read* 7)

A study of Woodcock, whose work "always moved," must trace its movements and development. One cannot impose or discover a static concept or structural architecture to illuminate the entirety of a corpus which shifts theoretically in relation to the author's practical instantiations of concepts. Woodcock's political and cultural thinking altered in their articulation relative to the contexts in which they were applied. He writes of Gandhi that he left behind "an existential pattern of thought and deed rather than a system of political or moral philosophy" such that the Indian leader, "could talk with accuracy of his career as a series of "experiments with Truth"' (Woodcock and Kermode 4). Woodcock's oeuvre can

similarly be approached as an existential and experimental body of literary acts that challenge imperialism in its multifarious guises—territorial and non-territorial—and the relinquishing of independence it invariably demands. This study argues that a dynamic and dialectical process came to animate Woodcock's work, a process I term "regional cosmopolitanism." My thesis traces this shifting dynamic from its formation in London, through its transoceanic meanderings and engagements, and into the pages and practice of *Canadian Literature*. At the pole of the imagination the dynamic is regional, for literature is conceived to arise locally and in organic relation to the space and time of its society of origin. But this culturally constructive imagination is also global, appropriative of elements foreign to it and having itself the potential for broad application. At the political pole, the dynamic entails a regional ethic, or "morality" as Woodcock prefers, for that term is more readily conceived in relation to the literary arts. A morality of region entails commitment to one's adopted place in a patriotism that eschews "petty localness." This pole of the dynamic also has planetary scope. Without seeking to extend liberty beyond one's immediate realm, to other regions in productive exchange, the inequities suffered by others persist as one's own society becomes subject to internal tyranny.

In recent critical theory, cosmopolitanism has become a point of reference in a world marked by "intensified patterns of cultural exchange" (Rovisco and Nowicka 2). Recovering the theoretical history of cosmopolitanism is an ongoing dimension of this project which has credited Immanuel Kant with resuscitating its basic ideals within an Enlightenment context. Neo-Kantian cosmopolitanists have advocated the institutionalization of universal norms through a regime of global governance and international law (Kurasawa 282). Critics charge that such a program seeks to impose a single liberal model on the the world's diverse nations (Stevenson 250), a model based on the Western bourgeois conception of society as comprised of isolated and competing individuals (Fine 150). In opposition to universalist conceptions of cosmopolitism arising from the heavily criticized philosophy of Kant, numerous "counter-cosmopolitanisms" have been theorized (Irvine, "Dialectical Modernisms" 599).

Rather than an elitist, top-down conception of cosmopolitanism, these approaches seek to acknowledge cultural and political diversity at the most basic level of theory. Such articulations imply conceptions of cosmopolitanism that are "dialectical, process-based, and interactive," as geographer David Harvey describes his own cosmopolitan project (72-3). Ulrich Beck has argued similarly that cosmopolitan must now be conceived as "a non-linear, dialectical process in which the universal and the particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived, not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles" (247). In a political intervention into this proliferate new discourse of alternative cosmopolitanisms, Étienne Balibar insists that as the economic processes of globalization have produced the "concrete political form of colonization," what is "*cosmo*-political must therefore also be cosmo-*political* in that the 'political' is inseparable from historical and social 'conflict'" (12). Such a cosmopolitanism, entailing resistance to political subjugation, is taken as an invocation of post-colonialism. Diana Brydon has recently suggested that to retain its import as political resistance amidst the presence of a new global security context, conceptions of post-colonialism must invoke cosmopolitanism and a conception of autonomy compatible with it (n. pag.). Dean Irvine, a historian of Canadian modernism, has made the remarkable discovery that such "processive conceptualizations" of postcolonial cosmopolitanism in fact were already operative within strains of Canadian literature during the Cold War period, evident in the work of Montreal-based poet and novelist A.M. Klein ("Dialectical Modernisms" 599).

The question of cosmopolitanism played a crucial role in the development of English-Canadian literature through the "nativist" versus "cosmopolitan" debates of Anglo-Montreal modernist poets during the forties. A "cosmopolitan literary consciousness" was the poetic ideal of A.J.M. Smith ("From the Introduction" 336), "the architect" of the modernist revolution in English-Canadian poetry which developed prior to the establishment of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957—a period in Canada many believed was a cultural desert (Warkentin 84). Smith's monumental anthology *The Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943)

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brought together Canadian modernist poetry for the first time, and in introducing his collection Smith draws a distinction between the universalist cosmopolitan sensibility of the best Canadian poetry and verse attempting "to describe and interpret whatever is essentially and distinctively Canadian" ("From the Introduction" 338). It was the cosmopolitan poets who "made a heroic effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing cultures of ideas" (Smith, "From the Introduction" 338). The nativists were afflicted by a "garrison mentality," a phrase subsequently given central importance in the study of Canadian literature by Northrop Frye. Western Canadian poet Dorothy Livesay was among the first to counter Smith, arguing that this cosmopolitanism itself was marred by a colonial acceptance of European modernism ("This Canadian Poetry" 20-21). John Sutherland, founding editor of the literary magazine *Northern Review* (1945-1956), would denounce Smith's distinction in introducing his own anthology of "nativist" contemporary Canadian poets, *Other Canadians* (1947), arguing that Smith reinforces colonialism through the imposition onto an emerging Canadian literature the classicist modernism of T.S. Eliot ("Introduction" 379). In line with Sutherland's assessment, Germaine Warkentin observes that Smith's universalist conception of literature was "avowedly non-historical" (87). According to Smith a poem is to be "objective, impersonal, and in a sense timeless and absolute"; it is detached from human geography and circumstance, "unconcerned with anything save its own existence" (*Towards a View of Canadian Letters* 172). As Warkentin recounts, Smith's critical position was resoundingly rejected by his fellow poets at the Kingston Writers' Conference in 1955 (84), an historic event which provided the direction for the early Canada Council (Djwa 311). As Alexander Kizuk notes, UBC English professor Roy Daniells—a principal force behind the establishment of *Canadian Literature*—would condemn "the inevitable divorce of poet and public" that Smith's distinction entailed (n. pag.). Smith practiced an evaluative criticism of taste, preoccupied with judging and ranking literary works, in keeping with an "aristocratic notion of poetry which rejected what he felt were the crude responses of the great mass of ordinary men" (Warkentin 84-85). Determining the "best" of Canadian poetry, Daniells

argued at the Kingston conference, was "inadequate to describe the poet's full function" in Canadian society ("Discussion" 41-44). The emerging community of Canadian writers rejected Smith in favour of a participatory literary culture with the broadest audience possible (Warkentin 84).

Following Irvine, I contend that a dialectical, processive and postcolonial cosmopolitanism is also present in Western Canadian poetry and criticism during the mid-twentieth century. Leading up to the Kingston Conference, Woodcock had made a crucial intervention into the cosmopolitan versus nativist debate with his article "A View of Canadian Criticism," published in *The Dalhousie Review* in 1954. Woodcock effectively reconciles the opposing factions in arguing that it is only by addressing the specific circumstances of her time and place that a writer is able to achieve cross-cultural relevance. Intercultural exchange, in turn, aids the regionally situated writer in her particular efforts to address the issues of her own immediate world. While already active in Canada's cultural scene, Woodcock had been resident in the country for only five years when he composed the article. It carries from London the "grass roots" relationship between art and society articulated in the anarchist modernism of Herbert Read, a modernism which stood opposed to the respective interpretations of the modernist movement by his contemporaries Eliot and Wyndham Lewis. After being placed at the helm of the journal that would provide the central meeting place in print for a new participatory literary community marking Canada's sixties, Woodcock would increasingly challenge the universalist aspects of his adopted modernist influences—which included not only Read but also W.H. Auden, Marie-Louise Berneri, the French Surrealists, and George Orwell—particularly through scholarly engagements with the cultures, past and present, of his readopted country and those of South Asia. Woodcock maintained close connections in the postcolonial literary and artistic culture of India and was one of the first Westerners to establish relations with the exiled Tibetan government of the Dalai Lama. This dissertation is a project in cultural analysis that studies movement between Europe and Canada, but also necessarily tran-Pacific ideational relations as well, for

Woodcock's engagements in Asia were responsible for countering his adopted modernist universalism, permitting the emergence of a new perception of the culture of his own country. A thoroughgoing historicism developed, interdisciplinary and intercultural, which transformed an artistic universalism and anti-political internationalism into a postmodern regional cosmopolitanism, attentive to understanding—and also critiquing—the unique circumstances that came to animate the "now" of geographically situated societies. To trace the development of Woodcock's work then, is at once to study the transoceanic metamorphoses of post-WWI variants of late British modernism—interculturally inflected during WWII and in the context of emerging Indian independence—into a specifically Western Canadian postmodernism developing in connection with social and cultural changes occurring across the Pacific.

As Woodcock was well aware, he was not the only inheritor of European modernist criticism on the scene, attempting to overhaul its concepts for application to the unique cultural landscape of Canada's sixties. Woodcock perceived Northrop Frye and Marshall McLuhan, each born within a year of himself, as his preeminent contestants in the effort to provide Canada a new self-understanding on the basis of profound cultural changes. During the sixties, Frye proved more effective than Smith himself in applying Eliot's modernist elitism to this new Canadian culture. McLuhan was an early admirer of Wyndham Lewis and became significantly influenced by his spatial theories (Cavell, *McLuhan in Space* 9). Woodcock devoted a 1968 issue of *Canadian Literature* to the assessment of Lewis, a writer and artist sharply distanced from Woodcock philosophically and aesthetically, but a fellow Canadian by birth who loathed the Victorian intolerances and philistinism of central Canada that he experienced as an exile in Ontario during the war years (Hammond 1). Lewis also had admired Woodcock's intellectual rigour, writing to *politics* editor Dwight Macdonald in 1947 that "Woodcock appears to have a serious mind, which is more than can be said of Orwell, who is a silly billy" (qtd. in Woodcock, "The Enemy: Symbol of Our Century" 529-30). Woodcock secured the support of Anne Wyndham Lewis, who recalled her husband's extreme interest in Woodcock's book on William Godwin ("Letter to GW 25 March 1967"), and

planned the issue without consulting McLuhan (McLuhan, "Letter to GW 30 March 1967"),

one of the only Canadian intellectuals to have befriended the Lewises during their time in

Canada.[3] While McLuhan's influences were as varied and complex as Woodcock's own,

Woodcock would come to derisively suggest that Lewis was McLuhan's "master" (*The World*

of Canadian Writing 238), and with the majority of intellectuals on the cultural Left, believed

the concept of the "global village"—which McLuhan had derived from Lewis's remark that

"the earth has become one big village, with telephones laid on from one end to the other, and

air transport, both speedy and safe"—utopian (Hammond 3; Lewis 21). Frye and McLuhan

developed an intellectual camaraderie at the University of Toronto and Frye—associated with

structuralism, the Toronto mythopoeic poets, and literary nationalism—became an unlikely

apologist for McLuhan after the media theorist's meteoric rise of the sixties was exchanged

for broad neglect and disfavour in the seventies and eighties (Cavell, *McLuhan in Space*

217-18). Frye and Woodcock shared friends in the Canadian literary scene and their paths at

times crossed both in person and in print. Frye was among the very few prominent Canadian

literary critics of the period who avoided writing for *Canadian Literature*. Entertaining Frye

one fine summer evening in Vancouver near to the publication of *Anatomy of Criticism*,

Woodcock came to realize, when Frye revealed how the mountains filled him with dread, that

his complex critical schemata served to detach literature from the nature he feared (Woodcock,

Beyond the Blue Mountains 71). Frye derived his systematizing approach from Eliot and

would declare that much in *Anatomy* simply "attempts to annotate" the "very fundamental

criticism" of Eliot which is grounded in the principle that "the existing monuments of

literature form an ideal order among themselves" (*Anatomy of Criticism* 18). The present

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[3]McLuhan wrote to Woodcock five days after Anne Wyndham Lewis, saying it would be impossible to find the time to put together his own memories of Lewis, but suggests Woodcock contact Stanley Murphy of Assumption College. McLuhan points out in his letter that Lewis, who had supported the rise of Hitler up until WWII, was "deeply offended" when not invited to attend the College's presentation of Eliot's anti-fascist poetic drama *Murder in the Cathedral* (Woodcock would avoid the subject of Lewis's politics within his editorial). Murphy's University of Windsor recollections provide the opening article for the issue which attests to McLuhan's admiration for Lewis, while Lewis "highly endorsed" the younger Canadian's writings. McLuhan, who was sent a copy by Sheila Watson, thought it was "a useful issue," noting in his thanks that he had not been asked to contribute. See McLuhan, "Letter to Sheila Watson 12 June 1968."

study thus conceives the Canadian cultural field of the sixties in transoceanic engagement with European modernism, and that internally, Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism was in contestation with other emerging Canadian postmodernisms which negotiated their own relationships with the modernist movements emanating from the far side of the Atlantic.

Contemporary cosmopolitanism as a problematic in critical theory has developed two interrelated dimensions: an analytic or methodological mode, oriented to understanding contemporary and historical social realities, and a normative orientation, which seeks "a better social world" which "ought" to become reality (Roche 70). In his practice of regional cosmopolitanism, Woodcock's work suggests a cosmopolitanism of "common ground," fundamentally differentiated from models derived from Western humanism, or those which have become associated with neoliberalism and economic-based methods of world governance. Methodologically, regional cosmopolitanism is a way of encapsulating Woodcock's tacit method of cultural analysis, which accounts for cultural change through intercultural exchange. As a normative philosophy, Woodcock's cosmopolitanism demands cultural freedom and social independence at the regional level, and by extension, at the global level. In this perspective, the planet is fundamentally comprised of regions, rather than nations, cultures, individuals, or undifferentiated "nature." As a model and practice, Woodcock's postcolonialism is thus grounded in specific cultural geographies, not the nation-state as advanced by modernist postcolonialisms. The cultural and political independence of a region—a geographical concept but also a cultural, environmental, political, and ideological one—involves dynamic and interpenetrating communicative exchange within and outside its permeable borders. The form of political organization Woodcock's cosmopolitanism entails, in a world that had become "post-national," as Woodcock would claim by way of Frye's phrase, but still remained afflicted by imperialist antagonisms, is that of federation. Woodcock believed that in furthering its own federalism, Canada would provide a model for countries wishing to effectively respond to a new technological world imperilled by processes of globalization. His work in fostering Canadian

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culture during the counter-cultural sixties was thus positioned against the centralist agenda of the Canadian government to institutionalize a national culture to support statism within an emerging Cold War geopolitical climate.

In the landmark *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson, following McLuhan (*The Gutenberg Galaxy* 138), argues for an intrinsic relationship between the nation and print culture. It is the emergence of European print-capitalist culture, claims Anderson, that made possible the conception of a nation as a "sociological organism" and "imagined community," floating in what Walter Benjamin had already termed "homogeneous, empty time" (*Imagined Communities* 24-26). Spatially, the imagination of regional cosmopolitanism is locally produced and oriented to its immediate geographic landscape, while networking out to other regions, acknowledged as independent in their difference. Temporally, Woodcock's dynamic rejects progressive "calendaric" movement through "empty time," in conceiving the past as dynamically operating within a present ever open to change. In McLuhan's terms, the "oral organization of society that preceded print and nationalism," was essentially "decentralist," and electronic media are returning us to this tribal state (*The Gutenberg Galaxy* 210). Anderson's follow-up to *Imagined Communities*, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (2006), shows that it was during the "early globalization" of the telegraph, the Universal Postal Union, the steamship, and transcontinental railways, that anarchism developed into a politically transformative transoceanic movement in the late nineteenth century (*Under Three Flags* 3). Woodcock points out in *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (1962), that it was the voluntary co-operation Kropotkin witnessed governments undertaking during this period which suggested to him that voluntary arrangements could be extended to embrace all functions of a complex society (*Anarchism* 204-205). As a broadcaster and experimental radio dramatist who insisted on preserving and studying Canada's electronic cultural history, Woodcock can be perceived as maintaining an uneasy anti-nationalist alliance with McLuhan amidst the statist imposition of a retrograde literary model insufficiently

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transformed in its application to the regional specificities of Canada.

The five chapters to follow each trace transoceanic ideational movement that contributed to the formation, and demonstrating the application of, Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism. The next chapter will explain the anarchist modernism of Read adopted by Woodcock with the outbreak of war and after the Marxist poetics of the "Auden generation" had been denounced even by its originators. The anti-imperialism of Read's philosophy, intimately connected to Surrealism, sought to bring to aesthetics the revolutionary nonviolence of Gandhi, which had been transmitted to Read and Woodcock by their mutual friend the Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand. The chapter shows how Woodcock moved away from the neo-romanticism of Read and the primitivism of Surrealism as he deepened his cultural engagements with Canada, fostering a regionalist theory of a postcolonial English-Canadian literature as the "meeting of time and space." Woodcock's Canadian writings do not evince the imperializing mythological imagination of Romantic nationalism operating within the period, I show, but rather dismantle it. The third chapter examines other modernist influences on Woodcock during his London years, primarily to account for Woodcock's "moralistic" approach to literary criticism. I also trace in this chapter how Read's anarchism led to his envisioning of an international artistic utopia that found its way into British and Canadian cultural policy-making. Woodcock's own trajectory would involve a rejection of Read's platonic and universalist notion of beauty, as apparent in his radio drama of the early sixties, produced on the heels of Woodcock's first and influential trip to India. The fourth chapter resuscitates the radio-based Western Canadian culture Woodcock emigrated into. In examining Woodcock's first original radio script—written in the context of both the founding of *Canadian Literature* and the composition of his landmark *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*—I show how regional cosmopolitanism is brought to bear on a Canadian psychogeography Woodcock believed to be infected by European imperialism. In the fifth chapter "A View of Canadian Criticism," I examine Woodcock's first explicit articulation of regional cosmopolitanism within the Canadian

literary scene which also builds a case for establishing a journal to study Canadian literature. This chapter shows how both the methodological and normative aspects of Woodcock's cosmopolitanism would be given their particular postcolonial and historical dimension through his trans-Pacific engagements, and how these forces in turn affected the formative years of *Canadian Literature*. The ethics of Woodcock's cosmopolitanism, which champions regional diversity, is demonstrated in explaining the remediation of Western Canadian poetry by American postmodernism within the Vancouver literary scene of the early sixties. Chapter six, finally, examines how Woodcock used regional cosmopolitanism in *Canadian Literature* during his editorship, and also within his Canadian dramatic and politic writings of the sixties, to promote federation in the face of an emergent neo-nationalism. The chapter concludes by comparing Woodcock's cosmopolitanism to the respective positions of Frye and McLuhan at the end of the period in Canadian cultural history over which the three held sway.

Chapter 2

The Meeting of Time and Space

Étincelant diamant
Vancouver
Où le train blanc de neige et de feux nocturnes fuit l'hiver

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

Woodcock was born in Winnipeg in 1912, but lived his life in England until returning to Canada in 1949. In the seventies and eighties, a period of heightened nationalism in Canada, Woodcock's associations with European culture were considered by some critics to inherently compromise his involvements in Canadian literature and society. Lorraine Weir argued that Woodcock, an "Anglo-Saxon male," grounds his writings in the "unsung source" and "undeclared pantheon" of William Blake and T.S. Eliot (144-146). Frank Davey suggested Woodcock's criticism is in keeping with that of University of Cambridge Professor F.R. Leavis, a culturally elitist literary critic whose work came to prominence during the Cold War (679). Robert Fulford, editor of longstanding Toronto magazine *Saturday Night*, observes the enormous role of British immigrants and visitors in the development of Canadian culture during the Cold War. He places Woodcock, "who founded *Canadian Literature* magazine in 1959 and provided the basis for academic study of fiction and poetry in this country," among those who, "in the empire-building tradition, arrived on our shores . . . [and] brought with them the British rules" ("The Canada Council at Twenty-Five"). This chapter, however, will

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show the anti-imperialism Woodcock had developed by the time of his arrival in Canada. Woodcock brought to Canada a surrealist understanding of the relationship between art and society largely derived from the work of modernist art critic Herbert Read. Woodcock's regionalism, his conviction that art is integrally related to its immediate social realm and grounded in particular geography, arises out of Read's work. Woodcock, however, would come to challenge Read's aesthetic philosophy in important respects after his arrival in Canada, conceiving a very different cosmopolitanism and an understanding of art which does not hinge on the intrinsic beauty of form. In this chapter, I will seek to explain Read's thought as it came to impact Woodcock in a conception of a postcolonial Canadian literature as "the meeting of time and space." I argue that Woodcock's engagements with the philosophy of Gandhi and his research into the Indigenous cultures of the West Coast worked to undermine the romanticist elements present in the philosophy of Read and Surrealism.

In January 1939, with another world war imminent, W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, the leaders of a generation of English poets, set sail for America. Their departure sent shockwaves throughout the London literary community: "The most important literary event since the outbreak of the Spanish War," wrote Cyril Connolly (Connolly 70). For poetry's avant-garde, it symbolized more than the retreat of the politically charged poetics that had defined the decade. The emigration of Auden was the abandonment of European civilization by a poet esteemed to be its greatest artistic and moral visionary. He was taken to have enlisted and devoted a generation to the social renewal of a continent his departure was understood to condemn. At the outbreak of war, Auden's own feelings of failure were expressed in a poem at a distance from those he had written before:

I sit in one of the dives

On Fifty-Second Street

Uncertain and afraid

As the clever hopes expire

Of a low dishonest decade

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("September 1, 1939")

Auden had departed from the Marxist theory associated with his work, following the path T.S.
Eliot already took towards Christianity. As for his literary language, it would also leave
England, increasingly absorbing the words and rhythms of America (Firchow 175). Art
would become dissociated from politics within his poetics; the hope that a new society could
be birthed through the aid of artistic creation, lost. His new verse declared that "poetry makes
nothing happen" ("In Memory of Y.B. Yeats"). In the long verse *New Year Letter* published
in 1941, Auden's political resignation, now echoing that of his generation, would be sounded
as aesthetic principle:

> Art is not life, and cannot be
>
> A midwife to society,
>
> (*Collected Works* 201)

The main poetical strain of the thirties, and its social ambitions, came crashing down by the
end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. When the fascist Nationalists, lead by Francisco
Franco, staged a coup following their election defeat in 1936, the country's working class rose
up to support their government. Many of the leaders of London's literary left, including
Auden, Stephen Spender, and Louis MacNeice travelled to Spain to fight alongside the
Republican loyalists. They would return disillusioned by the complexities of political reality
and the communists' role in the victory of the fascists. As Julian Symons recalls: "After
Spain, and indeed before the end came in Spain, there was little left of the Thirties movement
but a feeling of resignation and a sense of guilt" (*The Thirties and the Nineties* 109).

Woodcock was among the majority repelled by international Marxism after the Spanish
Revolution, but sought to retain a conception of the sociopolitical functions of art and the
writer. Following Auden's death in 1977, Woodcock composed the poem "Ballad for W.H.
Auden", a tribute in pastiche. Walking down Granville street in Vancouver, Woodcock
contemplates the contrasting images of the young and old faces of Auden, struggling to
articulate feelings that involve both pity and admiration for his "leader lost":

O master of my awakening

Who made me hear aright,

O leader lost of my twenties

Who elected for faith and flight,

(*Notes on Visitations* 95)

Rather than Auden's Marxism, it was Herbert Read's anarchism that was to be the major influence on Woodcock after the Spanish Revolution. In 1939 Read took up directorship of the publishing house Routledge & Kegan Paul, the chief rival to Eliot's Faber & Faber. He would publish Woodcock's first collection of verse *The Centre Cannot Hold* in 1943. The decentralist politics of Read are evident in that title, as they were that same year in the anarchist editorial stance Woodcock adopted for his magazine *NOW* which he had founded in 1940. London's most prominent literary magazine during the war was *Horizon*, published from 1940 to 1950. While *Horizon* would dissociate art from politics, *NOW* would carry the sociopolitical objectives of art into the forties, with different concepts and aesthetics than those associated with Auden and Marxism. In his study of literary life in London during the war, British cultural historian Robert Hewison suggests, somewhat misleadingly, that *NOW* was "under the neo-romantic spell" Read is considered to have cast onto the poetic scene (113). More recently, Klaus and Knight have noted that "the most substantial gathering of anarchist-inspired writers at any time in Britain was the *NOW* circle, composed of many conscientious objectors" (8). *NOW* carried the connection between anarchism and art which Read sought to establish in culture beyond the borders of England. Gregory D. Sumner argues that Dwight Macdonald's magazine *politics*, around which gathered the "New York intellectuals," was established "in some respects [as] a sister magazine" to *NOW* (23).

Alan Bowness, former Director of the Tate Gallery, reflects on the influence Read had on artists and intellectuals during and after the Second World War:

Read's pacifist and anarchist convictions, pronounced so publicly during and after the Second World War, might be regarded as impossibly utopian, but taking this

extreme position could also be seen as a beacon of sanity in a mad world. One

had to respect the opinions of a pacifist who held the Military Cross, and an

anarchist who could manifestly make organisations work. Read's position was

attractive to many people of my generation, growing up in the war. Discovering

the range and eloquence of his writing was a personal education that no one else

provided. (9)

Only recently has critical theory undertaken a rapprochement with Read's work. Jerald

Zaslove would summarize the critical treatment of Read during the Cold War as a relegation

to the "historical ash can" (20). Amidst "the almost total amnesia which . . . settled over the

remains of this poet, anarchist, and partisan of a comprehensive radical aesthetic modernism"

(Zaslove 19), writers in institutions of the West Coast sought to sustain Read's contribution

during an unfavourable intellectual climate. The University of Victoria acquired Read's

complete papers. In 1969 Robert Skelton, founding editor of Victoria's *The Malahat Review*,

would collect twenty-eight contributions, a number from Western Canada, for *Herbert Read:*

A Memorial Symposium (1970). Woodcock would publish the first comprehensive

examination of Read's complex and meandering oeuvre, *The Stream and the Source* in 1972,

arguing that Read, like Nietzsche and Proudhon whom Read admired, was not a systematic

thinker, but within his corpus "there is certainly a recognizable pattern, a philosophy of the

relationships between the arts and human society" (*Stream* 122). There has not been another

complete survey of Read's work since.[1]

Read stood aloof from the dogmatic International Communism permeating the literary

culture of the thirties. He criticized Marxists in their attempt "to deduce all social phenomena

from economic calculations," as he argued in *NOW* ("Chains of Freedom 1" 10). As Paraskos

notes, Read would in fact accept "the basic Marxist proposition that social conditions shape

the form, reception and use of artworks" (*To Hell with Culture* xii). Woodcock would follow

Read in this, disputing Fredric Jameson's positing of a unitary "'Anglo-American tradition'

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[1]Montreal's Black Rose Books reissued Woodcock's study in 2008.

hostile to the dialectical approach" ("Marxist Critics" 326). Read's criticism, Paraskos finds, has "features in common with Marxism, even paralleling, while predating, to some extent the work of Williams" (*To Hell with Culture* xii). Woodcock suggests also that "the Orwell who wrote *Coming Up for Air* and the brilliant essays on popular culture" was in fact for Raymond Williams an essential precursor ("Marxist Critics" 326). Writing in 1975, Woodcock believes the approach to criticism Read sustains is amenable to then-recent "neo-Marxist" critical approaches, far removed from the "Comintern" orthodoxies of the thirties, while highlighting Woodcock's own aesthetic inclination to Surrealism:

> … a range [of critical approach] that stretches in one direction from Herbert
> Marcuse to Claude Levi-Strauss and in the other from Walter Benjamin to
> Jean-Paul Sartre. Among these neo-Marxist critics one encounters a degree of
> intellectual competence and creativeness and a variety of heretical approaches
> that contrast dramatically with the tame obedience that even
> fellow-travellers—with the sole brilliant exception of the Surrealists—were
> inclined to display during the 1930s, that era of socialist realism and Stalinist
> orthodoxy which is personified for our generation by Christopher Caudwell …
> (Woodcock, "Marxist Critics" 325)

However, Read, Orwell, and Woodcock did not consider art merely a byproduct of society and ideology, and in this they fundamentally diverge from Williams and many other Marxist cultural theorists. In *Culture and Society*, Williams grants that in defining art as a "mode of knowledge" Read was seeking to describe art in reference to its social function. Woodcock notes that Read in fact explicitly accepts the second aspect of the Marxian dialectic:

> … its capacity to pass from the static to the dynamic, from a system of logic to a
> mode of action." But he differs from most exponents of Marxism in seeing art as
> a separate dialectical process, not merely a 'reflection of such a process.' Art
> must be accepted not as an *aid to thought*, which Communist propagandists tend
> to consider it, but as itself a *mode of thought*. (*Stream* 213-14)

As a mode of thought, art develops within a culture and acts upon it, according to Read and Woodcock as well. For Williams however, granting the artist any special function in society, "reiterates that view of the artist's essential abnormality which as much as anything has denied art's social bearings" (Williams 249). The unique "skill" of the artist, Williams argues, is for Read distinguished from the "imaginative truth" it seeks to disclose, a separation that bears the regressive sign of the Romantic (249-250). Williams can find fault in Read's conception of the artist then as engaging with "deeper levels" of human psychology, "harmonizing" people with an ever-changing society. This appropriation of Jung by Read does not motivate Woodcock's own writing on art and literature and he considered it the "least convincing" aspect of Read's theory. But Woodcock, like Read, considers art to play an essential function with its own dialectic in any culture, its various professional forms "equally important" as those even of medicine (*Strange Bedfellows* 195).

Read perceived the dialectic of avant-garde intentionality to oscillate between Superrealism and Abstraction. By *Superrealism* Read designates his own theoretical articulation of surrealist aesthetics in its intrinsic relation to abstractionism. Superrealism is a term Read derives from André Breton, the founder of the surrealist movement: "'I believe,' declared Breton in the First Manifesto of 1924, 'in the future transmutation of those two seemingly contradictory states, dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, a super-reality, so to speak'" (qtd. in: Read, *Art and Society* 120-21). Superrealism is distinct from aesthetic realism in that it is existential and phenomenological: "If reality is to be our aim, then we must include all aspects of human experience, not excluding those elements of sub-conscious life which are revealed in dreams, day-dreams, trances and hallucinations" (*Art and Society* 120). Breton had explicitly defined his aesthetics in opposition to "the realistic attitude, inspired by positivism," believing that while romanticism had failed, "the imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights" (*Manifestoes of surrealism* 6, 10). Read explains the revolutionary intentionality of Surrealism as an attempt to reinstate the organic connection between art and society (*Art and Society* 120), and

Read was instrumental in convincing Breton to adopt anarchism as the philosophy for the surrealist movement. Abstraction, at the furthest distance from superrealism in Read's modernist aesthetic ecology, was criticized by the Surrealists for being "completely devoid of social actuality" (*Art and Society* 125).

Read compares the elements of abstract art to those of architecture and music, explaining that in opposition to the superrealist, the abstract artist "has no need of natural appearances—of the accidental forms created in the stress of the world's evolution—because he has access to the archetypal forms which underlie all the casual variations presented by the natural world" (*Art and Society* 125). The work of Woodcock, who resisted both Jungian archetypes and the "purity of form" would remain decidedly on the surrealist side of Read's aesthetic division throughout his career, seeking in art and writing "social actuality." In examining early human artifacts, Read finds their evolvement proceeding towards "making and refinement of the tool to a point of maximum efficiency," and then past refinement for functionality alone, "towards a conception of form-in-itself" (*The Origins of Form in Art* 69). It is here, with the emergence of "free or symbolic form" that art becomes an independent force within human societies, argues Read, purely manifesting the feelings towards an idea of the artist to be subsequently conceptualized through analysis, paralleling Heidegger's notion of the abstracted object as *present-at-hand* (*The Origins of Form in Art* 75). Read regards the evolution to form-in-itself as involving a fundamental break from the immediate world into what might be described as the mystical or spiritual realm. The intensely individual nature of an artist's form resonates with others through the collective unconscious, healing or "harmonizing" the unbalanced psychologies of the work's audience in so doing. Woodcock's own work consistently evinces a skepticism in regard to form-in-itself, and Read's conception of "beauty" associated with it. Art as a *mode of thought* in Woodcock remains grounded in shared perception. Art has its own dialectic as a craft, but this dialectic remains fundamentally attuned to the regional society it serves, not to any purity of form.

Woodcock's understanding of art was not romantic and neither was his politics. In the

introduction to Woodcock's collection of essays on Canadian writers and writings, *Odysseus Ever Returning* (1970), part of the New Canadian Library edited by Malcolm Ross, a young W.H. New describes Woodcock as "justified" for "any Romantic idealism," by having "Western Canadian roots" (Woodcock, *Odysseus Ever Returning* xi). The title of the collection strikes the reader of Woodcock's oeuvre as an aberration, for nowhere does Woodcock self-identify with Homer's epic hero. Smaro Kamboureli in *Scandalous Bodies* (2000) argues that Homer has come to exemplify "the exaltation of mobility in the name of emancipation, which traditionally valorizes travellers like Odysseus as cosmopolitan paradigms of the Western patriarchal self" (20). Kamboureli observes that in the "Introduction" to the New Canadian Library edition of *Over Prairie Trails* (1922), Ross seeks to frame F.P. Grove as an "archetypal" Canadian on account of the author's internationalist cosmopolitanism (Kamboureli 32). In light of Kamboureli's analysis, one suspects that in the title *Odysseus Ever Returning*, Ross seeks to attribute to Woodcock—the perennial traveller ever returning to the literature of his own country with renewed eyes—the detached universalist cosmopolitanism the New Canadian Library identifies with Canadian literature in the tradition of Smith. This association of Odysseus with a universalist and patriarchal cosmopolitan paradigm is all the more ironic in that the earliest essay of the collection contends that "The cosmopolitan artist is as legendary as the Centaur; writers are dependent, not only on their immediate and temporary environment, but even more on their origins" (Woodcock, *Odysseus Ever Returning* 131).[2] While the title of the book associates Woodcock with the very cosmopolitanism his writing seeks to escape, its introduction by New conceives Woodcock's Canadian criticism as arising out of a Romantic connection to the land that Woodcock rejected. Woodcock later explicitly cautions against perceiving the philosophical origins of work in romantic terms:

> as I point out in *Anarchism*, the basis of Godwin's anarchism is really
>
> pre-Romantic, in the English dissenting radical tradition that goes back at least to

[2]See chapter five.

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Winstanley. Bakunin, like Harren and others of his Russian contemporaries, was

much influenced by the German romantics. On the other hand, Proudhon was

strongly anti-romantic and much closer to the Enlightenment. and [sic] one must

not forget that the anarchists have always regarded Rousseau as the ancestor of

the Jacobins, whom they rejected; they also strongly criticized Rousseau's ideas

of the Social Contract and preferred their own ideas of the natural sociality of

man, which has pre-Romantic roots. I have always regarded Rousseau with the

greatest mistrust, finding in his teachings much that leads down the steep path to

revolutionary authoritarianism. ("Letter 20 May 1980")

Woodcock's assessment of the authoritarian politics of romanticism is in keeping with his

condemnation of its attitude towards literature and the conception of the imagination, spiritual

and separate from the world, underlying it. Woodcock condemned the "neo-romantic

doctrine" of isolating particular forms as "creative writing" in a literary hierarchy that

conceives history, criticism and other genres as non-creative: "The attempt to divide poetry or

fiction hierarchically from the rest of literature is as devitalizing and as futile as the aesthetic

attempt to divide literature from life" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 142). The dispersion of

Read's creativity into an array of forms—poetry, painting, the novel, essays, criticism, radio

drama—reflects this non-hierarchical understanding of literature, arising out of a philosophy

of "coral growth, a symbiosis of attitudes," rather than a "rigid structure of metaphysical

architecture," writes Woodcock (*Stream* 105). Woodcock thus classifies Read as an

homme-de-lettres, "in the sense understood in France and other European countries," as a

writer for whom personal integrity and aesthetic principle find universal application (*Stream*

35). In describing the manner of Read's criticism and the way in which he composed his

written work, Woodcock also divulges his own writing practices. Read's books were often

"mosaic constructions," created from separate essays in which different facets of a subject had

been worked out (*Stream* 131, 121). In criticism Read eschewed any single formal method to

prioritize personal engagement with the subject matter. For Read, criticism at its basis is

"*pathos*. Sympathy and empathy—feeling *with* and feeling *into*" (Read, *The Tenth Muse* 322). The critic seeks to prepare others for their own engagement with a work of art, "by removing intellectual prejudices," and clarifying the experience by "genetic explanations" (Woodcock, *Stream* 173). Giambattista Vico, Woodcock notes, developed "the genetic method" employed by Read. It is a method, as Read explains, "that studies art in relation to its origins, its history and distribution—in brief, the empirical method itself. The whole of the modern tradition in art is a direct result of such an approach" (*Art Now* 37).

Woodcock developed his understanding of Read's philosophy through his friendship with the Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand. Anand is broadly credited, with R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao, for the emergence of modern Indian literature in English. Anand fostered relationships with members of the Bloomsbury circle in London during the twenties. Following his permanent return to India in 1946, Mohandas Gandhi would encourage him to remove their influence from his writing. Anand would serve on the World Peace Council as the unofficial representative of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, who brought socialist government to India. Woodcock considered Anand's novels *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) to critique untouchability and the caste system, although his "near-success was spoilt by the influence of the Marxism fashionable in the London literary circles where he was then working" (*Faces of India* 98). In an open letter to Woodcock, printed in a festschrift for Woodcock edited by New (*A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock* [1978]), Anand writes:

> The more deeply I understood the meaning of imperialism, through my
> association with people like H.G. Wells, Leonard Woolf, and George Orwell, the
> more relieved I felt at the emergence in the homeland of the Empire of young
> contemporaries like you. (Anand, "An Open Letter" 185)

In the early forties Anand and Woodcock would meet in London with other similarly minded writers, who together were "veering away from the reactionary alliance of T.S. Eliot with *Action Française* fascists in France, and were criticizing his 'Royalism in Politics,'

'Anglo-Catholicism in Religion,' and 'Classicism in Literature'" ("An Open Letter" 185).

Eliot had famously declared himself "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and

anglo-catholic in religion" (*For Lancelot Andrewes* vii). In aspiring for literary and political

"transformation," these young writers of the forties challenged the cultural project of Eliot and

would take as their "mentor," Anand recalls, Herbert Read:

> I had shared with Herbert Read many ideas and had known him intimately for
>
> over a decade. And it was through him that I began to read *Bakunin* and *Other*
>
> *Anarchists*. I introduced him to Gandhi's ideas. And the coincidence of our
>
> approach led me to participate in the group's activities. ("An Open Letter" 185)

Fellow conscientious objectors, Anand and Woodcock were closer in political outlook than

either was to their mutual friend Orwell, whose latent "attitudes acquired as a police officer in

Burma," recounts Woodcock, continued to shape his world view:

> I remember how, right up to 1947, he would argue with Indian nationalist writers
>
> like our common friend, Mulk Raj Anand, that they did not really want complete
>
> independence, which he considered in any case an impossibility. "India cannot
>
> be a sovereign state," he said [in reviewing a book for *Partisan Review*], "because
>
> she cannot defend herself." ("Orwell: Imperial Socialist" 57-58)

Read became increasingly intent on uniting the pacifist revolutionary philosophy of

Gandhi with his own aesthetic anarchism. While Gandhi drew heavily on traditional Indian

philosophies in developing his theory of *Satyagraha*, translated as "truth force," he also

disclosed debts to the Western anarchist tradition in the success of his method, which liberated

a population of 350 million—a staggering achievement for an anti-imperialist such as Read.

Gandhi was a friend of Kropotkin and admired the political writings of Tolstoy which inspired

his model of postcolonial India as decentralized and village-based (Woodcock and

Avakumovic, *The Anarchist Prince* 352). Gandhi also described his reading of *Unto This*

Last, a critique of capitalism by English art critic John Ruskin, as having "brought about an

instantaneous and practical transformation in my life" (Gandhi and Andrews 163). Ruskin

was an important influence on Read as well. Read saw his role as Europe's foremost impresario of the modern art movement as a way of bringing Gandhi's achievement from the realm of morality and religion to aesthetics, with the purpose of liberating the European imperialist mind. Read described the Indian leader as "the one authentic holy man of our time" but believed himself "not made for religion, or religion for me. My way must be the way of aesthetic discipline, of psychological integration, and this is the Other Way" ("Letter to Kathleen Raine 13 October 1956"). In this way, an Indian philosophy of non-violent revolt came to impact influential British anarchist thought.

> Revolt, it will be said, implies violence; but this is an outmoded, an incompetent conception of revolt. The most effective form of revolt in this violent world we live in is non-violence. Gandhi temporarily inspired his followers to practise such a form of revolt, but we are still far from a full awareness of its potentialities.
>
> (Read, *Anarchy and Order* 26)

Woodcock observes that Read was not against government—"Government—that is to say, control of the individual in the interests of the community, is inevitable if two or more men combine for a common purpose" (qtd. in Woodcock, *Stream* 250). The importance of "art" as integrative to a civilization, is opposed by Read to a model of "culture" in which outmoded values are commodified and imposed through institutions—museums, galleries, theatres—to maintain, at the expense of social vitality and the psychological health of the individual, an economically and politically dominant elite. For Read, a natural society is one allowed to organically develop with guidance from its poets and artists, "the unacknowledged legislators of the world," as Shelley deemed them. Reconnecting art to society in this way is for Read a revolt against the values of the European nation state.

Anand introduced both Read and Woodcock to the theory of *Satyagraha*, and there is a moment in the open letter by Anand to Woodcock in which Anand would seem to question his old friend, after describing how the principles of *Satyagraha* had lead to their mutual decision to become conscientious objectors at the outset of World War Two: "You also remained

pacifist, but, somehow, could not think of the Gandhian way as practicable in the West" ("An Open Letter" 187). Anand here alludes to Woodcock's *Mohandas Gandhi* (1971), a seminal examination of the Indian leader's philosophy. Woodcock wrote a book on each one of his key influences, not simply to promote their ideas, but to grapple with them, furthering his own intellectual development. Zaslove regards *The Stream and the Source* as a "low-keyed" and "cool" assessment of Read (36), but these are terms which could equally describe books Woodcock wrote on other writers he most admired. Gandhi described himself as "a kind of anarchist" (Woodcock and Kermode 11) and Woodcock credits his activist libertarian philosophy for the "liberation of India" and the "general end of the Empire" (3). In his historical "inquest" *Who Killed the British Empire?* (1974), Woodcock shows the loss of Britain's most important imperial possession lead to the Empire's complete dismantlement (*British Empire* 9). In analyzing this collapse, Woodcock argues that Canada's independence in 1867 set an essential precedent in the relinquishing of control over one of Britain's colonies. Woodcock also argues that the unity Britain imposed on culturally diversified India, through technologies such as the railway and radio, in fact produced the collective "imagined community" Gandhi's campaign depended upon in generating popular support (Woodcock, *British Empire* 259). But ultimately, it was in destroying the moral will of the British to rule, turning its pride into shame—"the erosion of their collective image of themselves as a master race"—by which Gandhi effected India's emancipation (*British Empire* 8).

Woodcock emphasizes that while Gandhi produced a great deal of writing he was not a systematic philosopher: "It was an existential pattern of thought and deed rather than a system of political or moral philosophy that Gandhi left behind him," such that Gandhi "could talk with accuracy of his career as a series of "experiments with Truth"" (Woodcock and Kermode 4). In his study however, Woodcock challenges the broad application of *Satyagraha* in several ways, noting its successful use by Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and other pacifist revolutionaries. He suggests that in his willingness to fast to the death, Gandhi's political method extended beyond shaming his opponent morally into the realm of coercion, and that

this reflected Gandhi's own personal "Christian rather than a Hindu preoccupation with martyrdom" (107). In wanting a society without social or religious discrimination, Gandhi accorded moral self-restraint a fundamental role, and in this failed to realize that "just as prisons create criminals, so restraint and repression can often breed monstrous passions" (96-7). Woodcock questions, but does not altogether discount, the feasibility of *Satyagraha* in modern urbanized societies and in a world that had witnessed nuclear warfare and the Holocaust.

After he achieved influence in Canada, Woodcock was still criticized on occasion for having been a pacifist during the war, a decision he would neither defend nor apologize for. Perhaps the closing lines of *Mohandas Gandhi* were written not only with the originator of *Satyagraha* in mind, but also for those who had questioned, as Orwell once did, the heart of the former *Satyagrahi* writing them:

> Where Gandhi was extravagantly wrong, it was usually from ignorance of the
> facts rather than from bad judgment. And the most important fact, of which he
> was almost willfully ignorant, was the extent and reality of evil. He could never
> admit that the end of sorrow was less than love. (117)

Woodcock offers a three-fold simplification of "Gandhi's achievement" in *Mohandas Gandhi*, and insofar as he himself very much believes this to be an achievement, Woodcock can still be regarded a *Satyagrahi* after the war: first, "the liberation of colonial peoples could be achieved quickly, and without the self-defeating use of violence"; second, that "nonviolent action … can also become the philosophic basis of a total reconstruction of society in such a way that excesses of power and violence are eliminated"; and finally, "that the individual, in cooperation with others and even on his own, can deploy a moral power that may result in changing the general mental climate and hence the political and social shape of the world" (110). Woodcock combined this appropriation of Satyagraha with the anarchist conception of French Surrealism advocated by Read, in developing Canadian writing as an anti-imperialist literature, postcolonial and post-national, regional and cosmopolitan, during the long

sixties.

The philosophical and aesthetic commitments Woodcock developed during the thirties and forties were, as Anand suggests, pitted against the imperialism, religiosity, and classicism of T.S. Eliot. Frye would say of Read, in an 1947 issue of *Canadian Forum*, that he "strives to be, in contrast to T.S. Eliot, anarchist in politics, Romantic in literature, and agnostic in religion" (Frye and Gorak 115). Frye draws the contrast too starkly, perhaps, but the gist of his comment is accurate. It should be noted that Read's declared "romanticism" in literature indicates his standing within the famous "Romanticism and Classicism" dichotomy introduced by T.E. Hulme in 1911 (Hulme favoured classicism). Read accepted romanticism as a political orientation, believing classicism throughout Western history produced slavery. So in Woodcock's study *William Godwin* (1946), for instance, we find Read writing in its foreword that Percy Bysshe Shelley essentially "transmuted" the philosophy of Godwin's *Political Justice* into poetry (Woodcock and Read, *William Godwin: a Biographical Study* vii). Read's understanding of the artist as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world," in Shelley's terms, is also in this romantic vein. But Read's anarchist assimilation of romanticism does not classify him a romantic idealist of the sort Frye himself came to be in the forties with the publication of *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), a brilliant attempt to forge Blake into the key monument of the Western canon. Eliot was of profound importance for Frye who experienced "outrage and betrayal" when he "first opened *After Strange Gods*," to discover his leader had been lost in reactionaryism to currents of the thirties (Frye, "English Canadian Literature" 330). This comment is made in the single piece Frye contributed to *Canadian Literature*, a memorial for E.J. Pratt. Pratt was a poet Frye admired as the greatest Canada had ever produced, while Woodcock considered Pratt "a highly imperfect and very conservative poet" (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 5).

Anand and Read together worked on Eliot's literary review *Criterion*, which ended its run in 1939. Published from 1922, eight years after Eliot's emmigration from America, *Criterion* was dedicated to establishing universal literary standards and unifying the diverse intellectual

community of Europe within the frame of Eliot's classicism. Eliot saw literature as a great "order of words," a single body, rather than "a collection of the writings of individuals," with works deriving their significance entirely in relation to the "existing monuments" of the Western tradition (*Selected Essays* 23-24). The function of criticism on this view is essentially a matter of determining the interconnections between works that taken together construct a great schematic system of literature. Eliot's conception came to inspire the "New Criticism" of the postwar period. The intimate connection Eliot sustains between Christianity and a structural and totalizing conception of the Western canon provided as well the key precedent for Northrop Frye's landmark *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). As Mark Vessey argues, the monuments of the Western canon are given their "common sense" within Frye's *Anatomy* by the Christian Bible, "the 'definitive myth,' 'central encyclopaedic form' or 'single archetypal structure' in relation to which other texts and stories in the culture have their meaning" (176).

Anand's understanding of Eliot, approached as "the key to the state of the art of Western poetry and culture," as Makarand Paranjape puts it, developed through their conversations (*Conversations in Bloomsbury* 17). The "melancholy" Eliot is found by Anand to be against instinct, anarchism, Buddhism, and Gandhi, sympathetic to imperialism, while philosophically, Anand assesses, "skeptical in the tradition of Hume, extended by Bertrand Russell, and the commonsense Realists" (qtd. in Paranjape 23). Read explicitly positioned his philosophy of the relationship between art and society against the logical positivism of Russell, which he considered an "arid logomachy without parallel in the history of thought" (Read, "Chains of Freedom 1" 10). The "poverty" of logical positivism, Read writes in *NOW*, lies fundamentally in its "denial of instinctive modes of thought, of super-rational intuitions, the aesthetic nature of perception—in a word, by [its] surrender of existential *freedom*" ("Chains of Freedom 1" 10). Eliot would argue free verse cannot exist *a priori*. As literature is created from literature, "*Vers libre* has not even the excuse of a polemic; it is a battle-cry of freedom, and there is no freedom in art" (Eliot, "Reflections on Vers Libre" 518). Read

clarifies that free verse, rather than anarchist polemic, challenges the humanistic concept of literature preserved by Eliot, for it introduces into poetry what abstract art had brought to painting:

> The revolt against the exclusively humanistic concept of art has been long in gestation, but it first comes into visible existence in the painting of Cézanne, and Cézanne's fundamental importance in the history of this revolution is due precisely to the fact that he was the first who dared assert that the purpose of art is not to express an ideal, whether religious or moral or humanistic, but simply to be humble before nature, and to render the forms which close observation could disentangle from vague visual impressions. (*The Redemption of the Robot* 150)

The free verse accompanying imagism challenged idealistic epistemologies and their spiritual conceptions of artistic creation by granting the physical world itself a *causal* role in human perception. This position denies skepticism but also denies empiricism, for the embodied and situated human being reconstructs her perceptions from her feelings with the resources available in her language. Woodcock's interests, however, were allied with the poetics of imagism, which discovers the world itself, not divine purpose. The generally acknowledged founder of the movement was T.E. Hulme. Woodcock describes the following remark of Hulme from 1906 as one of his "favourite quotations" (*Meeting* 7):

> Speaking of personal matters, the first time I ever felt the necessity or inevitableness of verse, was in the desire to reproduce the peculiar quality of feeling which is induced by the flat spaces and wide horizons of the virgin prairie in western Canada. (Hulme and Csengeri 53)

Woodcock believes Hulme captures here the fundamental "geographical factor of locality" in human experience and art (Woodcock, *Meeting* 8). For Woodcock, the regions of Canada in their very physicality require a poetry and literature specific to the way in which they impact human thought and feeling. This understanding is not romantic; the poet does not seek to impose spiritual qualities upon an undifferentiated nature. For Frye, the imagination was

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prevented from imposing itself on Canada because of the colonized poet's fear of nature; for Woodcock, perception had not yet seen the new land for what it was:

> The writing of the pioneer generation in all parts of Canada shows a similar tendency to escape from experience in a new and untamed country by rendering it in familiar and artificial forms rather than developing the kind of perception which see it as it is, and finally, the language which fits that perception. (*Meeting* 20)

Woodcock, however, deems that Hulme's imagism only aesthetically captures the spatial quality of human experience in the world and disregards the temporal aspect.

That a region of the Canadian landscape is discovered at the origins of the European movement of modernist poetry need not be surprising, in that Imagism arose from the felt inability of existing forms to reproduce modern human experience. Edward Said has suggested that what defines modernism is its attempt to take the "Other" seriously. In the work of modernist writers "alterity and difference are systematically associated with strangers, who, whether women, natives, or sexual eccentrics, erupt into vision, there to challenge and resist settled metropolitan histories, forms, modes of thought" (*Reflections on Exile* 313). Said contends that modernism adopted a stance of "contemplative irony" towards imperialism; it recommends, as in the case of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, neither decolonization nor continued colonization, producing only "paralyzed gestures of aestheticized powerlessness" (Said, *Reflections on Exile* 313). Hulme's experience of the "peculiar quality of feeling" of the Canadian prairie, which he brought back to Europe to transform its literature, was that of a traveller, not that of an inhabitant. It takes what is "Other" seriously, but does not participate in its world. Woodcock thus adds, in keeping with the Surrealism of his radio plays, a temporal factor to his theory of human experience and the literature that best represents it, with reference to a quote from *Heart of a Stranger* by his friend the novelist Margaret Laurence:

> This is where my world begins. A world which includes the ancestors—both my own and other people's ancestors who become mine. A world which formed me,

and continues to do so, even while I fought it in some of its aspects, and continue

to do so. A world which gave me my own lifework to do, because it was here that

I learned the sight of my own particular eyes. (qtd. in Woodcock, *Meeting* 8)

Woodcock grants history a fundamental role in human experience, not as lineal progression,

which he rejects (*Undermining History* 1), but history as *now*— "tradition" in McLuhan's

sense as arising with radio—impinging upon the present and requiring, through literature,

active negotiation. Woodcock accepts Laurence's notion of "other people's ancestors who

become mine" as a regional imperative to counter the detached viewpoint of modernism and

its powerlessness to confront imperialism. Said contends that "if there is anything that

radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism, it is the primacy of the

geographical in it" (*Culture and Imperialism* 77). On Woodcock's view, postcolonialism

requires further an active recovery of and engagement with local history to counter

institutionalized histories of external powers. In uniting a spatial modernism that had arisen

from an external European viewpoint on Western Canada, with living regional histories—"the

meeting of time and space"—Woodcock provides a particularly Western Canadian

postmodernism for Canadian literature, with striking similitude to McLuhan's notion of

"acoustic space." As Cavell has demonstrated, this critical formulation of "spacetime" by

McLuhan is fundamentally "a *hybrid* of oral and literate modalities" (*McLuhan in Space*

xiv).

Laurence's acceptance of "other people's ancestors" had a nationalistic counterpart during

the period in which she expresses the idea: Canadian novels of the seventies and eighties

reinstated an imperialist imagination that sought ownership of space as "land" through the

appropriation of its cultural histories. Margery Fee has shown that prominent novels

associated with the rise of Canadian nationalism from the sixties into the eighties, participate

in a Romantic strategy by which white English-Canadian authors dispossess the land, culture,

and history of Canada's First Peoples through ubiquitous mythological use of Native

characters:

It allows through the white character's association with the Native, for a white

"literary land claim," analogous to the historical territorial take-over, usually

implicit or explicit in the text. And it allows for a therapeutic mediation on the

evil of technology and the good of a life close to nature, the latter offering a

temporary inoculation against the former. (Fee 17)

What these novels reflect, Fee contends, is a "desire to naturalize our appropriation of their

land. It also explains the general lack of interest in Native culture of history: we want to *be*

them, not to understand them" (24). Fee's analysis finds the strategy of this nationalist literary

movement to emanate from the tradition of European Romanticism.

In his invocation of Laurence in *The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in

Canadian Literature* (1980), Woodcock can be understood as critically intervening within this

emerging trend in Canadian literature. He draws a distinction between nationalism and

patriotism, as Orwell did, referencing remarks of Roderick Haig-Brown to support his view

that while the nation-state is a destructive form of human organization in the post-national

age—needing external impositions by centralizers to publicly construct the artificial sense of

"imagined community" it depends upon—feelings of loyalty to the particular region one lives

within are to be accepted (Woodcock, *Meeting* 9). Woodcock is careful however not to

attribute these local feelings to a Romantic connection with "the Land."

Margaret Laurence's reference to "other people's ancestors who become mine" is

here most important, because by no means every one of these whose artistic or

literary expression becomes intensely regional in character can claim the region

as his "first home," where he "learned the sight of my particular eyes . . .

Strangers as well as natives can live in their minds the life of a region, so long as

they accept "other people's ancestors." (*Meeting* 8-9)

What it means for a writer to accept "other people's ancestors," in Woodcock's view, becomes

apparent in examining his own Canadian writings.

In its project to critique dominant Western culture, Surrealism developed a complex

37

alliance with the European ideas of primitivism, a commendatory perspective on non-Western art (Spiteri and LaCoss 122). The Surrealists shared in the romantic tendency to praise the "innate creativity" or "emotional nature" of First Nations peoples, while also coming to criticize, for example, the exploitation often involved in Western appropriations of black culture, and other instances of an acknowledged "romantic exoticism" within the surrealist movement itself (122-23). In 1946 Read would curate the primitivist exhibition "40,000 Years of Modern Art" at London's Institute of Contemporary Art. That same year Breton would declare that more than any other visual art, that of the "race rouge" offers modern society "un nouveau système de connaissances et de relations" (qtd. in Blachère 8). In an article by Breton entitled "The Colours of Liberty," published in a 1946 issue of *NOW*—also featuring automatic drawings by André Masson and the work of surrealist poets Philip Lamantia and Jackson MacLow, a pioneer of sound poetry and multimedia performance art—Breton announces that Surrealism carried the black flag of anarchism (A. Breton, "The Colours of Liberty" 33-34). The Surrealists were particularly captivated by the indigenous art of the Pacific northwest, and Woodcock would bring this decidedly European fascination with him to Canada.

The term "surrealist" was coined by the Italian-Russian writer Guillaume Apollinaire, who first wrote of totem poles in 1917 and 1918, seeking to account for their significance in relation to genealogy and biography (Tythacott 164-65). Woodcock, in an otherwise favourable review of the first book-length study of his UBC student George Bowering, *Bright Circles of Colour* (1992) by Eva-Marie Kröller, is surprised not to find a single mention of Apollinaire, whose work Woodcock believed was related closely to Bowering's poetics (Woodcock, "Poetry Column"). Bowering, an original member of the Vancouver *TISH* group, acknowledges the "romance" and "exaggerated mystery" with which the Surrealists conceived the Northwest Coast, in commenting on the lines of this chapter's epigraph (Bowering, *Left Hook: a Sideways Look at Canadian Writing* 101). The Surrealists became great collectors of Coastal objects, finding in them resonances of a lost magic they strove to reproduce in their

own art (Tythacott 165). Soon after settling on Vancouver Island in 1949, Woodcock would

report contact with members of a "primitive culture" in a letter to Read:

> They are the descendants of the Kwakiutl of whom Ruth Benedict writes. Now, I
>
> am afraid, they are a sad example of the effect of Western civilisation on primitive
>
> cultures . . . They still, however, maintain some vestiges of the old communal
>
> organisation, and I am trying to gather enough material to make a publishable
>
> study. (*Letters from Sooke* 28 June 1949)

Woodcock would later recognize that his initial perceptions, in fact the result of transatlantic

contact with the leading theoretician of European aesthetics, had been mistaken, and that the

societies of the Northwestern Peoples were neither primitive nor lost:

> almost certainly I was confusing them with the Cowichan, whom we had
>
> encountered. Even in talking of the Cowichan, I was making the kind of
>
> judgment by first impression which I later learnt to distrust; indeed, I saw
>
> everything I mention in that letter, but what I did not see—I later came to
>
> realize—was perhaps more important than the deceptive appearance of a people
>
> in disintegration. (Woodcock and Read, *Letters from Sooke* 16-17)

The dust jacket of Woodcock's first travel book, *Ravens and Prophets: An Account of

Journeys in British Columbia, Alberta and Southern Alaska* (1952), featuring a non-mimetic

and Westernized illustration of a totem pole, signals that the author's early meanderings in a

recently adopted region would be recounted with a surrealist gaze. Within the book, written

immediately following Woodcock's return from residence in France on a Guggenheim

Fellowship, coastal Indigenous culture provides only a foil against which Woodcock derides

the "semi-colonial" culture of western Canada. The coast had "a luxuriant culture" (*Ravens

and Prophets* 2), up until "the missionaries commenced their intensive attack on the native

social order" (*Ravens and Prophets* 137), and the Hudson's Bay Company was established as

"a great parasite over the country, draining and corrupting its original life" (*Ravens and

Prophets* 25). Missionaries as destroyers of Indigenous societies is a reoccurring element in

Woodcock's work, apparent already in the forties, although then operating out of a pure reversal of the imperialist mindset, grounded in the conception of the natural sociability of human beings he derives from Kropotkin.

> Probably no other class of European, even the slave trader, has done so much to destroy indigenous cultures or to break down the economic and social patterns of tribal life which were often based on a sense of co-operation and mutual aid superior to anything that occurs in modern Western civilisations. (Woodcock, *The Writer and Politics* 241)

The first Surrealists to visit British Columbia to study Northwest Coast culture were Wolfgang Paalen and Kurt Seligmann in the late thirties. It was during this period that Woodcock took to Surrealism, visiting Paris every year between 1935 and 1939 (*Letter to the Past* 198). What Marie Mauzé finds in studying the writings and photographs of Seligmann and Paalen, also elucidates the conflicted impetus of *Ravens and Prophets*: the Surrealists "failed to explore or acknowledge native resilience to colonial policy, but each in his own way contributed to make Northwest Coast art known to a most certainly small audience, genuinely inspired by its richness and greatness" (Mauzé 21).

Woodcock's "publishable study" of West Coast Indigenous cultures would appear in the late seventies. In *Peoples of the Coast* (1977), the term "primitive culture" is replaced in acknowledgment of the "complexity" of the first cultures in the region, shown through analyses of the "sophisticated techniques" used to produce the "formal qualities of high art" (*Peoples of the Coast* 12-15). The book, written in an accessible manner without footnotes, and including numerous photos by Ingeborg Woodcock, incorporates a focused critique of Canada's treatment of Indigenous Peoples and their societies. Noting that the societies of the region learned to keep their customs to themselves from experience with English-Canada, the Woodcocks left their camera and tape recorder at home as advised in attending a Salish spirit dance, the description of which forms the Epilogue to the book. The concluding impressions Woodcock shares, acknowledged as those made by outsiders, stress the independence and

strength of the Salish culture they had "witnessed":

> Somewhere past three in the morning the crowds on the bleachers began to thin as people set out on the way home to other villages, and we went out with them. We were elated by what we had seen, above all by what we had heard and felt in the vast vibrations of sound that surged above the great house. The Salish contend that attendance at the spirt dances can cure many sicknesses that are in some way or another psychosomatic. But it seemed to us not merely a matter of individual cure, but of the cure of a whole people from the alienation of those intermediate generations when they lived between two worlds, their native culture almost completely destroyed and the culture of the white man temperamentally alien to them. (Woodcock, *Peoples of the Coast* 214)

In adopting "other people's ancestors who become mine," Woodcock did not elaborate the deleterious effects such an attitude might have on the people whose ancestors are so adopted. It is apparent from *Peoples of the Coast* however, that Woodcock's understanding of Laurence's concept is not Romantic. In witnessing Salish culture he sought to develop "the kind of perception which sees it as it is, and finally, the language which fits that perception." It is an attitude by which something is learned, rather than one through which something is taken.

In his radio play *The Island of Demons*, produced for the Trans-Canada network's *Summer Stage* by Gerald Newman in 1962, Woodcock critiques colonialist Romantic appropriation of Indigenous culture. The play reimagines the ordeal of Marguerite de La Rocque who was banished to the eponymous island off the coast of Quebec in 1542. Woodcock's telling is loosely based on the tale recounted in *Heptaméron* by Queen Marguerite of Navarre, recorded following de La Rocque's rescue and return to France. The play opens in 1545, with Marguerite returning to France aboard the ship that spotted her on the island's shore. On a ship to Canada three years before, Marguerite's uncle, the explorer de Roberval, learned she had a lover—Michel, a member of the crew—and in punishment, left them both on the island

with Marguerite's handmaiden Marie. Michel had been given a stone bird he thought a talisman from an Indian chief Cartier had brought to France, and believed in its gifting ". . . there was a flash / That leapt across our strangeness, heart to heart." In English-Canadian Romantic nationalist novels of the period, a "totem transfer" is frequently used to validate "the white's land claim and blessing the relationship between old land and new landowner" (Fee 21). It was for their plans to live like the natives, to use the talisman as a passport into the world of "the foe," that de Roberval chooses banishment to the island as the lovers' punishment. The listener might have anticipated the drama to unfold as a romance, had it not begun with a traumatized Marie providing at the first scene's end the vague outlines of a nightmare:

> The hearts I buried, in coffins of bone and flesh,
>
> And the beasts calling like demons in the woods,
>
> And the demons calling like beasts in the air,
>
> And we hiding in the house of driftwood
>
> On the empty shore above high tide
>
> And one by one by one
>
> The tides and the nights . . .
>
> (Woodcock, *Two Plays* 11)

The beasts and demons of the island are the projections of Michel and Marguerite's imaginations. Marguerite's three demons, "Doubt, Discord, Regret—thought, action, consequence!", a "trinity of negation" as the first of them explains, were voiced, Woodcock's directions indicate, "in the style of modern public relations men" (*Two Plays* 34). In part, Woodcock is dramatizing an idea evident in Read that the modern individual cannot escape from herself and that isolation breeds psychological disease: "He carries his warped psychology about with him no less inevitably than his bodily disease. But the worst disease is the one he creates out of his own isolation: uncriticized phantasies, personal symbols, private fetishes" (Read, *Anarchy and Order* 61). Far from a pastoral integration with the land,

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Michel's fantasies about becoming chief over the Indians—who never do appear in the play—are transmuted into an obsession for hunting the island's animals in a fatal attempt to conquer it. Marie, a "Breton woman" (Woodcock, *Two Plays* 40), blames the bird of stone, a magical "graven image," for their predicament. Marguerite comes to realize Marie's surrealistic-like reverence for the intrinsic power of a primitive object wrongly attributes the source of its power. Marguerite faults not the magic of the stone itself, but rather the exotic beliefs she and Michael had imbued it with:

> I know no devils and I know know angels.
>
> It was a sign pointing to nothing. A stone
>
> With meaning only for the men who made it.
>
> Now, to please you, I'll throw it in the fire.
>
> (*Two Plays* 46)

With the image broken, Marguerite is left with "only grief and a faceless anguish," a point from which a new connection to her own world can be reattained. In "demythologizing" the Romantic transfer of land from First Peoples to colonial imperialists, Woodcock's voiceplay confronts the Romantic nationalist trend reemerging within Canadian literature during the period, revealing the mythologizing of First Nations as a strategy of domination, born of fantasies to conceal the despair of alienation. Woodcock ends the play with an alexandrine couplet, a weighty poetic meter found in both early modern French and twentieth-century surrealist poetry (Havard 93), to unite the perceptions of Marguerite with the listener, for whom the voices of the island are also silenced with the program's end and a return to reality:

> The ship sails in from the east like a great white bird
>
> And all the voices of the island are silent.
>
> (Woodcock, *Two Plays* 56)

The speeches of the Demon of Doubt throughout the play appropriate this rhythm and syllabically undermine it. A speech in which the Demon discloses she (or he) is liable to

doubt herself, for example, begins with the twelve syllables of the alexandrine, decaying by one syllable per line before temporarily reestablishing constancy again (*Two Plays* 44). Orwell charged that the simplified propaganda of "public relations" damaged language itself. Woodcock cannot be taken to advocate with the play's final purposive lines however, that in looking out for one's own society, a rejection of primitivism as a solution to its ills demands a concomitant restoration of traditional European forms, for the *The Island of Demons* itself plays with and undermines formal poetics for its aesthetic ends. In returning to France aboard the ship that rescued her, Marguerite no longer hates the colonialist Roberval, but he has become her "dearest enemy" (*Two Plays* 9). In *remediating* the alexandrine for radio, Woodcock advocates through his own practice creatively *treating* the Canadian landscape, diseased in isolation by Romantic colonialist thought, with the very resources of its own cultural heritage, which include English and French literatures, transforming rather than undermining them all in the artistic process.

Chapter 3

The Artist and Utopia

> Some of you think that you can do without Art, that it is an
> unnecessary frill, especially in a country preoccupied with the
> serious business of pioneering.

<div align="right">

"Vancouver in Relation to the Arts" (1956)
HERBERT READ

</div>

In 1941 Woodcock became affiliated with Freedom Press, an anarchist publisher set up in

1886 by writer Charlotte M. Wilson and the Russian prince Peter Kropotkin. It was founded

to produce the propaganda paper *Freedom* which was committed, as its masthead reads, to "a

society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation." Through Kropotkin's expeditions as a

geographer—his major contribution to science was a more accurate understanding of Asia's

physical structure—he came to argue that cooperation and "mutual aid," both in nonhuman

animals and throughout human history, are more important factors than competition in the

evolution and survival of species. In Victorian England Kropotkin's work counteracted

Darwinism, both scientifically and in respect to the sociopolitical theories it inspired.

Recounting the early history of Freedom Press, Woodcock describes the circle of intellectual

activists it gathered as "an almost classic example of the 'affinity group' that had been

developed among Latin-European anarchists as the idea framework for propaganda of both

the word and the deed: a group cemented by both personal friendship and shared sensibilities

and ideals" ("The State of Letters: Half a Life of Editing" 414). Benedict Anderson explains

the unique cosmopolitan milieu of the Freedom group in the late nineteenth century and its

global reach:

> Following the collapse of the First International, and Marx's death in 1883,
>
> anarchism, in its characteristically variegated forms, was the dominant element in
>
> the self-consciously internationalist radical Left. It was not merely that in
>
> Kropotkin (born twenty-two years after Marx) and Malatesta (born thirty-three
>
> years after Engels) anarchism produced a persuasive philosopher and a colorful,
>
> charismatic activist-leader from a younger generation, not matched by
>
> mainstream Marxism. Notwithstanding the towering edifice of Marx's thought,
>
> from which anarchism often borrowed, the movement did not disdain peasants
>
> and agricultural laborers in an age when serious industrial proletariats were
>
> mainly confined to Northern Europe. It was open to "bourgeois" writers and
>
> artists—in the name of individual freedom—in a way that, in those days,
>
> institutional Marxism was not. Just as hostile to imperialism, it had no theoretical
>
> prejudices against "small" and "ahistorical" nationalisms, including those in the
>
> colonial world. Anarchists were also quicker to capitalize on the vast
>
> transoceanic migrations of the era. Malatesta spent four years in Buenos
>
> Aires—something inconceivable for Marx or Engels, who never left Western
>
> Europe. Mayday celebrates the memory of immigrant anarchists—not
>
> Marxists—executed in the United states in 1886. (Anderson, *Under Three Flags*
>
> 2)

Woodcock maintained a lifelong engagement with the work of Kropotkin, retaining a

belief in mutual aid while critical of certain aspects of the Russian's anarchism. With UBC

professor of political science Ivan Avakumovic, Woodcock published the first comprehensive

biographical study of Kropotkin, *The Anarchist Prince*, in 1950 and his final major

undertaking before his death in 1994 was editing Kropotkin's eleven volume *Complete Works*.

Woodcock was introduced to the Freedom group circle by Marie Louise Berneri, whose father Camillo Berneri had been assassinated by the communists after fighting against the fascists during the factional Spanish Civil War. Herbert Read was loosely affiliated with the group, having a few pamphlets published by the press. As Read's theories and conversion to anarchism become better known, influential European anarchists of the old movement began to consider transformation of culture through art and literature as a legitimate revolutionary tactic. A close friend of Turgenev, Kropotkin himself had established a connection between literature and political resistance through his study of Russian literature of the nineteenth century. After Kropotkin's 1897 journey across a Western Canada that was not yet entirely of the confederation, he gave a series of lectures in the United States, including eight highly successful talks in Boston on Russian literature, published in 1905 as *Russian Literature: Ideals and Realities* (Kropotkin and Woodcock xxiii). Kropotkin claims in the book that as there was no open political life in Tsarist Russia, literature became the principle form through which authority was criticized. In introducing the lectures for their 1991 reissue, Woodcock criticizes Kropotkin for ignoring the formal aspects of writing to elucidate its politically oriented content, for only superficially discussing the religious philosophies of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and for neglecting to treat Leskov and younger authors that came to prominence by the turn of the century. But in the forties, Woodcock can be seen to elaborate Kropotkin's political literary criticism into a literary mandate for the writer.

Woodcock began publishing his journal *NOW* in 1940 after being granted conscientious objector status, and the magazine's first editorial would declare its pacifist orientation. Initially, the journal was an open forum for controversial writing that could not otherwise find publication during the war. A significant proportion of the journal was devoted to poetry, providing a forum for many of the poets associated with the defunct *Twentieth Century Verse* edited by Julian Symons. *Twentieth Century Verse* emerged in the late thirties to represent poets diverging from the Auden generation by way of Surrealism and other new movements (Jackaman 100-17; Woodcock, *Letter to the Past* 82-3). Symons, looking back on his

Twentieth Century Verse thirty years later, would find some "genuine poems" amongst its pages, specifically citing lines from Woodcock's "Snow" ("A Glimpse of Thirties' Sunlight" 433):

> All day from the east slanted snow
>
> Covering pavement toys and the metal men
>
> Who speak for England the lead laws of ago.
>
> ("Snow" 155)

It is the formal composition and contemporary social critique which marks it as of the thirties. The poem parts ways with Auden in conceiving nature as involved in the social sphere. Perception changes with the coming of "white's illusion": London is shamed and the speaker voices its judgment. Symons was among *NOW*'s key supporters, but would complain the magazine lacked editorial focus. After his intellectual relationships with Read and Berneri developed, Woodcock would address Symons' complaint. In *NOW*'s "Second Series," commencing in 1943, "the magazine abandoned its position as an independent forum [to] become the cultural review of the British anarchist movement" and published by Freedom Press ("Pacifism" 417). Woodcock's alliance with Freedom Press would soon result in the publication of *Anarchy or Chaos* (1944), Woodcock's first history of anarchism and a book he would later disavow.[1] Read would sing its praises: "You have succeeded in giving a clear and straightforward explanation of anarchism without indulging in any of the rhetoric and invective which spoils so many past attempts. I can't imagine a better introduction to the subject" (Read, "Letter to GW 21 October 1944").

After the first issue of *NOW*'s new series began circulating, the anarcho-syndicalist backers of Freedom complained about the series' literary and artistic focus. Read's ideas concerning the relationship between art and the development of a non-authoritarian society had had little influence among the workers. Editors of Freedom's *War Commentary* were

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[1]The book was largely responsible for Woodcock's expulsion from the United States in 1955. For an account of Woodcock's failed immigration for a position at the University of Washington see Fetherling.

sympathetic to Read, including Berneri's husband Vernon Richards,[2] but while the Press would continue distributing *NOW*, Woodcock, the coterie of writers it attracted, newsstand sales, and its subscribers, would finance it. The range of *NOW*, to take a somewhat random sampling, included the political writings of Read, experimental compositions by Henry Miller, poetry by Denise Levertov, analyses of jazz and African-American folk music, explication of Wilhelm Reich's psychological theories by Berneri, writings by anarchist psychologists Alex Comfort and Paul Goodman, correspondence from the exiled revolutionary Marxist Victor Serge, and internationally submitted reports giving overviews of various cultural scenes from countries as disparate as France and Japan.

After Freedom Press was raided late in 1944 for publishing content "to undermine the affections of members of His Majesty's Forces," the Freedom Defense Committee was founded to provide legal support, with Read as its chairman and Woodcock its secretary (Honeywell 141). It would "defend those who are persecuted for exercising their rights to freedom of speech, writing and action," up until the year the Woodcocks left for Canada, when it was disbanded. Ingeborg Woodcock, who was *NOW*'s business manager by that time, managed most of the organization's correspondence and finances. Prominent members of a diversified intellectual Left were brought together in the Committee, including E.M. Forster, Orwell, and Bertrand Russell. With its previous editors imprisoned, Woodcock, whose name had not been on the paper's masthead, and Berneri, who was released by the police (to her indignation) because she was a woman, took on the task of editing *War Commentary*. They would change the paper's name to its original *Freedom* following the end of the war. With Woodcock as an editor, the paper experienced a marked increase in book reviews and discussions of world literature. As well, perspectives and biographies of prominent members from the history of anarchism were paid greater attention. Following the example of Kropotkin, Woodcock sought to discern resistance to political authority operating throughout

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[2]Richards had published with Camillo Berneri the paper *Italia Libera* and distributed propaganda with his father Emidio Recchioni, who fled to England after being implicated in a plot to assassinate fascist leader Benito Mussolini.

the history of Western literature, not only within the romantic anarchist poets Read invoked. Writing in *Freedom* on the occasion of Cervantes' four hundredth birthday, Woodcock locates in the content of Europe's first novel the tradition of Spanish peasantry striving for communal self-governance, creating in the character of Sancho a voice for the common people of his age (Woodcock, "Literary Notes: Cervantes and the Spanish People" 6). In his study of Aphra Behn *The Incomparable Aphra* (1948),[3] Woodcock perceives her novel *Oroonoko* (1688) as challenging Western conceptions of indigenous peoples and provides further support for the assertion of Virginia Woolf that Behn was a pioneer in the fight for women's emancipation (*Aphra Behn* 9).

In 1945 Woodcock wrote an essay for *NOW*, "The Writer and Politics," contending that the truly individual writer, one not compromised by the pressures of a political party or the mandate of a formal literary doctrine, is "a revolutionary force." Woodcock explicitly differentiates the writer from the propagandist at a time when he felt the anarchist movement had come to entail a tacit pressure towards doctrinal conformity and the simplification of its intellectual content (*Writers and Politics* 7). The writer, argues Woodcock, critiques society in showing truth, "even a limited aspect of the truth," which serves "to elevate a criterion against which falsehood must be judged and condemned" (*Writers and Politics* 17-18). Woodcock and Orwell saw a great deal of one another in the mid-forties, and in 1948 Orwell would publish an essay written along similar lines, "Writers and Leviathan," promoting the independent writer as "the most unwelcome guerrilla on the flank of a regular army" ("Writers and Leviathon" 413). Woodcock would refer to such a writer as a "franc-tireur," a "free shooter," allied with the regular formation of an army but moving independently (*The Writer and Politics* 7). Orwell had been a maverick writer of this sort in thirties, never falling into the main lines of the literary avant-garde. His own thought underwent changes during the forties, evident in his positive reassessment of Gandhi in *Reflections on Gandhi* (1949), suggesting the flexibility and shifting positions of the franc-tireur writer.

[3]A later edition would be retitled *Aphra Behn: The English Sappho*.

Woodcock's reimagining of Gandhi's *Satyagraha* as aesthetic nonviolent political resistance differs from Read's in important respects. The franc-tireur and Read's modern artist, simply "humble before nature," hold different conceptions of truth. For Read, the artist is truthful in showing beauty in form: "the purpose of art is . . . simply to be humble before nature, and to render the forms which close observation could disentangle from vague visual impressions." In rendering these observations, the artists reveals "the general law in nature" which "is equity":

> the principle of balance and symmetry which guides the growth of forms along
>
> lines of the greatest structural efficiency. It is the law which gives the leaf as well
>
> as the tree, the human body and the universe itself, a harmonious and functional
>
> shape, which is at the same time objective beauty. (Read, *Anarchy and Order* 41)

Truth for Woodcock however is not fundamentally an aesthetic concept but a social one. Justice is not derived from nature through art but founded within existing social structures. Woodcock carries into the forties the sociopolitical orientation of the thirties movement, grounded in social justice rather than Read's Platonic aesthetics. Like Read, Woodcock rejects a "morality of obedience" for a Kropotkinian "morality of reciprocity," but in effecting it, the localized writer draws upon society, tradition, rather than "space" alone. Modern art, on Read's view, was to serve the public yet is intelligible only to an elite: "Is there any evidence that art in its highest manifestations can appeal to more than a relatively restricted minority?" (*Poetry and Anarchism* 16). Among Read's key influences was the anarchist Max Stirner, an obscure philosopher greatly admired by Nietzsche as evident in his concept of the the will to power (Woodcock, *Anarchism* 95). In *Anarchism* Woodcock characterizes Stirner as the movements's "egoist," and as we have seen in his radio plays, consistently problematizes absolute authority of the individual will due to its involvements with a socially constructed subconscious. Read understands the artist as seeking to communicate with a social sphere incapable of understanding her message. For Orwell, "purity of form" meant prose as "a windowpane," used not to reveal something hidden and timeless through form, but

to show human injustice. This philosophical difference may appear subtle, a matter of emphasis, but it is important for how Woodcock's work would develop in Canada. In Orwell's famous essay *How the Poor Die* (1946), first published in *NOW*, form strives in its clarity to match perception to show injustice. Orwell's concern for preserving the integrity of language lies in maintaining the public accessibility of moral truth. Woodcock himself does draw certain connections between Read and Orwell; that Orwell wrote to Read alone about setting up an underground press in 1939 in the case of wartime censorship, for instance.[4] In *The Stream and the Source*, Woodcock records Read's personal and intellectual affinity towards Orwell:

> "His personality, which remains so vivid after all these years, often rises like some ghost to admonish me," Read wrote to me in 1966 after I had published my book on Orwell, *The Crystal Spirit*. "I suppose I have felt nearer to him than to any other English writer of our time, and though there were some aspects of his character that irritated me—his proletarian pose in dress, etc., his insensitivity to his physical environment, his comparatively narrow range of interests—yet who was, in general, nearer in ideal and even in eccentricities?" (*Stream* 239)

In harmonizing his two most significant influences by emphasizing their connections, Woodcock lends support to viewing his own body of work, which integrates the thinking of Read and Orwell, as coherent.

Despite the organic connection Read insists on between the modern artist and society the artist herself, as Williams observes, is endowed with a special sensibility. Read thus draws a sharp distinction between art and "entertainment":

> The reality is a powerful and ruthless entertainment industry that knows only too well how to exploit the alienation and boredom of the masses. The cinema, broadcasting, pop singers and jazz—these are the more obvious forms of

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[4]After the Freedom Press raid, Read hid a cache of anarchist pamphlets for safe keeping at Orwell's home (*Stream* 262-63).

amusement and distraction. To question the cultural value of such entertainment

is to invite charges of puritanism, snobbery, or intolerance, all of which are far

from my state of mind. All that is necessary is to make a distinction between art

and entertainment and then in all our cultural activities to maintain that

distinction. (Read, *Art and Society* vii)

Woodcock has a much more fluid understanding of art, as did Orwell, its mobility

undermining the class division Read proposes:

Art can begin in an aristocratic setting and become popular, as Mozart's operas

have done. Art can begin among the people and permeate the whole of society as

jazz did. Art can begin on a popular level and remain there, as the whole

nineteenth-century Italian opera tradition from Rossini to Puccini did. And the

artists, particularly performing artists, can, if they are good enough, move with

integrity from point to point within this great continuum, refuting the artificial

distinction between the elitist and the popular as Benny Goodman so splendidly

did when he moved with his clarinet from the mastery of jazz to the mastery of

Mozart. (Woodcock, *Strange Bedfellows* 16)

The best artists can move with integrity throughout the social continuum, on Woodcock's

view, while Read can be seen to place the artist in a special "guardian class" within her

society.

This difference between Read and Woodcock is apparent in their respective

understandings of the relationship between form and content in modern painting. In a

keynote address to the 2010 gathering of the Modernist Studies Association at the University

of Victoria, Patricia Leighten presented material from her forthcoming book *The Liberation of

Painting: Modernism and Anarchism in Avant-Guerre Paris* (2013), arguing for an overlooked

intimacy between aesthetic modernism and pacifist anarchism. Woodcock praised Leighten's

earlier work *Re-ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism* (1989) for demonstrating that

the content of modernism was significant to its political imperatives, rectifying, in his terms,

"the myth that Pablo Picasso and his coterie really believed that significance lies only in form" (n. pag."Review: Re-Ordering"). In framing Leighton's analysis, Woodcock insists the body of Picasso's work not only defies "conventional modes of painting; the content is equally contemptuous of the politics of the age and its social emanations—as well as less esoteric than Picasso pretended and critics have assumed" (Woodcock, "Review: Re-Ordering"). For Read, all of art's significance lies in it form. The poet is to use free verse, allowing perception to dictate the poem, replacing the authoritarian structures in the social psychology with the equitable ones of the natural world. Woodcock contends that "Read's obstinate and almost exclusivist advocacy of free verse was due to a deficiency in his own experience as a poet" (*Stream* 150). The nature of this deficiency, unspecified by Woodcock, might be understood as the pursuit of absolute individual form to capture the specificity of a perception (likely shared by many others), even when preexisting forms might be more effectively employed by the technically adept to address the social injustice compelling the artist to create. Art for Woodcock is fundamentally human communication, which involves adjusting the form of a message for its effective reception, as Dorothy Livesay sought to do in composing poetry for radio. It is a "social activity," within the context of the artist's time, place, and circumstances, "however isolated the processes of creation may be" (*Strange Bedfellows* 18). The fundamental problem facing the transformation of society, believed Read, is that while the modernist art movement revealed the inherent beauty in nature, the general public had not developed the sensibility to be affected by it. Read did not fault modern art for failing to broadly communicate, but rather, faulted public education. Woodcock would not hesitate in attacking philistinism where he found it; Read would engage in efforts to produce aesthetic sensibility within the masses through the implementation of public policy.

In the sixties Woodcock became the foremost authority in English on the history of anarchism. *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, published in 1962, was the first comprehensive history of the tradition in English, treating the entire range of its many theoretical variations and practical instantiations. Commercially, *Anarchism* was

Woodcock's most successful work by far, distributing ideas that would become points of references for counter-culture in the sixties, a period of renaissance for anarchism. Its Epilogue deems the anarchist movement—which had emerged with Mikhail Bakunin's expulsion by Marx from the *First International* and which lasted, by Woodcock's analysis, until the fall of the Spanish Republic in 1939—a failure. The insurrectionary tactics it employed contributed to its demise, but the fundamental failure lay in anarchism's "vague and vapid vision of an idyllic society" and its "infinite and consistent contempt" for practical reforms and realistic social improvements (*Anarchism* 471-473). While "criticism of the present" had been anarchism's greatest strength, the movement pursued utopian "urges toward the past and the future" (*Anarchism* 469). The anarchist movement can thus be remembered for having stood opposed to "the totalitarian goal of a uniform world," but such lost causes, "should be allowed to die peacefully so that room can be made for the new movements that will take their place and perhaps learn from both their virtues and their weaknesses" (*Anarchism* 468, 474-5).

Woodcock follows Berneri in rejecting utopias as inevitably seeking exclusive worlds that benefit the few. Morris' *News from Nowhere* is construed by Berneri as an alternative to utopias themselves, for in acknowledging the personal and embedded nature of the world a particular agent prefers to imagine, it can be pursued and shared, without imposing violence on the realities and imaginings of others. Berneri's conception can thus be seen to parallel the notion of "imagined worlds" advocated by Appadurai, for whom the multiple dimensions of global cultural flows provide building blocks for individual actors to challenge the instituted imagined communities they are immersed within:

> These landscapes thus are the building blocks of what (extending Benedict
> Anderson) I would like to call *imagined worlds*, that is, the multiple worlds that
> are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups
> spread around the globe … many persons live in such imagined worlds (and not
> just in imagined communities) and thus are able to contest and even subvert the

imagined worlds of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that

surround them. (Appadurai 33)

Read's belief that sweeping reforms on a global level must occur if the truth of art would ever

be socially realized, came to involve him in national and international policy making. If

Woodcock and Berneri would share in Read's vision of a modern world in which art plays an

integral function, they would not follow him in how he sought to implement it. In his critique

of Canadian state involvement in the arts, Woodcock writes:

> [I accept the argument] put forward by William Morris and developed by Herbert
>
> Read in his crucial work *Education through Art*, that art must enter deeply into
>
> education and daily existence if humanity is ever to live in harmonious
>
> self-fulfillment. But that process can only be a permeative one, moving outward
>
> from the community of the arts; it cannot be achieved by policies devised by
>
> bureaucrats and dictated by politicians. (*Strange Bedfellows* 115)

In the perspective of Berneri and Woodcock, to impose on the world a vision of the truth,

irrespective of the theory underlying it, entails imperialism.

Both Orwell and Woodcock would particularly target the later fiction and political

manifestos of H.G. Wells as utopian ("Wells, Hitler and the World State";"A Study in

Decline" 50). Wells had elaborated a justification for collectivism and global governance in

his tract *The New World Order* (1940) following his BBC talks on the subject broadcast

during the thirties. Wells aligns his position with that of Leonard Woolf's *International

Government*, a treatise proposing "Cosmopolitan Law-Making" by an "International

Authority" (118). Philip Coupland has recently assessed Wells's "Cosmopolis" as "liberal

fascism," in its belief that "elitist, authoritarian, and violent means would yield liberal ends"

(547). Wells contends that only global law enforced by an international vanguard can defeat

human nature, extrapolating a Darwinian and Victorian imperialist understanding of persons

onto humanity at large. International law alone can "defeat human nature in defence of the

general happiness. Law is essentially an adjustment of that craving to glory over other living

things, to the needs of social life, and it is more necessary in a collectivist society than in any other" (Wells 109).

In addition to countering what they perceived as the imperialist cosmopolitanism of Britain's socialist left, Orwell and Woodcock were forewarners of global capitalism in its social implications as the world approached the stasis of "cold war":

> We may be heading not for general breakdown but for an epoch as horribly stable as the slave empires of antiquity. James Burnham's theory has been much discussed, but few people have yet considered its ideological implications—that is, the kind of world-view, the kind of beliefs, and the social structure that would probably prevail in a state which was at once unconquerable and in a permanent state of "cold war" with its neighbors. (Orwell, "You and the Atomic Bomb")

Burnham was an American Trotskyist who gravitated towards the political Right and produced *The Managerial Revolution: What is Happening in the World* (1941), which argued historic capitalism was undergoing supersession through the ascendancy of managerial elites, prioritizing control of the means of production as opposed to ownership. Burnham located economic parallels between Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and America under the "New Dealism" of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Burnham thought this future exciting. Orwell, Woodcock argues, used Burnham's analysis in developing the dystopian *1984* (*Crystal Spirit* 208-9, 219-220).

Woodcock, like other intellectuals of the sixties' Left, came to localize their critique in McLuhan's involvements with leaders in politics, industry, and advertising. These engagements can be understood from within McLuhan's Canadian context as a critique not only of state-involvement in the arts, which McLuhan argued produced culture that did not and need not engage the public, but also as a judgement on fellow Canadian literary critics who actively participated in nationalizing culture in a post-national age. Writing in 1971, Woodcock believed that *The Mechanical Bride* (1951) had "spotted some genuine trends in our society," and considered it McLuhan's "most true and useful book, since here he is merely

revealing, with some acuteness, the way in which advertising both reflects and moulds the attitudes of our world" (Woodcock, *The World of Canadian Writing* 238). Nor does Woodcock criticize *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962). Woodcock believed, however, that in *Understanding Media* (1964) McLuhan had rewritten the ideas of his earlier books, not to appeal to intellectuals or a general public, but in "such a way that the leaders of industrial and advertising corporations adopted him briefly as an instant guru" (*The World of Canadian Writing* 237-38) For this Woodcock charges McLuhan with *la trahison des clercs*:

> That monstrous half-truth, implying that content is irrelevant, seemed for a time
>
> to be accepted as a white flag of surrender offered on behalf of the whole
>
> intellectual community. (*The World of Canadian Writing* 238)

In the concept of the "global village," Woodcock credits McLuhan with becoming "the leading Utopian fantasist since Huxley and Orwell," but considers McLuhan to have embraced and promoted what Forster and Huxley perceived as a nightmare (*The World of Canadian Writing* 240). The later Frye points out that McLuhan's work in fact reveals a deep concern over the sociopolitical effects of electronic media. Only by understanding media, its profound adjustments to human relations and engagement with the world, can "media fallout" be defended against. According to Frye, what underlies McLuhan work is also "a horrifying vision of a global village, at once completely centralized and completely decentralized, with all its senses assailed at once, in a state of terror and anxiety at once stagnant and chaotic, equally a tyranny and an anarchy" (Frye, O'Grady, and Staines, *Northrop Frye on Canada* 560). As Cavell explains, with reference to Frye's evaluation of McLuhan, the "retribalization" produced by electronic media does not signal "a return to a pre-literate utopia; on the contrary, the entry into the electronic era had initiated a process fraught with terrors, as well as benefits" (*McLuhan in Space* 208).[5]

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[5]Today radio continues to be the world's most prevalent mass medium, and the efforts of Unesco programs to localize radio content and foster greater community involvement in broadcasting would be welcomed by McLuhan. Woodcock gave his own talks over radio in India and Pakistan with local writers in the countries' own stations.

McLuhan's *The Mechanical Bride*, in its analysis of popular culture as art, was a pivotal text for The Independent Group (Robbins 59), which met between 1952 and 1955 at London's Institute of Contemporary Art to explore artists' engagements with mass media. When Eduardo Paolozzi projected popular American magazines through an epidiascope in 1951, making mass media the message, the modern art movement rejected the romantic separation of the artist from the world Read had insisted upon. The IG was the essential and immediate precursor in the emergence of pop art (Cavell, *McLuhan in Space* 187), which in attacking abstract expressionism for its elitism, announced to Read that the modern movement had become a product of the society he believed it was to change. Woodcock compares Read's "sorrow" in the demise of the modern art movement with that of Gandhi when he realized "in the bloodsoaked villages of Bengal and Bihar during the months before Indian independence, that the people whom he had led successfully in the great non-violent action against the British had turned their violence upon each other" (*Stream* 287). In the fifties, Read would rest his utopian hopes entirely on his most influential book, *Education through Art* (1943), which arose out of studies of children's art. Read came to believe that a new model of education was necessary if art was ever to be appreciated within modern societies to the point where it could transform them. Read considered *Education through Art* his most significant contribution to anarchist theory, although its many proponents in pedagogy were largely unaware of this political impetus. Woodcock observes that Read's theory of education was also inflected by the libertarian thinking of Gandhi, based on a "conception of revolution by change of heart" (Woodcock, *Stream* 281). Creating all humans to have the sensibility of artists became the "Other Way," that of an aesthetic, rather than moral discipline.

As Brandon Taylor has shown, Read's book provided direction for the *Arts Inquiry of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts*, established by the British government in 1940 to promote and maintain the nation's culture. The Council's conclusions, published as a Political and Economic Planning pamphlet entitled *The Visual Arts* (1946)—"an eloquent, even utopian tract," Taylor notes—would propose:

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a nationwide programme of "educating up" the population from the nursery

onwards with the help of Herbert Read's *Education Through Art* ... Art

education, Read had said in his book would produce "better people and better

communities"; and the PEP Committee were pleased to repeat him. "Too often

the natural impulse towards self-expression is repressed." (Taylor 175)

The major result of *The Visual Arts*'s unreserved support for modern art, was the founding of

a new funding body, announced in 1945 as the Arts Council of Great Britain. Read would be

appointed to the Council's Advisory Committee on Fine Art which, that same year, would

organize a major Picasso and Matisse exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, to the

indignation of a large contingent of British traditionalists. Read would have an ally in the

Canadian diplomat Vincent Massey, trustee of both the National and Tate Galleries between

1941 and 1945. Massey led a special House of Commons committee which recommended, in

its controversial *Report on the Functions of the National Gallery and Tate Gallery* (1946),

referred to in the British press as the "Massey Report," that the Tate be divided into two

separate collections with their own trustees, a National Gallery of British Art, and a National

Gallery of Modern Art. Taylor situates Massey alongside Read, Maynard Keynes, and others

as part of a new powerful generation of mandarins "highly articulate on behalf of international

rather than merely British art" (168-9). Presumably for Massey, supporting the modern

international art movement could only appreciate the value of Canadian art as a form of

diplomatic currency with Britain and other Western states. It was the social revolution Read

insisted the movement aspired to which had Woodcock exhibiting modern art on the pages of

NOW during this time, including work of Maxwell Armfield, Valentine Penrose, Henri

Rousseau, Stanley Jackson, George Rouault, Jankel Adler, André Masson, and Pablo

Picasso.

    Massey had earlier brought to London the largest and most representative exhibition of

Canadian art ever assembled, which included Indigenous art of the Pacific West Coast, to the

Tate Gallery in 1938. Reviewing Massey's *A Century of Canadian Art* in *Canadian Forum*,

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Frye would highlight and defend the Group of Seven Painters it featured:

> It is easy to say that Canadian art lacks subtlety. It would be equally easy to answer that what modern art needs is not subtlety so much as the rediscovery of the obvious. Nor does that altogether dodge the issue. The Group of Seven put on canvas the clear outlines of the Canadian landscape in the hard Canadian light, and provided a formula for a bright posterish painting, often with abstract tendencies. That much of this painting would be facile and insensitive is of course true; but there is a corresponding virtue, the virtue of good humour. (Frye, O'Grady, and Staines, *Northrop Frye on Canada* 8-9)

A romantic shift is perceptible in the terms Frye uses to discuss the acclaimed Group of Seven once the war had begun. As Canadian culture centralized and came increasingly under governmental influence, Frye's assessment of Thomson aims to produce national identity by imbuing his paintings with an unrequited desire for unity with the land. What is "essential" in the work of Tom Thomson, whose *Jack Pine* and *Spring Ice* were featured in *A Century of Canadian Art* at the Tate, is "the imaginative instability, the emotional unrest and dissatisfaction one feels about a country which has not been lived in: the tension between the mind and a surrounding not integrated with it. This is the key to both his colour and his design" ("Canadian and Colonial Painting" 15).

After his return to Canada, Massey would lead Canada's own arts inquiry, the *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*. The Royal Commission was an initiative of Brooke Claxton, the Minister of National Defence, who finally succeeded in having it established under the new Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent in 1948 (Massolin 318). Massey explains the Commission's original mandate as follows: "The Government wished, so I was told, to have a survey made of institutions, agencies, and organizations 'which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life'" (Massey 450). Its purpose became to produce an internationally identifiable national "high" culture to protect against hegemonic

American cultural and political expansionism within the emerging Cold War geopolitical climate (Cavell, *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War* 3-27). The Report would become "a defining document in Canadian cultural life" (Cavell and Szeman 149).

The Massey Report, participating in the British genre of the artistic utopia, was written with a literary élan that surprised many early Canadian readers. Assessing the current state of culture in Canada, the Commission went well beyond its original mandate, calling for comprehensive and sweeping changes to the state's involvements in culture. Its most significant recommendation was the establishment of a "Canada Council" modelled on the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Canada Council would serve:

> *for the Encouragement of the Arts, Letters, Humanities and Social Sciences to*
> *stimulate and to help voluntary organizations within these fields, to foster*
> *Canada's cultural relations abroad, to perform the functions of a national*
> *commission for UNESCO, and to devise and administer a system of*
> *scholarships...* (*Massey Report* 377)

The policies of Unesco informed the Report's terms of reference and the submissions made to the Commission during its inquiry (Druick). The first Director-General of Unesco, evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley, had served with Read on the editorial board of the short-lived *Realist* (1929-30), a "Journal of Scientific Humanism," and both were members of the organizing committee that brought the so-called *"Degenerate" German Art* exhibition to London in 1938 to promote its artists.[6] Woodcock published an article written by Huxley—the biologist still under the discernible influence of Read in matters of culture—soon after Huxley's nephew Anthony joined *NOW*'s editorial board with Alex Comfort, Anne Richmond and Anne Romanis at Cambridge where Woodcock had resumed the magazine's first series while digging ditches in the service of the War Agricultural Committee (Woodcock, *Letter to the Past* 231-34). In *Unesco: its Purpose and its Philosophy* (1946), the arts are

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[6]Curated by the German authorities as propaganda against modern art, the "exhibition was in fact substantially responsible for stimulating paradigms of Modernism that helped defend and explicate its various forms" (Romans 192).

defined by Huxley as "agencies both of individual and social expression," while culture is "cultivation of the mind" that can be gauged at "a high or a low level" within a particular community (Huxley 26). In the postwar context, societies lacking in culture are detrimental at a global level. Huxley writes out of the Darwinian perspective of his grandfather Thomas Henry Huxley, whose ideas Kropotkin set out to challenge. Communities that maintain "cultural backwardness, like scientific or educational backwardness," Huxley contends, "are a drag on the rest of the world and an obstacle to the progress that we desire" (26).

Following his contribution to the ideals of the British Council, Read would be consulted in the development of Unesco policies aimed at cultivating worldwide understanding through art and education. From 1946 until his death in 1968, Read was president of the Unesco organization Society for Education in Art (SEA), through which *Education through Art* became the manual for thousands of teachers worldwide. Read publicly criticized Unesco's cultural policies, insisting that science and education are themselves aspects of a culture and that in separating them out, Unesco reveals a bias towards the "spirit of intellectualism and scientific humanism" (Read and Unesco). Rather than advancing global peace through the "circulation of masterpieces," the organization should provide "encouragement of creative effort on the amateur levels." Kropotkin, friend of William Morris, had first championed art at the amateur levels, conceiving persons as having not only the material needs by which Marx defined humanity, but also artistic ones (Woodcock, *Anarchism* 205). As Woodcock explains, just as a person's work should be organized by co-operative associations, "leisure will be enriched by a vast proliferation of mutual-interest societies, like the present learned societies, but reaching out into a great population of fervent amateurs (*Anarchism* 205). The Massey Report and the Canada Council would appropriate this duel inheritance, both a romantic conception of a socially progressive high culture and support for the amateur artist working from the grass roots of society.

In outlining the direction for a Canadian high culture, the Massey Commission is resigned to Canadian radio remaining "entertainment." It desires playwrights to ultimately shift their

energies to the stage while emphasizing that radio must also serve to foster the national imagined community in the face of Canada's ethnic differences, regionalism, and American cultural imperialism:

> In Canada radio has a particularly important task. It must offer information, education and entertainment to a diverse and scattered population. It must also develop a sense of national unity between our two main races, and among our various ethnic groups, in spite of a strongly developed regional sense and of the attractions of our engaging and influential southern neighbour.

In literature, the Massey Report takes as its ideal the Group of Seven painters, who had left the city: "Their great contribution was that they had seen and shown a pattern in Canadian landscape" (*Massey Report* 206). The "young abstract painters" in Canada are related to the Group of Seven, but "coming back to society" to "express a new Canadian spirit" (*Massey Report* 206). In inquiring into literature, the Massey Commission finds that "among the various means of artistic expression in Canada, literature has taken a second place, and indeed has fallen far behind painting" (*Massey Report* 222). To produce a "national literature," that might approach the achievements of the Group of Seven, the Report advocates a turn away from the cosmopolitan in search of a spiritual connection with Canadian society:

> Immunity from alien influences would not, of course, be sufficient in itself to create a national literature; but it would at least make possible a climate in which the Canadian writer would find himself more at home, where he would be better understood, and where he would find the opportunity for more frequent spiritual contacts with a society which would be more fully Canadian. (*Massey Report* 226)

In Canada, Read's ideas, passing transoceanically through the Arts Council and Unesco, became transmuted within a proposal to grow culture from the grass roots of society identified with the nation. Woodcock assesses Read's involvement with Unesco and the promotion of his theories on art and education into public policy as producing the opposite effect than what

they had intended: "His ideas have suffered the ironic fate of being used in Mithridatic doses to prolong rather than bring an end to the old system . . ." (Woodcock, *Stream* 281).

Read, now knighted, visited Woodcock in Vancouver in 1956, lecturing on children's art at UBC where Woodcock had joined the Department of English that same year. He also addressed the city's politicians and prominent business people at The Vancouver Rotary Club in a talk entitled, "Vancouver in relation to the Arts."[7] Read begins his address by quoting his friend, the author and broadcaster J.B. Priestley, who described Canada as "a frustrated nation," in a recent BBC Radio talk. Canada, Priestley argued, was in urgent need of writers and artists to express the feelings of being Canadian, concluding that were he himself Canadian, "I should ask for a hundred million dollars for the Arts." Priestly visited Vancouver on more than one occasion in the fifties, and made a CBC television appearance with Woodcock in 1956, talking knowledgeably about *William Godwin* (1946), Woodcock's biography of the anarchist (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 65-66). That year Priestley also wrote a play for three Indigenous Canadian actors he met in Toronto, dealing with the subject of English-Canadian prejudice.[8]

Read could also draw upon Woodcock's observations of Vancouver given in *Ravens and Prophets*, which was published in Britain. The travels recounted in the book took place in 1950, but Woodcock will have written most of it from notes in Paris and San Francisco during his Guggenheim Fellowship. In its acute observations of a wandering traveller detached within his own world, the book participates in the literary tradition of the *flâneur*, established with Walter Benjamin's cultural observations on Paris comprising *The Arcades Project*. The book also anticipates the notion of psychogeography that emerged in the writings of Guy Debord, a member of the Lettriste Internationale and a regular contributor to their journal

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[7]Subsequent quotations are from a transcription of the talk: Herbert Read. "Vancouver in Relation to the Arts". *Sir Herbert Edward Read Fonds*. Box 11.74, Lot 62.29. University of Victoria Special Collections, 21 Octorber 1944. TS.

[8]*The Glass Cage* premiered in Toronto's Crest Theatre in 1957.

Potlatch (1954-1957).[9] Psychogeography, which motivated the politicized aesthetics of the

Lettristes, is concerned with determining the effects of the geographic environment on human

emotion and behaviour (Gregory 597). Far from Apollinaire's glittering diamond, Vancouver

is found by Woodcock "too regular to allow any immediate charm, and its central area is a

jarring combination of dull masonry and concrete" (*Ravens and Prophets* 15). The city is

"drab, clanging and much too crowded, metropolitan in its disadvantages, yet provincial in its

amenities" (*Ravens and Prophets* 15). Culturally, Vancouver lacks basic essentials, such as a

"permanent professional theatre [and a] hall which is acoustically fit for a good symphony

orchestra" (*Ravens and Prophets* 15). The literary scene was also found to be a

disappointment. A poetry reading, as Woodcock would later elaborate, showcased "contorted

prose and sheer bad poetry read by perfectly sincere people under the influence of passing

literary fashions" (*Beyond the Blue Mountains* 17-18). And yet, the city at its grass roots stirs,

Woodcock writes, "with all kinds of small intellectual impulses and artistic currents . . . in

these ways Vancouver also represents all the genuine creative urges which are trying to break

through the materialism and semi-colonial smugness of general Canadian life" (Woodcock,

Ravens and Prophets 15). In the preface to *Canada and the Canadians* (1970), Woodcock

would comment on the reaction his early impressions produced:

> [in 1967] the *Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* could still
>
> record: 'The book aroused resentment among some British Columbians who felt
>
> that several of the author's observations were patronizing.' My observations were
>
> not patronizing, but they were critical, and I have lived here long enough to see
>
> the causes of most of them disappearing as Canada has moved socially and
>
> culturally . . . (*Canada and the Canadians* 16)

In his talk on "Vancouver in Relation to the Arts," Read would attempt to use his influence

to improve the status of the arts in Vancouver and Canada. He would deny that "the main

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[9]Presumably potlatch was taken up by the French post-surrealists through George Bataille, who had reflected on the gift-giving ceremony of the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest, banned by the Canadian government between 1884 and 1951, in developing his economic theory of the *The Accursed Share* (1949). See Winnubst.

purpose of Art is nationalistic," or that "the problem is one which money alone can solve," but would advocate "a body in Canada comparable to our Arts Council in Great Britain," so as to produce "a democratic culture to correspond to our democratic way of life." Vancouver also needs educators in the arts, to unite within its citizens, "the governing mind and the imaginative mind . . . the productive mind and the creative mind." If a hundred buildings "noble in scale and contemporary in design" are built within the city centre, Read suggests, "the Art will follow. The seed will germinate in this rich soil and a new Venice will rise on the Pacific shore." But the city must also acquire art from outside the nation and outside the present, not merely "for your own enjoyment—young artists need these testing stones from the past, not to imitate, but to measure up to. Art is not generated in a vacuum, it is a slow process of organic growth and you may have to import some necessary fertilizers." Read thus shifts the focus back to the importance of art to society, rather than to the nation, in advocating a Canada Council. In the summer of 1956, politician Jack Pickersgill and UBC Economics Department Head John Deutsch proposed the idea of using the death duties of Sir James Dunn and Isaak Walton Killam, two of Canada's wealthiest persons, to establish a Canada Council with a hundred million dollar endowment (*Strange Bedfellows* 55). The Canada Council for the Arts would be established in March 1957. Brooke Claxton would be installed as the Council's first Chairman. He would state, echoing the language of Read, that "Culture is a bad word . . . I have made speech after speech about the Canada Council without using it once" (qtd. in Granatstein 445). The Canada Council's broad support for conferences, individual writers, journals, and presses financed the "colossal verbal explosion," as Frye described it, of Canadian writing during the sixties ("Conclusion" 318).

Woodcock's radio verse play *The Benefactor*, produced by Newman in 1962, marks the conscious beginning of Woodcock's philosophical break from Read. It was a time when *Canadian Literature*, which Read declined to write for, had become established to a point that its continuation was assured. *Anarchism* came out that same year with Penguin. Read's hope to have Routledge publish the book changed after he had read the manuscript, although

competition with Penguin, the book's American publisher, was provided to Woodcock in support. The particular anarchists Read felt the greatest intellectual affinities with, "the egoist" Max Stirner, "destructive" Bakunin and "the prophet" Tolstoy, as the book's chapter titles describe them, are the recipients of Woodcock's sharpest criticisms. The enthusiasm Read felt for the content of *Anarchy or Chaos* is notably absent for *Anarchism* in manuscript form. Read is able to affirm the structure and the presentation, which is "excellently conceived and, as I would expect, admirably clear and concise" ("Letter to GW 5 June 1961"). In regards to its Epilogue, which announces the death of an anarchist movement still active in London and with which Read maintained associations, he writes more circumspectly, "In general I cannot but admire and share your objective conclusions, although I imagine that they will give offence to some of our old comrades" (Read, "Letter 26 June 1961"). With the exception of fellow historian Colin Ward, Woodcock fell out with the remaining *Freedom* editors after the publication of *Anarchism*, and his intellectual relationship with Read dissipated as Woodcock devoted increasing attention to Canadian culture and to research in Asia.

The title, *The Benefactor*, hints that the tradition of utopian literature is involved. In Yevgeny Zamyatin's dystopian novel *We*—the single most important influence on Orwell's *1984* according to Woodcock—"the Benefactor" rules over a garrison society, walled from the outside world of nature for fear human contact with the spontaneous patterns of life will undermine his political control. Like other utopias, Woodcock's play satirizes the present, and Read's vision of an artistic utopia actively taking root in Canada, is not spared. In synopsis, a rich citizen dies leaving two conflicting wills composed the same day: in one, the inheritance goes to his dilettante son Falbridge who will found a theatre; in the other, the money is assigned to the town hospital. The topic was timely, as the Canada Council had begun distributing its grants, and many Canadians questioned the worthiness of the recipients. In Woodcock's play, the benefactor Simon Mercator is the president of a monopolizing corporation who sees his business progressing towards a collectivist utopia:

> By dint of healthy competition
>
> our rivals wait for demolition
>
> and up and down this lucky land
>
> our branches thrive on every hand.
>
> In seven years, or five, or three,
>
> we'll reach our goal—monopoly. (*Applause*)
>
> In all our actions we combine
>
> the profitable and sublime.
>
> Our brands are better, cheaper, brighter,
>
> (Woodcock, *The Benefactor* 99)

This speech of Mercator to his shareholders opens the play, continuing in this rhythm of the advertising jingle for some forties lines until, with the listeners sufficiently prepped, a request is made for nine percent of the ninety-nine percent annual profit to be put aside for charity, earning him the moniker "the benefactor." Mercator brings the matter of the disputed will to court on behalf of the hospital and orchestrates a character assassination of Falbridge to win the case. Woodcock creates in Irving Falbridge an artist the public might have reservations granting a fortune to:

> SECRETARY
>
> Make money, you mean?
>
> FALBRIDGE
>
> Make money!
>
> SECRETARY
>
> In this place that's the realest thing!
>
> FALBRIDGE
>
> I'd lose it, but I'd make it sing.
>
> I'd build a playhouse, first-rate actors,
>
> best musicians, top-shelf writers,

Camus, Beckett, Ionesco,

and, of course, myself.

…

Here we go then. I look at you,

and a verse comes twanging out of the blue.

> Beauty is deeper
>
> than the sleeper
>
> deep in his night
>
> can ever dream,
>
> deeper than light
>
> can deepest gleam.
>
> How do you like it?

(*The Benefactor* 21-22)

For the listener, Woodcock's verse has become the contrasting reality by which Falbridge's efforts is sounded as doggerel. The play suggests that Falbridge, the artistic revolutionary, and the Benefactor, the capitalist social collectivist, are in fact united in a single dialectic. Falbridge kills Mercator at the play's end, and in this action, the two are judged as siblings, a utopian Janus of good and beauty.

BEATRICE

You saw the world in the same black and white,

but when he called on good you called on beauty.

(*The Benefactor* 66)

The egoism of Stirner, the absolute truth of Read's artist who lives beyond social morality, are given their Raskolnikovian implications by Woodcock, and Falbridge provides an inevitably moral justification for his actions:

FALBRIDGE

To live this nature is every man's courage.

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To make oneself whole by the inner change,

or to strike the stem of the outer evil!

There's the dilemma! No logic presents

the ultimate answer; it lies in ourselves.

I acted in violence. You made yourself whole.

Each in his way struck down the evil.

(*The Benefactor* 65)

Woodcock rejects Falbridge's and Read's beauty and would seek to direct the writers of Canada's sixties towards a literature with different ends. Woodcock had mixed feelings about national cultural policy and patronage, as both an anarchist and a writer who believed the arts in society are "professions equally important to medicine and somewhat more important than law and politics" (*Strange Bedfellows* 195). He attributes his reading of the Massey Report in the fall of 1951 as "a decisive reason" for why he would remain in Canada, to "see what would develop" ("Massey's Harvest"). Many of his own projects, including the printed edition of *The Benefactor* were supported by the Canada Council. Woodcock stridently criticized patterns of direct state involvement in Canadian culture following the sixties, once "the first sweet spring of the Canada Council" had passed. But in evaluating the history of Canadian cultural policy from the vantage of the mid-eighties, a time when B.W. Powe could state he knew of "no novelist, poet or essayist, no university or writer's program, who has not had support from the omnipresent Council or its provincial counterparts" (65), Woodcock would affirm the Massey Commission's accomplishment:

I have often heard it said that Vincent Massey was an elitist, and that the report

was an elitist document. And so, if you think in such barren terms, it probably

was. But in the cultural desert of Canada at that time a group of men and women

was needed who could act the elitist role and decide what seemed good for the

arts and suggest that what was good for the arts was good for the country. One

has, even, to admire the grudging courage that St. Laurent showed as a politician

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in first setting up a commission to enquire into what must then have seemed very
much a minority area of interest and, having set it up, to implement so many of its
recommendations. (*Strange Bedfellows* 51)

In his political activism of the forties, and as a wayward second-generation modernist of
the thirties, Woodcock's anarchism was grounded in social justice, not Platonic beauty,
despite his particular appropriation of Read's philosophy. Woodcock maintained a belief that
art might help birth a new society, but with Orwell, Woodcock's aesthetic *Satyagraha* was of
that of the *franc-tireur*, a writer whose truth was fundamentally social and moral. Woodcock
followed Orwell and Berneri in conceiving political utopias as authoritative visions, and was
dubious of Read's work in bringing about the British artistic utopia through his involvements
in national and international policy making. And yet, when the Canadian arts became
endowed with a hundred million dollars by way of politics, Woodcock would be at the
forefront of the literary culture it financed. One of Woodcock's final interviews was with the
psychologist Tony Gibson, a member of the Freedom group during the forties offended by
Woodcock's later writings on anarchism. Woodcock recounts to Gibson that while he ceased
calling himself an anarchist in the fifties, in writing *Anarchism* he had not rejected its concepts
as points of reference in the critique of the present:

Read and I were not rejecting anarchism. We were discussing it closely, seeing it
as a touchstone, regarding it as a goal just over the horizon that would not be
attainable in our lifetimes. (Gibson and Woodcock section 4)

Woodcock proceeds to describe how his thinking underwent changes in Canada, how his
attempt to approach indigenous culture in non-romantic terms brought about a conception of
anarchism as already present within societies, there to be reactivated and nurtured:

Later, and before the 1986 edition, I did a lot of research into aboriginal politics,
with their consensually democratic structures, and went back to [Kropotkin's]
Mutual Aid at rather the same time as Colin [Ward] and Paul Goodman, to
discover the anarchy around us without which our societies, authoritarian though

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they may be, would not exist. (section 4)

Woodcock recounts in the preface to *The Benefactor*, published by Oolichan Books, that the character of Mercator took shape after a Vancouver businessman, "well-known for the kind of ostentatious generosity which is accompanied by buildings and foundations bearing the donor's name down to posterity," refused in "insulting terms" to donate to the Woodcocks' charitable work in India (*The Benefactor* 5). In writing the play, Woodcock came to realize, that in "laying bare the motives of the ostentatious benefactor, I could not help laying bare also the motives of the unostentatious benefactor," so that the character of Mercator, "is as much me as he is the Vancouver tycoon whom I have still not forgiven" (Preface*The Benefactor* 5). The tycoon was Walter C. Koerner, so it was only after the death of both benefactors that amends were made, with the plywood cabinet of the George Woodcock display now appropriately residing in the lower levels of the Koerner Library, while the face of Woodcock, a writer so close in thought to "the explorer" Kropotkin, is notably absent among the thirty-six portraits which today adorn the Freedom Press building in Angel Alley.

Chapter 4

Landscapes of Sound

> Radio owns my room as the day ends.
> The slow return begins, the voice calls
> the yeses and the noes that ring or toll;
> the districts all proclaim themselves in turn
> and public is my room, not personal.

from "Election Day" (1945) P.K. PAGE

In England, Woodcock had been an essayist and poet. In Canada, he would quickly become a radio broadcaster and dramatist. Woodcock's early initiation into Canadian culture was largely through his involvement with radio, and the medium must be restored to cultural discourse to understand Woodcock's place in the development of Canada's literary history. A tradition of socially-oriented and experimental radio drama can be seen as part of the local Vancouver cultural milieu that affected developments in Western Canadian poetry and conceptions of culture and literature. Woodcock perennially called for increased scholarly attention to radio as a cultural medium. Today, radio drama in Canada remains undervalued by critics and historians, often disregarded as a temporary stand-in for the stage which emerged in Canada well after the radio play had developed into an independent artistic form. This condescending attitude towards radio drama dismisses the earliest transnational culture in Canada. The Centre for Broadcasting Studies at Concordia, however, houses more than

20,000 original Canadian radio scripts, representing only a portion of the plays broadcast over the years. Many of the talks given on radio in Canada have not been preserved, forever remaining a cultural record "writ in air." Woodcock's work in broadcasting can be understood as at once a continuation of British modernism and a radical Western Canadian departure from it. Against the background of radio's development as a popular artistic and political mass medium—in Vancouver, Canada, and internationally—this chapter approaches the first of Woodcock's original radio drama scripts produced by CBC Vancouver for the transnational network, *Maskerman* (1960), as effecting the regional cosmopolitical.

Appadurai has suggested that radio is a medium that would "start out extremely global and end up as very local" (106). This is true in India, for example, where the BBC Empire short-wave service (1932) preceded the Indian Broadcasting Company (1936), with a multitude of local stations broadcasting in regional vernaculars to come later. As McLuhan can be taken to suggest, radio affects different cultures differently (*Understanding Media* 297 ff.), but the effects themselves are decentralizing: "while radio contracts the world to village dimensions, it hasn't the effect of homogenizing the village quarters. Quite the contrary. … Radio is not only a mighty awakener of archaic memories, forces, and animosities, but a decentralizing, pluralistic force, as is really the case with all electric power and media" (*Understanding Media* 306). Radio broadcasting in Canada took root as a local phenomenon, becoming national and international over time. It was only after the medium had already achieved a national presence that the federal government sought its centralization. Vincent Massey, in 1927, was the first prominent Canadian official to call for "careful consideration … at an early date" of "the question of radio broadcasting in Canada in its national aspects," comments he made incidentally in a report sent to Prime Minister Mackenzie King (qtd. in Vipond 162). As the first Canadian ambassador to Washington, Massey had become involved in unsuccessful negotiations on behalf of Canada for an increased number of exclusive radio frequencies, an issue exacerbated by American networks pirating the limited wavelengths previously designated to Canada on an informal basis (162). The early period of Canadian

radio has "almost been forgotten," writes Mary Vipond in her groundbreaking study *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932* (1992). Canadians took keen interest in wireless technology very early in its development, and among the world's first radio broadcasts of voice and music were those transmitted by Canadian Reginald Fessenden, an inventor devoted to "commercial point-to-point communication," whose innovations in wireless technology, "stimulated development of the first practical broadcasting technology" (Schiffer 149-150). Hobbyists and experimenters in Canada were the first to explore popular applications of the medium and were crucial to its public uptake. There were nearly six hundred licensed "hams" by the end of 1920; one of them, Graham Spry of the Winnipeg Radio Club (founded in 1919) would come to significantly shape the history of Canadian broadcasting in his role with the Canadian Radio League (Vipond 13). Following technical advancements—and once a business model was located in advertising—radio broadcasting exploded onto the Canadian cultural scene as a popular medium in 1921. By the end of 1922 there were already fifty-eight broadcasting stations licensed in Canada, a number of these operated by Toronto newspapers (19). Radio was greeted by élite commentators with unbridled enthusiasm, evidence that modern science had marched onward towards a more perfect world, despite the setback of the war (22). On Vipond's analysis, journalists saw in radio the potential to affect divisions between city dwellers and rural immigrants, to democratize culture, to unify eastern and western Canada, and as a means to preserve conservative family values and gender roles in the home (23).

While rejecting any simplistic understanding of "media imperialism," Simon J. Potter suggests that historians "have paid insufficient attention to the role of British models, British identities, and direct British intervention in the birth of Canadian broadcasting" ("Britishness" 78). Potter observes that earlier historians adopted a strictly nationalist perspective on public broadcasting in Canada, portraying its development as a "straightforward clash" between impinging American broadcasting, enjoyed by the Canadian public, and an English-Canadian nationalism fearing cultural annexation (Potter, "Britishness" 79). Potter's analysis shows the

transnational and triangular relationship with America and Britain was, in fact, carefully negotiated by the Canadian agents responsible for establishing public broadcasting. It was the lobbying efforts of the Canadian Radio League (CRL), and the public debate its activities generated, which set a new direction for radio in Canada. The CRL was founded in 1930 by Graham Spry and Alan Plaunt, Canadian nationalists with connections in Britain through studies at Oxford. Massey was among the CRL's key advisors and backers. Its purpose was to implement the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting (the Aird Commission) for the creation of a Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC). Through its highly successful lobbying efforts, the League was able to mobilize a vast body of public support for the establishment of a government-controlled Canadian broadcasting system (Finlay 161). The motives of the Aird Commission were also nationalist ones. It saw in the medium the potential to further a common national spirit and understanding of citizenship (Aird 6).

Critics of the Aird Commission considered the UK model unsuited to Canada's dispersed population and regional makeup (Potter, *Broadcasting Empire* 50). John Murray Gibbon would argue in the *Canadian Forum* that in looking to the BBC, the Aird Commission and the CRBC had turned to a culturally destructive and imperialist apparatus for their common ideal (Gibbon 212-14). It needs to be recalled that prior to the CRBC and the CBC, Canada had a national broadcaster for a period of nine years in the Canadian National Railways Radio Department (CNR Radio), the first national network in North America (Vipond xiii). Its decentralized network provided news, music, entertainment, hockey games, and radio drama—produced from CNR stations in Ottawa, Moncton, and Vancouver—coast-to-coast (Potter, *Broadcasting Empire* 49-50). The zenith of the CNR's artistic program was its massively successful *Romance of Canada* series, directed by Tyron Guthrie in 1931, and Rupert Caplan and Moonie in 1932. A collection of twenty-four plays written by Merrill Denison on Canadian historical events, *Romance of Canada* was performed in the CNRM Montreal station. During the twenties, the country's electric theatre emanated from a city at

its other margin, Vancouver. The professional CNRV Players, under the direction of Jack Gilmore, performed ninety-five radio plays for national broadcast between 1927 and 1931, both adaptations and original scripts written by local authors (Vipond 96).

The first nationwide and international broadcast of the CNR was its coverage in 1927 of the three-day celebration in Ottawa of the 60th anniversary of Confederation. The event was a landmark for both Canadian unity and radio. New carrier-current technology was installed to improve the quality and capacity of the CNR network. The broadcast went out through 23 stations in Canada—the signal could be picked up as far away as South America—and to Europe by way of short wave transmission to Britain (Hanratty). The interest in Canadian broadcasting maintained by the BBC and its director John Reith lay in the prospect of reasserting the empire within Canada (Potter, *Broadcasting Empire* 51,84; Vipond 265-6). After the CRBC was formed in 1932, it took over the stations of the CNR. The CRBC would become the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936 after its reorganization as a Crown corporation, making it independent of direct political influence. In programming, Canada would adopt Reith's emphasis on broadcasting "as an instrument of education" (Potter, "Britishness" 84). It was in assuming this British understanding, as opposed to allowing radio to continue its course in Canada, which would lead to McLuhan's complaint in 1952 that "a great proportion of our radio programs are inspired by conceptions of cultural uplift, or the highbrow's burden" (McLuhan, "Defrosting Canadian Culture" 91). In *Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC, 1922-1938* (2006), Todd Avery argues that influential modernist authors engaged in broadcasting after hearing "in the vibrations of radio waves the sonic architecture of twentieth-century ethical thought" (31). In taking to the radio, these writers hoped "to rewrite the public or mass psychography and align it with their deeply held aesthetic and ethical beliefs" (31). Some, like Virginia and Leonard Woolf, conceived their broadcasts as counteracting the agenda of Reith who sought to unify the nation through elevating traditional conservative cultural values. For T.S. Eliot, who had a thirty-five year relationship with the company beginning in 1929, and who gave eighty-three broadcasts in

total (Coyle 32), the moral agenda of his Christian idealism dovetailed neatly with the aims of the BBC (31). The radio talks of modernist writers on culture, economics, and politics developed into an interest in adapting poetic and dramatic work for the medium.

Read had sought to innovate radio drama in English by translating with Margaret Ludwig *Radio: An Art of Sound* (1936) by Rudolf Arnheim, which argues artists had not taken advantage of the acoustic and technological possibilities of the new medium (Kahn and Whitehead 2). Futurists F.T. Marinetti and Pino Masnata had demanded in their manifesto *La Radia* (1933) that the art of radio must altogether abandon the conventions of stage—including notions of an observing audience, unity of action, and dramatic character—for qualities absolutely specific to radio, such as simultaneous actions, structural and spatial uses of silence, the creation of atmosphere through resonances and noises, acoustic depth and distance, and "Words in freedom" (267-68). The "Auden group" of poets would involve themselves in post-print media by the late thirties, with Louis MacNeice writing a number of plays for radio during his BBC career. Insofar as MacNeice's radio plays of the forties and fifties depart from thirties poetics, it is in relying on "invention," resulting in "dramatised fairy-tales" as Auden described them (MacNeice 8). A true experimenter in radio drama was Woodcock's friend of the forties, the poet Dylan Thomas. A shared pleasure in sound once had Thomas and Woodcock, following a night at the pub, nabbed by police for going arm-in-arm through the streets of Soho barking like dogs (Woodcock, *Letter to the Past* 215). In defending Thomas' "play for voices" *Under Milk Wood* (1954) from dismissal by literary critics, Woodcock would acknowledge that "nothing much has happened in the ordinary theatrical sense," during the play, but radio drama must be understood by different criteria than stage performance: "We have lived for a while in an autonomous poetic continuum, and it is we rather than the people in the play who emerge with our minds somewhat changed" ("Voices Set Free" 160). While television in the fifties and sixties would return drama to the visual stage, sound plays developed the acoustic aspects of the form. Writing in the mid-eighties, when radio drama experienced a transient resurgence in Canada,

Woodcock would credit technological developments in acoustics, already explored by Glenn Gould in his final documentary of the *Solitude Trilogy*, "The Quiet in the Land" (1977), for furthering the immersive quality of the art, placing the listener within "a landscape of sound":

> dimensional sound technique through stereoscopic transmission mean that the voices no longer project forward from a speaker as they would from the pictorial space of a stage; they are all around us, impinging on other levels of listening consciousness as well as the thinking mind. One is, as it were, among speakers in a landscape of sound. ("Voices Set Free" 160)

Woodcock had ceased writing dramatic scripts by the eighties, although he had not stopped broadcasting, receiving an award from The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists for a five-hour documentary on Orwell in 1984.

During the war, broadcasting was increasingly considered compromised by those on the literary Left, with writers such as Orwell, who worked full-time for the BBC's Eastern Service from 1941 to 1943, facing harsh criticism for their involvement. In 1942 Orwell's propagandizing on behalf of the war carried into the pages of the *Partisan Review* in an attack on British pacifist periodicals, Woodcock's magazine *NOW* (1940-1947) among them. Woodcock would respond in kind, contending that Orwell's broadcasts for the BBC compromised his integrity as a socialist and intellectual:

> Comrade Orwell, the former police official of British Imperialism (from which the Fascists learnt all they know) in those regions of the Far East where the sun at last sets for ever on the bedraggled Union Jack! Comrade Orwell, former fellow traveller of the pacifists and regular contributor to the pacifist *Adelphi*—which he now attacks! Comrade Orwell, former extreme Left-Winger, I.L.P. partisan and defender of anarchists (see *Homage to Catalonia*)! And now Comrade Orwell who returns to his old imperialist allegiances and works at the B.B.C., conducting British propaganda to fox the Indian masses! It would seem that Orwell himself

shows to a surprising degree the overlapping of left-wing, pacifist and reactionary

tendencies of which he accuses others! ("Pacifism" 417)

Harold Bloom notes that after the two writers formed their friendship, "Orwell admitted to

[Woodcock] that he was being used by the governing classes [at the BBC], but that the defeat

of nazism had to take priority over the socialist revolution" (Bloom 59). In 1946 Orwell

would publish in *NOW* and contribute financial support to the magazine. During the war

Orwell publicly defended himself adamantly against Woodcock's criticisms. "Does Mr.

Woodcock really know what kind of stuff I put out in the Indian broadcasts? he does

not—though I would be quite glad to tell him about it" ("Pacifism" 421). An invitation to

participate in a panel on modern English poetry for an Eastern Service broadcast came in

September 1942 through their common friend, acclaimed novelist Mulk Raj Anand. A BBC

photograph of the broadcast has a smiling Woodcock alongside Anand while Herbert Read

sits at the microphone, reading from a script. On the photo's opposite side, waiting their turns

to speak, are Orwell, poet-critic William Empson, and poet-critic Edmund Blunden. The

photo, while unmentioned, is glossed in Woodcock's memoirs. Orwell deviated from the

script, suggesting they read Byron's "Isle of Greece," a poem exhorting revolution during the

Ottoman Empire, to show "that English poets had a tradition of friendship for the aspirations

of subject peoples . . . and as Herbert Read spoke the ringing verses of revolt, the programme

assumed a mild flavour of defiance which we all enjoyed." Woodcock's visit to the BBC did

not dissuade him from understanding Orwell's employ as "mainly in the dissemination of

official propaganda" (Woodcock, *Letter to the Past* 252-3).

Orwell had hired Anand to develop programming for the Eastern Service after they

became while fighting together in the Spanish Civil War. Anand had been reluctant to take up

a position at the BBC, however, and initially refused. Orwell writes of this in his diary:

"[Anand] is genuinely anti-Fascist, and has done violence to his feelings, and probably to his

reputation, by backing Britain up because he recognizes that Britain is objectively on the

anti-Fascist side" (Orwell, *Diaries* 3 April 1942). But as an Indian nationalist and

conscientious objector, Anand's motives for joining the BBC extended beyond support of the war effort. In introducing *Diasporas and Diplomacy: Cosmopolitan Contact Zones at the BBC World Service*, editors Marie Gillespie and Alban Webb comment on the unprecedented "political, intellectual and literary" environment the "cosmopolitan contact zone" of international radio offered for postcolonial political activists such as Anand, who were willing to negotiate the "soft power" tactics of a World Service built upon the asymmetrical power relations of colonialism and globalization (Gillespie and Webb 7-9). Not all of those within Woodcock's transnational anarchist coterie embraced mass media as an intellectual environment and cosmopolitan contact zone. Cultural critic Dwight Macdonald considered the mass media ideologically corrupted and anathema to the Left, believing that the language and symbols of "masscult" were irrevocably infected by capitalism (Macdonald 128). Woodcock, however, followed the lead of Anand in using radio for intellectual engagement with the public. Radio had a decentralized, local presence in Canada, and Woodcock embraced the medium as a way to distribute his writing in a country that was still fundamentally oral, lacking publishing houses and periodicals. The fifties were "Canada's Cold War," a period in which statist wheels were set in motion to produce as a form of political defence, a centralized national culture and literature (Cavell, *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War* 6). During this time, Woodcock would strategically drop his self-designation as an anarchist to begin broadcasting. Woodcock was under surveillance by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during his career, and his activities were monitored from his arrival to the country in 1949 (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 5). From a station in Vancouver, Woodcock's talks and dramas sought to instil anarchist ideas and a moral approach to literature, challenging the "imagined community" of the nation-state and the colonial Canadian psychogeography.

If Woodcock's books were better known outside the country during his early decades in Canada, his work found mass distribution within the country only by way of radio. In 1949, soon after his arrival in Canada, Woodcock began writing and broadcasting scripts for the

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CBC. His initial assignments included talks on British novelists, reviews for *Critically Speaking*, and a series on classic Russian novelists (*Beyond the Blue Mountains* 15). He came to compose radio talks—hundreds in total over the years—in conjunction with the many books and articles he wrote mostly for American and British publishers. He cultivated a refined voice for radio, with crystal clear pronunciation and musical tonality. In a period of Canadian nationalism and conservative morality, Woodcock brought world literature and social critique to the Canadian public. The topics are in keeping with the concerns of his printed work: talks on Tibet, India, several series on women writers, Canadian minorities, avant-garde poetry, anarchist writers, political history, a series on utopias, little-known Canadian writers. Woodcock would attribute the public anxiety over national identity, essential to the production of nationalism in Canada, as originating with the Aird Commission:

> The Aird Commission took the view that broadcasting should become a public
> service aimed at encouraging the sense of a separate Canadian identity:
> "Canadian listeners want Canadian broadcasting," it asserted with somewhat
> excessive confidence. A public broadcasting service should be created with the
> aim of bringing together Canadians from all regions and local cultures. The great
> anxiety over national unity was already upon us. (*Strange Bedfellows* 36)

Woodcock's radio talks, like his efforts on behalf of Canadian literature, seek to dispel that anxiety. The voice of Woodcock's *Canadian Literature* editorials, a refinement of the insurrectionary tenor of *NOW*'s young editor, developed through addressing the Canadian public over the air.

McLuhan suggests that orality and literacy are not to be understood as binary opposites, but as in dynamic interrelation with one another (Cavell, *McLuhan in Space* 133). The increasing transformation of culture into "acoustic space" by radio and other electronic media "speeding-up" communication results not in the exchange of a verbal/visual realm for an oral/aural one, but a newfound dynamic interplay between the written word and sound that is

attended to (not always consciously) by artistic and literary movements of the post-Gutenberg world. Woodcock's oeuvre reflects this process of "remediation," as Jay Bolter and Richard Gruisin have more recently elaborated it, as his writing in radio came to alter his literary work. As Woodcock describes it, he would "open up and colloqualize" his prose because of radio (*Beyond the Blue Mountains* 17). This remediation is apparent in comparing the writing of his early books to those written late in his career. The scholarly apparatus, focused viewpoint, and argumentation of *The Greeks in India* (1966), is absent in the erudite but personal *The Monk and his Message* (1992), the latter addressed explicitly to a Canadian public and employing the radical juxtaposition of temporal periods and geographical regions to undermine the lineal understandings of history preserving hegemonies. Woodcock published books almost exclusively with Canadian publishers in the latter decades of his career. For many readers, Woodcock was a longtime presence on radio and the style of prose could allow them to "hear" him speaking. Such writing would distance Woodcock from many of his strictly academic colleagues. The style and structure of Woodcock's biographies also reveal this "acoustic turn." The grand narrative of *Letter to the Past* (1982) renders stylistically the literary world of England in which the book is set. *Beyond the Blue Mountains* (1987), covering the years after the Woodcocks' arrival in Canada, lacks both the index and narrative cohesion of the first autobiography. Lists of persons and memory fragments from countless locations incite feelings and reflections for the reader, without an overarching connecting structure.[1] Most striking are the changes in Woodcock's poetry, as evident in the collection *Notes on Visitations: Poems 1936-1975*. Traditional metrics and imagist technique from London's thirties are absent in Woodcock's Canadian poetry, composed in free form with vernacular language. Woodcock notes that his later verse employs traditional forms only to effect parody or pastiche (77).

The talks Woodcock broadcast in Canada were made possible by CBC programming

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[1]Sadly, Woodcock's final autobiography *Walking through the Valley* (1994), written amidst illness and just prior to his death, reveals deterioration rather than further aesthetic development.

policy developed with an eye on the BBC. His radio dramas, on the other hand, participate in a Canadian artistic tradition hearkening back to the early years of Canadian radio, before the medium became directly affected by Cold War geopolitics. In the thirties and forties, working in Vancouver with such writers as Lister Sinclair and Fletcher Markle, Andrew Allan had introduced experimental techniques to radio drama, transitioning the art away from the traditional stage. In 1943, at a time when the CBC Drama Department had become an important instrument of war education and propaganda, Allan would be appointed as national drama supervisor of the CBC in Toronto, "centralizing prestige radio drama," and commencing the so-called "golden age" of Canadian radio drama (Fink, "Radio Drama").[2] Allan established *Stage* in 1944 and *CBC Wednesday Night* in 1947, two highly popular weekly series that broadcast hundreds of original live productions and adaptations by Canadian writers over the years (Nischik 213). The most prolific radio dramatist during this period was writer Gerald Noxon, who worked with Allan and Frank Willis in Toronto, and producers Esse Ljungh in Winnipeg and Rupert Calan in Montreal (Nothof). Using sound collage and original music scores by Lucio Agostini, Noxon's plays were a mix of propaganda documentaries funded by External Affairs, and more "serious" plays, critics contend, that "are at once more personal and more universal" (Noxon, Fink, and Jackson 10). While many plays produced from Toronto, such as those of Noxon, "were simplistic and didactic, involving emotional manipulation, specific historical and political bias, and over-simplification of complex moral and social issues" (n. pag. Nothof), other critics imply Golden Age writing in Toronto on the whole challenged colonialist Victorian values, taking on such issues as racism, abortion, and religious intolerance (Nischik 213). In Vancouver, through the plays of such poets as Earl Birney and Dorothy Livesay, radio would develop as an independent form of social critique during the fifties, rejecting Cold War conceptions of nationalism and simplistic didacticism, but also the universalism of modernism. Irvine shows

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[2]Increasing centralization at home was accompanied by the founding of the CBC International Service, renamed to Radio Canada International (RCI) in 1970, which began broadcasting to Europe in 1942. For a history of the RCI, which terminated its shortwave service in 2012, see Wood.

that a discernible modernism is evident in Anglo-Montreal literature of the forties. In

Western Canada, Robert Kroetsch's assertion, that "Canadian literature evolved directly from

Victorian into Postmodern" is appropriate (1).

In 1955 Frye would follow A.J.M. Smith in placing Livesay and Birney within the

"cosmopolitan" current of Canadian poetry, "representing more international influences, and

showing less of the poetry of facile romantic and patriotic formulas" (Frye, "English Canadian

Literature" 245-46). Intriguingly, Smith further demarcates the poetry of Birney, Livesay, and

Anne Mariott into a grouping—three writers of the Western Canada region with significant

work in radio—without explicit rationale. Their cosmopolitan verse simply "is 'Canadian' in

the only way that is worth anything, implicitly and inevitably" (Smith, *The Book of Canadian

Poetry* 28). Mariott's work in radio in the forties developed alongside her published poetry.

She collaborated with Margaret Kennedy on several CBC radio documentary dramas in prose

and verse. She also read her poetry over Vancouver radio stations and in 1943, broadcast the

series *My Canada* as a cross-Canada school radio series. Mariott would seek to change her

poetic modernism to make it more suited for the medium of radio and thus more culturally

relevant (Irvine, *Editing Modernity: Women and Little-Magazine Cultures in Canada,

1916-1956* 90). In this she was an important influence on Livesay. Livesay was, Frye reflects

in 1955, "the Canadian poet most deeply touched by the moral and political challenges

presented by the rise of Fascism and the Spanish Civil War" ("English Canadian Literature"

46). Livesay's poetry is not approached in Frye's writings from her own socialist perspective,

and her groundbreaking verse play for radio *Call My People Home* (1950) is absent from his

early Canadian criticism. In Frye's return to Canadian literature in the late seventies and

eighties, he can celebrate Livesay's *Call my People Home* with "Birney's brilliant fantasy"

Trial of a City as "poetic dramas written for radio" ("Across the River" 560).

In its formal composition, documentary realism, and social criticism, *Call My People

Home* suggests continuity with thirties' Marxist poetics. The play's title evokes the

African-American spiritual "Let My People Go," as Cheryl Cundell explains, and returns to

Canadian memory the profound injustice of the Japanese Canadian interment by the federal government during the Second World War ("Dorothy Livesay and "Call My People Home""). It was first broadcast in 1949 abridged, then aired in its entirety in 1954 through the efforts of Birney ("Dorothy Livesay and "Call My People Home""). That Birney, a Trotskyist, Livesay, a communist, and Woodcock, an anarchist, maintained friendships and professional alliances in Western Canada, when forerunners of their respective political affiliations were killing one another by the late thirties, speaks to a shared understanding that what happened during the Spanish Revolution was a tragedy.[3] That all three retained their political poetics through the depoliticized forties and into the Cold War of the fifties, which brought to English Canada centralized nationalism, moral didacticism, and romantic mythopoeia, speaks to the marginal but distinctive difference of Western Canadian culture, sustained not simply through its connections with California, which are significant,[4] but to the independent and variegated cultural firmament produced by such institutions as the modernist poetry magazine *Contemporary Verse* (1940-1952), the UBC English Department, and Vancouver's tradition in radio drama.

The Massey Report (1951) of the *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* set a precedent in disparaging radio drama while proposing radical changes to the cultural life of Canada:

> the play-writer must have a vigorous, living theatre for which to work; for this,
> radio drama is not a substitute and indeed, we are told, habitual writing of scripts
> for radio broadcasting purposes, though a skill in itself, may ruin a writer for the
> theatre. (*Massey Report* 196)

In bringing Earl Birney's acclaimed verse play for radio *Damnation of Vancouver* to print in

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[3]The first Canadian writer to visit the Woodcocks on Vancouver Island was Birney. He helped Woodcock obtain his position in English at UBC and with his wife Esther, put the Woodcocks up in their barrack at Acadia Camp when Woodcock visited Vancouver in the early fifties to broadcast.

[4]Radio impacted cultural developments in the San Francisco scene as well. Brook Houglum has examined Rexroth's particular use of listener-sponsored radio in the forties and fifties to promote poetry, decentralization, and pacifism; see Houglum.

1952, Ryerson Press deregionalized the title, calling it *Trial of a City*. In reviewing the play

very favourably in 1952, Frye does not note its origins in radio. In the final pages of his

famous Conclusion to *The Literary History of Canada*, Frye refers to the play again without

acknowledging the medium it was written for, and actively deemphasizes its highly

regionalized social critique. In visually-oriented terms, rather, the play's opposition "not to

the democratic but to the oligarchic tendencies in North American civilization" arises from a

Canadian capacity "to see these distinctions from the vantage-point of a smaller country"

(Klinck and Bailey 847).

    It is remarkable then, that in Frye's later writings he credits radio with changing the nature

of poetry: "Radio also influenced, I think, the development of a more orally based poetry,

more closely related to recitation and a listening audience, and popular in a way that poetry

had not been for many centuries" ("Across the River" 561). In his poetry reviews for *The

University of Toronto Quarterly* in the fifties, Frye attends to the rich sound patterns that had

emerged in Canadian verse (Wilson 149), but does not credit the omnipresent radio for the

development. Yet in 1980 Frye writes that "much of the best work produced in Canadian

Culture" was for radio and that the "benefits extended into literature" ("Across the River"

560). From a 1987 typescript we learn that in the late forties, Frye himself collaborated with

CBC personality Don Harron in an attempt to adapt Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* as a radio

drama ("Don Harron" 637). Frye's obliviousness in the fifties and sixties to the effects radio

had on Canadian culture resonates with McLuhan's insight of 1965 that the "helpless

unawareness of the nature and effects of radio" had become "a universally shared ineptitude"

(*Understanding Media* 298). But this blindness to radio was also closely associated with a

disregard for the contemporary social concerns of the regional cosmopolitan Canadian writer

which were at odds with the centralizing and institutional Cold War cultural agenda of central

Canada. Very early in his tenure as editor of *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock challenged the

absence of radio within Canadian cultural history. The failure of CBC to publish its radio

broadcasts—"the creation over the years of a kind of mosaic record of a country's life and

thought, its manners and opinions, its arts and sciences"—has left the country's cultural history a record "almost entirely writ in air," Woodcock writes in 1961 (Woodcock, "A Record Writ in Air" 3-4). Woodcock references a review from two issues before assigned to Gerald Newman suggesting much of Canada's best dramatic writing was for a medium other than the stage (Newman 72). In 1968 Woodcock again calls for the CBC to publish a regular journal, comparable to the BBC's *The Listener*, and to "throw open its vast files to controlled research in co-operation with the Universities" (Woodcock, "Awards and Initiatives" 5). In 1970 Woodcock would again criticize the CBC for not preserving the foundations of Canada's shared cultural history:

> Radio drama, now a literary form doubly vanished because of the decline of the
> medium and also because of the failure to publish the best of the scripts that
> yearly gather dust in the unresearched archives of the CBC, extended significantly
> in its day the non-visual potentiality of drama and produced a new kind of theatre
> for voices . . . ("The Frontiers of Literature" 4)

Woodcock wrote thirty radio dramas for the CBC. His first, *El Dorado*, based on Voltaire's *Candide*, was performed in 1951. He created adaptations of classical Greek and Latin texts, plays of the Restoration and Elizabethan periods, Molière's comedies and Racine's *Phèdre*, and twentieth-century work, including plays by Irish dramatist John Millington Synge, *The Just* by Camus, and *We* by Zamyatin. After learning the art of sound theatre in writing these adaptations, Woodcock began composing original plays in 1960. A proportion of these he regarded as "burlesque thrillers," suggesting discontinuity with the preoccupations of his oeuvre as a whole, hearkening instead, perhaps, to the early days of Canadian radio drama ("Letter 3 Oct. 1980").[5] The four scripts Woodcock had published are representative of his intellectual and artistic aims during the period ("Letter 3 Oct. 1980") and

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[5]Several of these detective stories and mysteries were coauthored with his wife Ingeborg Woodcock, who had independently written a thirty-minute comedy (produced twice by the CBC) and two adaptations of German plays: one by Curt Goetz and the sound play *Das Unternehmen der Wega* (The Mission of the Vega) by Swiss avant-garde dramatist and crime novelist Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

intimate the sorts of writing he would seek to cultivate as editor of *Canadian Literature*.
Literary critics of the seventies and eighties found Woodcock's radio plays unpalatable.
Philip Stratford considers the two original Woodcock dramas he reads for *Canadian
Literature* in 1985 dull in verse and simplistic in theme (156-57). Peter Hughes, in conceiving
Woodcock's oeuvre within the ideological continuum of anarchist thought he evidently
admires, omits mention of Woodcock's radio plays. Jack Robinson's treatment is cursory,
while locating themes within the scripts that cohere with philosophical outlook he grants to
Woodcock. In the case where the subject of a radio plays is treated also in Woodcock's
nonfiction, it is attributed to the recycling of material for financial reasons and to detrimental
effect. The "finely honed perspicuity" and "casual eloquence" of Woodcock's prose, with its
"vivacity, directness, and clarity," becomes a "turgid repetition" when brought to radio
(Robinson 236). Woodcock's radio scripts do not sit comfortably with the image fostered for
him as a "man of letters." Woodcock would not refuse this categorization, derived from the
French *homme-de-lettres*, but thought it had "a slightly patronizing tone" within the Canadian
context (Woodcock, "Of People" 6). Fetherling does not include Woodcock's radio plays in
A George Woodcock Reader (Woodcock and Fetherling vii-viii).

 Woodcock's first original radio drama, *Maskerman*, was aired transnationally on the CBC
in 1960 and produced by Newman, the drama and music producer for the CBC in Vancouver
credited for experimental Canadian radio drama during the period, with John Reeves in
Toronto (Fink, "English-Language Radio Drama"). A testament to the emphases on aurality
in his sound plays—fostered by creating adaptations with Newman throughout the
fifties—Woodcock specifically wrote the title role for the voice of then prominent Vancouver
actor Ian Thorne (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 95). The success of the play would
result in the CBC producing it twice more in the sixties. The minimalist and parabolic
sequence of events in *Maskerman* are implicated for the listener through several discourse
scenarios, a technique radio drama theorist Tim Crook refers to as "arcaded narrative" (168).
Maskerman's use of formal verse, as the poet Al Purdy recognized, who heard the play on a

portable radio while camping in northern B.C., produces a tone of decadence (Woodcock and Purdy ii). Woodcock was one of the first writers to take the work of Oscar Wilde seriously, his *The Paradox of Oscar Wilde* appearing in 1949. He believed that the playwright's decadent dramas critiqued through satire the social psychology of accepted morals and manners. In its decadence, *Maskerman* sets out to critique a Canadian psychogeography colonized by the mythology inscribed into European geography.

Woodcock favours lateral time frames, in which the beginning of the play is the end of the narrative; it is an effective technique for securing a listener's focus by creating enigma (Crook 164). In *Maskerman* the second person is employed initially to engage the listener, giving the play a ludic quality. The ghost of the title character Alfred Maskerman, a television cameraman, introduces the play:

> I am the hero and the victim too—
>
> My name, Alfred Maskerman, slave of love. So let the spirit of these acts
>
> Step from the shadow,
>
> Open up the play.
>
> (Woodcock, "Maskerman" 5)

In subject matter, the play does not stray far from the popular radio soap opera, with the successive romantic disasters of Maskerman, the "slave of love," pinned to a refusal to take moral responsibility when interpersonal discord arises. But there is a transoceanic and postcolonial dimension which makes the trials of Maskerman a parable for Canadian society. There is no specifically Canadian geography in the play, so how then is the play Canadian? It is precisely by not being explicitly set in a particular place that the play becomes regionalized. Each Canadian listener can imagine a courthouse and a home, the settings for the first six scenes. The Canadian setting is implicated for the imagination only by establishing Europe as the setting for the final three scenes— Maskerman's fatal holiday destination—as somewhere to travel to. The play is designed to give the listener the responsibility for its localization. Her own space is thus conjoined with the play's mythological "now." Woodcock concludes

his landmark study *Anarchism* with the "insistence that freedom and moral self-realization are interdependent" (333). Kropotkin believed that since society is a natural phenomenon, if the artificial structures of government are removed, persons will act socially in accord with natural disposition (*Anarchism* 206). In this, Woodcock argues, Kropotkin fails to recognize that when people have been conditioned to depend on the state, "fear of responsibility becomes a psychological disease that does not disappear as soon as its causes are removed" (*Anarchism* 206). *Maskerman* suggests this disease is European in origin and inscribed into the continent's landscape.

Writing in *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock draws a sharp distinction between radio plays of invention and those which involve the Surrealists' politicized understanding of imagination:

> plays of imagination rather than invention, of history merging into myth; plays
> that seem to surge from dreams and memories and to operate in that inner
> territory of the mind which lies between the subliminal and the conscious.
> ("Voices Set Free" 159)

An initially surprising aspect of *Maskerman*, written by the anarchist editor of *Canadian Literature*, is that it gives voice to a highly European mythological imagination intimately associated with a romantic German nationalism. The Lorelei is a character in the play, and a symbol that each of its main characters invoke when imputing blame to someone else for their own predicament. Lorelei is known to German culture as a precarious twist in the Rhein marked by a towering, echo-producing rock, mythologized in the nation's poetry as a siren, whose beauty caused the death of sailors.[6] Apollinaire attempts to undermine the myth in his *La Loreley*, conceiving the deadly actions of Lorelei as themselves the result of cruelty inflicted upon her (Apollinaire and Greet 148-51). In *Maskerman*, her presence in the characters' minds is a symptom of their psychological disease of social irresponsibility, and

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[6]The ballad of Clemens Brenato, *Zu Bacharach am Rheine* (1803), was condensed by Heinrich Heine into the famous poem *Die Lorelei*. For a discussion of the poems, see Youens.

Woodcock emphasizes that the Lorelei myth is embedded into *European* geography. Lorelei is given her own voice, providing the Epilogue, after Lore has let Alfred drown in a whirlpool at the cliffs near Porto Fino:

> Water killed him. But who led him there
>
> To the fear and the terrible gasping for air?
>
> Where was the Lorelei? Where was I?
>
> Was I Jacquetta? Maria? Was I Lore?
>
> (Woodcock, "Maskerman" 40)

Lorelei echoes and reverberates in the listener's mind, and the play suggests she is a European ghost, an affliction that spread from Germany to Italy into Canada and beyond. For the new editor of *Canadian Literature*, European nationalism and the psychological disease of social irresponsibility that it breeds, must not be inscribed into the Canadian landscape by the country's writers. In its regional cosmopolitanism, Livesay's "Call My People Home" demonstrates how war in Europe and the Canadian nationalism it produced created injustice for Japanese-Canadians of the British Columbian coast. Woodcock's *Maskerman* announces that the regions of Canada, present within the imaginations of their people but not within Canadian culture as a whole, are threatened by the imaginings of an Old World under the spell of nationalism and the culture of social irresponsibility that became integral to it, a failure of moral self-realization that permitted the ascendance of fascism. In its transoceanic regional cosmopolitanism, Woodcock's Western Canadian radio drama, like those of Livesay and Birney, is thus oriented towards contemporary Canadian society, challenging the universalist and European mythopoeisis dominating Ontario's fifties, and an ascendent print-based nationalism.

Chapter 5

Neither East nor West

> I hope I am as great a believer in free air as the great Poet [Rabindranath Tagore]. I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

<div align="right">

MAHATMA GANDHI

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Woodcock would make his own contribution to the "cosmopolitan versus nativist" debate that came to define Canadian literature in the forties with his article, "View of Canadian Criticism," first published by *The Dalhousie Review* in 1954. The article mounts an unprecedented call for "a Canadian Journal devoted specifically to the critical consideration of native and world literature" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 137). Woodcock's rationale for such a journal, at a time when few considered Canadian writing worthy of "literature" or critical study, was Read's "grass roots" conception of cultural development. Criticism itself is conceived by Woodcock as a natural and specific outgrowth of any maturing literature. As Sandra Djwa has noted, in his proposal for a journal of Canadian literature in a global context, Woodcock's "interests inclined to the cosmopolitan" (312). These interests were comparativist ones, and for critical comprehension not evaluation. Woodcock explicitly denies within his article the very possibility of a cosmopolitan artist creating out of universal forms: "The cosmopolitan artist is as legendary as the Centaur; writers are dependent, not

only on their immediate and temporary environment, but even more on their origins" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131). On this view, literature is regional: "peoples and regions have their own distinctive literary and cultural traditions and attitudes, conditioned by shared language and habitat and historical experience" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131). There is thus a certain irony, and appropriation perhaps as well, in A.J.M. Smith dedicating "To George Woodcock in friendship and admiration" his *Towards a View of Canadian Letters: Selected Critical Essays 1928-1971*, published by UBC Press in 1973 at the height of Woodcock's Canadian reputation and influence. In beginning his career as a critic of Canadian literature, Woodcock was personally initiated into Canadian fiction by John Sutherland (*Beyond the Blue Mountains* 5), but regional cosmopolitanism also rejects the isolationism of the "nativist" pole. Woodcock counters the conception of the closed region of the nativists, for it is through the necessary "cultural interplay" within a given region that a particular sort of cosmopolitanism can and should occur: "where cosmopolitanism exists it is in the continual and necessary interplay of various traditions acting upon each other" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131). A society unreceptive to outside cultural forces, Woodcock shows through examples from history, will stagnate and repeat itself with increasing meaninglessness, dissociating society from its world ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131). Literature as regional cultural interplay thus denies the international cosmopolitanism of Smith's dichotomy, while dismissing also the "nativist" model that seeks a common substrata underlying Canadian writing, lending itself to nationalsim. Woodcock insists that a "Canadian literary tradition" already exists, but not on account of any "nationalist feeling" common to its writing. Political nationalism, in fact, contributes only negatively to cultural traditions, as history attests:

> Italian and German literature and painting and music flourished when those
> countries were loose collections of small sovereign states and free cities, with a
> splendour that was denied [in] the arid deserts of nationalism under Mussolini
> and Hitler; Irish literature began to lose its richness of quality when political
> separatism weakened that bond of cross-fertilisation with English movements

which had given it vigour and variety. Nationalist movements, indeed, can often

frustrate and paralyse cultural traditions; never are they Frankensteins enough to

create what can only spring out of the organic richness of individual and social

life. ("View of Canadian Criticism" 130)

Woodcock argues that literature is to be approached within its particular social reality, so

that "[it] is impossible to imagine *The Divine Comedy* outside its context of the early Italian

renaissance, or *War and Peace* being produced by any but a man who had entered fully into

the tragedy and richness of Russian existence" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131). "View of

Canadian Criticism," further reveals Woodcock in 1954 an advocate of Read's belief in the

"universal" dimension of art based on Jung's archetypes. Woodcock suggests that culture,

created within a particular language, habitat, and history, extends outside of its context for

ultimately "it deals with myths and images and thoughts which pierce like cosmic radiation

through the barriers of language and environment" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131).

Woodcock thus appears to follow Read in giving the artist a special status, "a unique

intelligence dealing with those problems of thought and morality which are universal" ("View

of Canadian Criticism" 136). Woodcock also contends, in keeping with Read's

Heideggerianism, that literature which "appeals most widely" arises "when the writer reaches

most deeply into the life of his own place and time, and finds the universal where his spiritual

roots plunge into their native soil" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 131). Through his

engagements in Asia, however, Woodcock would come to replace his understanding of art as

achieving universal relevance through its archetypes.

Woodcock grants the emergence of new culture directly to the geographical specificity of

the region. An independent society may emerge when colonizers encounter geographical

circumstances very different from their place of origin ("View of Canadian Criticism" 132).

When colonization takes people to a place similar to that of their past, "then the continuation

of intercourse with the mother country may lead to the mere extension of its culture, as in the

case of most of the antique Greek colonies in Italy" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 132). As

in the cultural histories of the United States and Mexico, transformation from a colonial culture to "a regional and integral" one is a process, "first in the development of independent forms of what are generally delimited as the 'creative arts,' and later in the growth of a critical literature," which assesses the culture "in its own terms as well as in relation to other traditions" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 133). Woodcock thus perceives criticism not as an external structure imposed upon a cultural tradition, but as an eventual and particular outgrowth of it ("View of Canadian Criticism" 133). Founding a journal as a forum for discussion already taking place in "coffee houses" should be regarded as a natural step in Canada's cultural development, with the poets and novelists which came to prominence in the forties already warranting such ongoing critical study:

> in the work of writers like E.J. Pratt, A.M. Klein, Hugh MacLennan, Earle Birney, Dorothy Livesay, A.J.M. Smith, Morley Callaghan, Ethel Wilson and many others, it has also taken on the rough outline of an emerging native literary tradition, admittedly with no major achievements as yet, but rooted in Canadian life and seeing the world sensitively through an experimental pattern that is distinctively Canadian. ("View of Canadian Criticism" 134)

A critical tradition had not yet emerged to accompany this Canadian literary movement, argues Woodcock. Frye then, who had been providing annual reviews of contemporary Canadian poetry for the *University of Toronto Quarterly* since 1950, is rejected with Smith and Sutherland. Woodcock does not perceive any existing criticism as naturally connected to the Canadian literature brought under its purview:

> I do not suggest that good critical writing is not being done anywhere in Canada today. But the best of it, like that of Northrop Frye, is outside the Canadian literary movement; it is work which belongs to the tradition of academic exegesis. Of criticism which, in the full sense, seeks to evaluate Canadian writing in a creative manner and to relate it, not only to Canadian experience, but also to a universal criterion, there is almost none. ("View of Canadian Criticism" 134)

Woodcock proceeds to reject criticism that gives Canadian writing "special treatment,"
pseudo-critical approaches unrelated to Canadian experience and which also reject the
applicability of established literary criteria when dealing with the native author ("View of
Canadian Criticism" 135). Woodcock refuses any prospect of "a group of New Canadian
Critics, devoted to the task of close textual analysis" ("View of Canadian Criticism" 136). A
criticism attuned to the specificities of Canadian experience and the particularities of its
literature must be thoroughly interdisciplinary and sensitive to the global cultural
continuum:

> The Canadian critic . . . will have to be something of a psychologist, something of
> a sociologist, something of a philosopher, something of a mythologist, besides
> having a developed consciousness of formal values and an imagination that is
> both creative and receptive. He will be concerned with the peculiar nature of
> Canadian experience, what makes the temper of our life—despite so many
> superficial resemblances—essentially different from the American or the British,
> and how this regional pattern of living and thinking and reacting affects the work
> of Canadian writers. But he will also be aware of trends in other countries, and
> will have to consider in what relation life and literature in Canada stand to the
> world continuum. He will have to delve into the past for unifying threads and
> probe into the future for the sense of direction. But he will also not lose sight of
> the fact that, within the culture, each writer is inalienably an individual, with his
> own psychology and his own reaction to experience. This experience, which
> includes language and the whole complex of natural and social and cultural
> influences to which he is subjected, will mark the writer off as a Canadian . . .
> ("View of Canadian Criticism" 136)

The Massey Report had commented on the isolation of Canadian writers, and Woodcock
suggests in 1954 that a common body of Canadian criticism undertaken along the lines he has
proposed might provide for writers, "strung across the CPR," a sense of shared community

("View of Canadian Criticism" 135-36).

The cosmopolitan approach Woodcock outlines in 1954 would be implemented from the very founding of *Canadian Literature*. It is a cosmopolitanism involving regional loyalties, appropriating foreign cultural elements that contribute positively to social health, while publicly critiquing—rather than merely dismissing or relativizing to the place of origin—elements that contribute negatively. In 1959 Woodcock began exchanging issues of his journal with an editor of the official English-language journal *Chinese Literature* in Beijing. He followed trends in Chinese writing carefully, as he did developments in a number of other literatures, and in 1967 would publish a scathing indictment of state involvement in Chinese writing in UBC's journal *Pacific Affairs*, reading in the course of *Chinese Literature* over eight years, a progressive "grotesque and brutal philistinism" produced by the Cultural Revolution ("Literary Lines in China" 138). After his article was published, *Chinese Literature* would cease to reach him (*Caves in the Desert* 99). Woodcock's judgment on Chinese literature was a moral and political one, grounded in his work from Vancouver towards a Canadian literature independent of the agenda of political nationalism. His critique of Chinese literature during the Cultural Revolution involves careful analysis that is not detached, and results in a moral judgment, not a relativizing one. Establishing a negative cosmopolitan connection between Vancouver and Beijing, rather than remaining silent and turned inward, still formed a relationship, one subject to change. Twenty years later, in 1987, the Ministry of Culture invited the Woodcocks and their friends, Paul and Xisa Wong of Vancouver's Bau-Xi Gallery, to create their own itinerary, and China would see to the travel arrangements. Woodcock's arrival in China was announced on radio and television from Beijing as the coming of the "the Canadian Ba Jin." Woodcock found this an "admirable circumlocution," for as he explains, Ba Jin, whose real name was Li Fei-Kan, was a prolific anarchist writer and contemporary of Woodcock's, known to the West as Pa Chin. His nom de plume was composed by combining the first syllable of Bakunin's name and the last of Kropotkin's—Ba-kin. Ba Jin, who survived the cultural upheaval in China after 1949 became

revered as one of the most important and most widely read Chinese writers of the twentieth century. Calling Woodcock "the Canadian Ba Jin" suggested to Woodcock, as he believed it was intended to, that the Chinese authorities knew about his opinions and welcomed him to their country (as the Americans had not). It also revealed China's changing attitude to literature and its cultural history.[1] Woodcock would use *Canadian Literature* to forge positive intercultural networks within the Pacific world as well. A 1965 editorial would send "Trans-Pacific" greetings to *Meanjin*, the leading Australian literary review in celebration of its 100th issue. The *Meanjin Papers* was founded the same year as *NOW*, and Woodcock and its editor Clem Christesen had kept up contact ("Trans-Pacific" 103).

Woodcock discovered a cosmopolitan "meeting of time in place" in an emerging postcolonial modernist Indian literature, perceiving in it a corresponding model for an emerging Canadian literary milieu. Woodcock visited India for the first time in 1961, on a research trip sponsored in part by the Canada Council. He would reunite with Anand who had founded *Marg*, a quarterly magazine dedicated to Indian art, after returning to India in 1946. Woodcock describes *Marg* as an endeavour to bring Indian traditions to a modern independent India.

> [Anand] had shed the close political commitments of his past, but in his own way
>
> he still remained a man of social mission, and he described his present task as
>
> [editor of *Marg*] an attempt to rediscover essential Indian traditions, and in the
>
> process to extract what might be incorporated into the life of the new,
>
> independent India. (*Faces of India* 27)

As Woodcock had left the anarchist movement, seeking to change Canadian society through *Canadian Literature*, Anand had found new forms for his socialism in an independent India. While in India, Woodcock attended with Anand the Rabindranath Tagore centenary celebrations at the University of Delhi. Woodcock met R.K. Narayan at the event and reunited

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[1]The highlight of the journey for Woodcock was visiting the Magoa caves of a Thousand Buddhas near Dunhuang, which Woodcock describes as "the most remarkable treasury of religious art in our life of long travels." An anticipated second journey to China by Woodcock in his final years did not materialize due to illness.

with old friends Balachandra Rajan (novelist, internationally regarded Miltonist and authority on Eliot) and Narayana Menon (literary critic, musician, and authority on classical Indian music). In the pages of London's *The Times Literary Supplement*, Rajan would later convey the existence of a respectable independent Canadian critical tradition, referencing the work of Frye, Marshall McLuhan, and Woodcock (Rajan 796). Upon returning to Vancouver, Woodcock would draw connections between the cultures of India and Canada within *Canadian Literature*:

> … there are similarities between the literary worlds of India and Canada. In both countries native writers are adapting the English language and English literary forms to the lives they live in a world away from England. In both countries the limitations of publishing facilities make writing more often a labour of dedication than a profession by which the author can hope to attain economic independence. In both countries writers are divided by sheer distance, which makes the links between Bombay and Calcutta or Mysore and Delhi as remote as those between Vancouver and Toronto … (Woodcock, "Remote Reflections" 3)

Woodcock believed Narayan a better writer than Tagore, but Tagore, argues Woodcock, had achieved a sort of cosmopolitanism that Canadian writers had yet to, one related to the social concerns of both his own place and the world, historically bound while appealing to the moral human condition:

> We have had writers whose work has been as good as Tagore's, and even better, but we have had none so far who has so clearly and admirably in his own life related the aims of literature to the realities of his country and of the world beyond, to the external demands of history and to the unhistorical urges of the man within. ("Remote Reflections" 4)

Like Gandhi, Woodcock believed that the cultural interplay arising from the "free air" blowing into the regions of Canada from across its oceans would find residence in *Canadian Literature* and the writing that it served, but *because* it stood in its own ground, so as to

generate a wind that might blow back across the seas and in other directions.

Human mobility is the principal factor in intercultural exchange. Among the some 150 titles presented by the George Woodcock Display at UBC, we find that a significant proportion recount his own travels in Asia or study the travels of others. "Without adventure, civilization is in full decay," Alfred North Whitehead wrote in the thirties (Whitehead 360), and Woodcock discovers civilizations benefit from their explorers. *Henry Walter Bates* (1969) attends to how the naturalist was changed, as science was, by the people and environment of the Amazon during his eleven-year expedition. *Into Tibet* (1971) shows the Enlightenment prejudices of early British travellers to the country discombobulated, resulting in policy change in Lhasa that would allow Westerners entry again—after the gates had been closed with the expulsion of the Jesuits. Aphra Behn returns home to transform Western literature after travels in Surinam. Kropotkin arrives at his theory of cultural migration amongst Mennonites of Manitoba driven from Russia (Woodcock and Avakumovic, *The Anarchist Prince* 274-5). Woodcock broadcast a series of CBC talks on "Globe Trotting Women." Hulme is moved to imagism on the Canadian prairie. And there are other such examples of "cultural interplay" recorded within Woodcock's oeuvre. Superficial engagements with other cultures fosters the imperialist urge. He assesses Wells as having remained secluded in his own portion of the globe, thus unable to understand "the minds of people who had not sprung from his own environment" (Woodcock, "A Study in Decline" 49). The political structure of the nation-state, on Woodcock's view, has a tendency to preserve cultural homogeneity within the confines of an impermeable border. Traditional conceptions of anarchism are little better, he believed, and a closed self-sufficient community is liable to become a moral tyranny or theocracy.

Woodcock came to this realization in writing *The Doukhobors* (1968) with Ivan Avakumovic. It was the first examination of the Canadian minority written in English and made intelligible Doukhobor customs and actions to English-Canada, helping change perceptions about the historically beleaguered group. While believing it important to explain

their plight, Woodcock did not altogether admire the social structure of the Doukhobors which Tolstoy, who helped arrange their immigration to Canada, thought instantiated anarchist ideals.[2] Woodcock would later encourage the Doukhobors, who regarded him reverentially as a "Canadian Tolstoy," to involve themselves outside their own community:

> If you turn in on yourself you tend to become overly concerned with your own
> problems. I would see it as a two-way process—endeavouring to create an
> example, but still moving into the wider community of, say, socially idealistic,
> peace-based movements and this kind of thing, so that your example can become
> visible. What's the good of becoming an isolated Utopia living the perfect life
> for your own satisfaction? (Popoff and Woodcock 11)

On their 1961 trip, the Woodcocks ventured to Northern India where they became among the first Westerners received by the recently exiled Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso. The meeting arose from the impetus of Ingeborg Woodcock who had studied Tibetan language and culture (Woodcock, *Faces of India*). Woodcock's anarchism, with its largely negative conception of freedom as "freedom from" already had resonances with Buddhism. From their first meeting with Tenzin Gyatso, Woodcock began to shift philosophically nearer to the Mahayanist doctrine of universal compassion as a way of life (*Faces of India* 130-131). Even before they left India, the Woodcocks began making arrangements for a Vancouver-based organization that could provide assistance for Tibetan refugees. In April of 1962, Roy Daniells, Bill Holland of *Pacific Affairs* and John Conway founded the Tibetan Refugee Aid Society in Vancouver. UBC President Norman Mackenzie served as the chairperson and Woodcock the vice-chairperson. Operating today as the Trans-Himalayan Aid Society, the organization is still a flexible "affinity-group," in Woodcock's anarchist terms, or a "postnational social formation" in Appadurai's. The first "transit school" was run by Judy Pullen in Kangra for

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[2]Kropotkin planned the immigration to Saskatchewan of 7500 pacifist Doukhobors who had been persecuted violently in tsarist Russia throughout the 1890s. Arrangements were made through Kropotkin's friend James Mavor, the major Canadian economist instrumental in the founding of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum. Fundraising by Tolstoy covered approximately half the cost of the migration.

hundreds of sick and malnourished Tibetan children, who came down from Ladakh and Nepal. The school was set up and organized by Woodcock's student, later the poet and experimental multimedia artist, Sam Perry, and his wife Beth, a student nurse. They approached Woodcock about volunteering and he made arrangements (*Beyond the Blue Mountains* 79). The Woodcocks were responsible for establishing what became a longterm relationship between the Dalai Lama and Vancouver, who visited the city on several occasions during their lives, giving some of his earliest public interviews on radio, conducted by Woodcock (Twigg 175).[3] On their first trip to India, the Woodcocks also met the Indian writer and editor of *Design* Patwant Singh, who introduced them to writers, artists and filmmakers in Bombay and Delhi. In 1981 Singh would seek to raise funds for impoverished Indian villages, and the Woodcocks would found Canada India Village Aid (CIVA), also still operating today. With painter Toni Onley, Woodcock produced the illustrated travelogue *The Walls of India* (1985) to support CIVA, and with Margaret Atwood, Al Purdy, George Bowering, and other acclaimed poets, ran a poetry contest fundraiser whose winners were published in *The Dry Wells of India* (1989). These practical instantiations of Woodcock's anarchism arose from theoretical commitments he made in London during the early forties, and reflect the moral and political dimension of his cosmopolitanism:

> My study of Gandhi's teachings and my contact in India with people who had
> worked with him led me to accept his advocacy of working from the roots, of
> permeating rather than destroying … I saw the wisdom of proceeding gradually
> once one had recognized that society contained within its structure the mutual aid
> of which the anarchists had spoken, and which was prevented from flowering
> only by the state, whether in its repressive or its benevolent "welfare" form.
> (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 110)

These events of intercultural exchange arising from the Woodcocks' first journey to India were serendipitous. Woodcock's original purpose for the trip was for historical research associated

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[3]For the history of the Woodcocks' non-governmental organizations, see Twigg.

with his interest in the philosophical and moral basis of normative cosmopolitanism.

The connection Martin Buber finds between Kropotkin's historical writings and his social geography holds equally true for Woodcock: "Kropotkin is no historian; even where he thought historically he is a social geographer, a chronicler of the states and conditions on earth; but he thinks in terms of history" (Buber 38). Woodcock's inquiries extend to the ancient world in attempting to trace the development of shared humanity as an idea, and the role art and politics played in its circulation. He believed the conception of the common moral basis of humanity existed well before anarchism and "mutual aid," in particular strains of the world religions for example, and would resurface during humanity's most violent century in such diverse forms as the poetry of Tagore, Unesco, and the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. The recent cosmopolitan turn in Western critical theory had appealed to Arendt who sought a new foundation to secure human value in a century that claimed 40 million lives by battle and 262 million by democide (Rummel). Arendt and Woodcock had written in several of the same journals during the forties and met face to face in 1951 at a party Dwight Macdonald gave in the Woodcocks' honour on their visit to New York (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 28). In 1954, while a lecturer at the University of Washington, Woodcock became one of the founding editors of *Dissent*, the politics and culture magazine associated with the New York intellectuals, and the successor to Macdonald's *politics*. In 1963, *Dissent* would provide a public forum to debate the controversy over *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt's book of that year based on her reporting from the Adolf Eichmanm trial for the *New Yorker* (Arendt, *Eichmann*; Greif). Among those in defence of Arendt was the critic Alfred Kazin, with whom Woodcock voyaged to Paris in 1951. Woodcock credits conversations with Kazin aboard the *Ile de France* and in Paris for helping him fully embrace "the creativity of the non-inventive modes of writing" and for getting over the disappointment of just having a novel rejected by New York publishers. Woodcock mentions reading a book of Arendt's on the journey, presumably *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1950), and threw the manuscript of his novel into the Atlantic as the ship neared Le Havre (Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue*

Mountains 28).

Arendt was roundly criticized for her assessments of Eichmann, which attributed his evil to an inability to think for himself. As Arendt's ideas developed in the seventies, she would contend that universal moral law must transcend the demands of specific communities, and she turns to the thought of Socrates in her belief that civil disobedience ought to be employed when local laws do not comply with higher moral demands. Woodcock elaborates on these philosophical implications of the Eichmann trial in seven half-hour radio talks on non-violent civil disobedience for CBC's *Ideas* in 1966. The program *Ideas*, still on the air, was co-created by William Young and Phyllis Webb. Webb also had Woodcock gives talks on anarchism for *Ideas* and her admiration for Kropotkin resulted in her "Kropotkin Poems." Woodcock argues in his talk that the condemnation of Eichmann by a global public revealed that humanity appeals to a morality of responsibility that supersedes the demands of any particular political authority. Like Arendt, Woodcock considered the trial entailed advocation for civil disobedience as an essential human right:

> [Civil disobedience] erects principles above political expedients, and it has been
> rather well described as "an application of absolute moral truths in the realm of
> historical action." It invokes the idea of responsibility as against the idea of
> obedience, and for this reason it appeals strongly to a doubt about conventional
> ideas of duty which has become very widespread since the rise and fall of
> Nazism. It was this doubt that made the trial of Adolf Eichmann such a morally
> significant event. What was being tried in that Israeli courtroom was not merely a
> man who had sent millions of innocents to their death; it was not even merely the
> general record of the Nazis. It was the cult of unquestioning obedience to law and
> authority. If we accept duty as meaning that kind of obedience, then Eichmann
> was innocent: he merely acted under orders. If Eichmann was guilty, then we
> have to accept the idea of a point at which a man is morally bound to disobey
> rather than perform acts that go beyond his conceptions of morality or justice,

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even if these acts were ordered by the state. . . . in ceasing to condone blind duty,

we have to accept the right to Civil Disobedience. (*Civil Disobedience* 4)

Woodcock places the Cynics and the Stoics in a cosmopolitan tradition stemming from Socrates. Accused of not believing in the gods of Athens and corrupting the young, Socrates embodied detachment from local demands for moral responsibility in his willingness to die for the right to pursue truth irrespective of Athenian law. In summarizing how the death of Socrates fostered a line of cosmopolitan philosophies in his radio broadcast, Woodcock tailors his language for the beatnik generation while heightening the dissonance between imperial power and the counter-culture attitude:

The Stoics, who greatly admired Socrates for his way of dying, taught that a

man's conscience must be the final arbiter of his conduct and that his ultimate

loyalty was not to the state but to all mankind. The Cynics went further. They

proclaimed brotherhood with animals as well, denounced slavery, and taught that

true philosophers should opt out of the state and live regardless of the law. The

most famous of these beatniks of antiquity was Diogenes, who sought to break all

the taboos, including those of decency; he is said to have lived in a tub, but in fact

he lived in a very large oil jar, and when Alexander the Great, who was something

of a culture snob, visited him and asked if there were anything he could do for

him, Diogenes looked coldly at the world conqueror and said, "Just get out of my

light!" (*Civil Disobedience* 8)

The origins of cosmopolitanism are typically traced back to the lapidary statement "I am a citizen of the world" made by Diogenes of Sinope. Skrbiš and Woodward express the key ideas of *kosmopolites* taken up by current theorists as professing "detachment from the local" and "a sense of openness" that allows one to "embrace the world community" which is "different and apart" from one's embedded world (53). A.A. Long likewise credits Diogenes' declaration as the first articulation of "the idea that human nature in its rational capacities transcends all civic and ethnic boundaries" (54-5). Long also emphasizes that this

cosmopolitanism "was normative rather than descriptive," deriving fundamentally from the Greek philosophical tradition (55). Cosmopolitan theorists thus have not observed that Diogenes' statement was also descriptive, uttered at a time when the world had been brought together by Persia. Sinope, a Greek colony on the Black Sea, was under the rule of the Persian Empire in the fourth century BCE, and Cyrus the Great, on clay cylinders distributed throughout the Achaemenidian Empire had declared, "I am Cyrus, king of the universe" already in the sixth century. Woodcock's work reflects the understanding that cosmopolitanism cannot be approached apart from its emergence within the contexts of imperialism and colonialism. The idea of a shared humanity is not a universalist notion to be rationally justified as Kant had done, but a historical emergence that counteracted imperial violence between civilizations. The feelings that accompany natural human sociability, arising when people work together towards common ends, required conceptual extension to the members of other worlds once imperialism had shown distinct civilizations can impinge upon one another. The conceptual extension of sociability to those outside one's realm, if not an empty abstraction, is grounded in productive intercultural exchange which, in the ancient world, produced liberating religions and philosophical systems.

The study which resulted from the Woodcocks' trip to India, *The Greeks in India* (1966), was the first treatment of the entire millennium of Greek penetration into India. The book might also have been appropriately named *Neither East Nor West*, the title of Berneri's selected writings published in 1952 (a number of which critique Western imperialisms). Once the Ionian cities and Taxila, the renowned Indian centre of religious learning, were brought within the Persian empire in the late sixth century BCE, Woodcock shows it became theoretically possible for a Greek philosopher to travel the same route to India taken by the famous explorer Scylax, or for an Indian ascetic to reach the Ionian cities or even Greece itself (*The Greeks in India* 150). In practice, ideas were likely exchanged between Ionia and Taxila in the cities of Persia during the sixth and fifth centuries. Democritus, a great traveller, visited Persia in late fifth century, developing his atomic theory well after Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist

atomistic cosmologies had appeared. Woodcock makes the case that the ascetic brotherhood at Croton founded by Pythagoras, who also travelled extensively according to Diogenes Laertius, emulated Indian ascetic centres from which his theory of transmigration also likely derived (*The Greeks in India* 153). Also impossible to dismiss, argues Woodcock, are the resemblances between the doctrines of Plato and those already developed by Brahminical, Buddhist and Jain thinkers. Plato's theory of reincarnation involving karmic process has Indian rather than Greek antecedents (*The Greeks in India* 153). Equally remarkable are the structural parallels between the Hindu caste system and the society of his Republic, with its three classes of Guardians, Auxiliaries and Craftsmen, fulfilling the same functions of the highest Hindu castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas (*The Greeks in India* 154).

   Woodcock finds, however, that the successful transfer of ideas from one cultural region to another, in all cases, involved a transmutation. If Democritus learned from the atomistic theories of India, it was in order to serve the traditions of his own milieu:

> it offered a clue that helped him in his own inquiries into the nature of the
> universe; atomism as he finally presented it was divorced from Indian
> terminology, and admirably suited to the needs of Greek philosophy at a time
> when it was taking form not merely as an inquiry into the character of man's
> environment, but also as the theoretical basis for the emergent natural sciences.
> (*The Greeks in India* 152)

The Indians, in turn, would come to assimilate the sciences of the Greeks, which spurred what Woodcock describes as a "technological revolution" in the region after the arrival of Alexander. Cultural exchange, Woodcock shows, also created feelings of appreciation and admiration for a foreign culture in a world where foreign peoples were assumed uncivilized and savage: "'The Yavanas [the Brahmin term for the Greeks adopted from the Persians] are barbarians,' declared the author of the Sanskrit *Gargi Samhita*, 'yet the science of astronomy originated with them and for this they must be reverenced like gods'" (*The Greeks in India* 155). Even Greek astronomy, itself derived from the Chaldaens, was assimilated by the

Indians in accord with their own cultural circumstances, adapted as an astrology to serve the traditional social function of divination. Woodcock observes, in the context of a heightened Indian nationalism paralleled in Canada, that the astrological system used by twentieth-century politicians and businessmen in India and by which marriages are determined, came from the Greeks (*The Greeks in India* 155). Woodcock felt that Nehru's adoption of British socialism as a political model after independence was a betrayal of Gandhi and the village-based social structure he envisaged to put an end to the caste system. Concern that Indian nationalism already had deleterious cultural effects is shown early in *The Greeks in India*:

> When resistance built up against [Alexander] at the time of his retreat it was largely fostered by the Brahmins, not, as modern Indian historians would have us believe, from a sentiment of patriotism, which as yet did not exist in an India that did not see itself as a nation, but rather because they were offended by the thought of being subjected to the rule of foreigners who did not observe the Hindu rites.
>
> (*The Greeks in India* 34)

For Woodcock, to adopt the European nation-state as a political structure was in fact to maintain at a systematic level subjection to a foreign authority. Rather than adapting recent Western influence into the patterns heterogenous Indian culture developed over millennia (as Gandhi had done), a European model came to impose a rigid organizational pattern onto this vast cultural history, with its implicit conceptions of space as homogenous and time as linear.

The imperial rule over the Greek world by the Persians in the sixth century, followed by the retaliative Greek invasion of Asia Minor in the fourth century, "created the gulf between East and West, between Europe and Asia, that has never really been filled to this day," Woodcock writes (*Undermining History* 15). Woodcock perceives the moral "aims of literature"—focused on immediate social circumstances but invoking a general humanity—to have arisen simultaneously with the politically motivated violence that separated east and

west. Edith Hall in her structuralist study *Inventing the Barbarians: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (1989), seeks to show how Athenian tragedians used derisive images to define the world of the non-Greek "barbarian." In treating *The Persians*, the first surviving play of Aeschylus, Hall observes in passing that "marked 'barbarism' coexists with the narration of a genuinely tragic *pathos*, which precludes the nineteenth-century interpretation of the drama as mere xenophobic self-congratulation" (100). As Buxton comments on the quote above, Hall tells us "next to nothing about this 'pathos' and not much either about the effect of comparable feelings evoked in other tragedies" (218). Woodcock contends that in its pathos, *The Persians* reveals "the new consciousness of a common humanity which was emerging during the sixth century BCE." This consciousness was given its dramatic portrayal by Aeschylus:

> Describing the sea covered with wreckage and the slaughter as the Greeks killed
> the Persians and their allies like tunny fish all day long while the light lasted,
> Aeschylus was writing the first poetry of war. He wrote with triumph. But he
> also wrote with a sense of the pity of it all that is not in the *Iliad* or even in the
> *Odyssey*. And that pity showed the new consciousness of a common humanity
> which was emerging during the sixth century B.C. and colouring the work of the
> first historians as well as of the first dramatists. (*Undermining History* 22)

This "imagined" humanity arose from cultural exchange itself, on Woodcock's view, which carried into Greece *ahimsa*, the principle of universal non-violence, common to the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain systems of Persian occupied India in the sixth century.

While ancient Indian philosophy contributed profoundly to Greek philosophy, artistic technique that had developed in Greece would come to facilitate the religious transformation of Asia, Woodcock shows. Gandhara was conquered by Alexander in 327 BCE, became part of the Mauryan dynasty twenty-two years later, and following the decline of the Mauryan empire in the second century BCE, allowing for the eastward expansion of the Greco-Bactrians, it became an independent Greco-Indian kingdom comprised of dynastic

polities, lasting for a period of approximately two hundred years. These Greeks in India adopted Buddhism and used the artistic forms of Athens to give shape to their religious ideas.

> By creating the Buddha image, and by defining in visual terms the mythical content of Buddhism, the artists of Gandhara not only established the iconographic pattern of Buddhist art; they also created a canon of form which dominated its most vital phases throughout the east. The haunting Buddhas of this school, with their Apollonian faces and their strange companies of attendants drawn from the pantheons of Western and Eastern religions, represent an art born in the disintegration of the classical heritage. Like the Coptic and Byzantine traditions, that of Gandhara had its distant roots in Athens, but, like them, it was saved from becoming a mere school of colonial imitation by the impact of a religion in dynamic expansion. (*The Greeks in India* 140)

Woodcock stresses that in giving an image to Buddha, previously represented only symbolically, it was culture, rather than politics, that had the most powerful impact on the transformation of Asia, "bringing Buddhism back from the rarefied heights of monastic seclusion, [making] it aware once again of the general human condition, and proclaimed that the way of enlightenment was open to all men and not merely to the few monastic select" (*The Greeks in India* 140). After the Mauryan emperor Ashoka converted to Buddhism in the third century BCE—in remorse for his brutal conquests—he used Greek monument technique to create pillars throughout India, displaying edicts based on *ahisma* for the protection of natural resources, the promotion of contact between different religions, and universal medical treatment for humans and animals. This "conquest by Dharma," which extended into the Hellenic world, sought "the achievement by peaceful means of a worldwide state of justice from which all men would benefit in this life" (*The Greeks in India* 158). Woodcock does not deny that Ashoka's efforts helped liberalize traditional Hinaynist Buddhism and contributed to the rise of Mahayanism which had important parallels with the Christianity that had emerged

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simultaneously in the West.

> Just as Christianity brought together slaves and kings, Greeks and barbarians,
> under the concept of equality before God, so Mahayanist Buddhism brought
> together the many peoples who accepted its broad doctrines under the
> revolutionary idea of an all-comprehending Lord of Compassion, before whose
> myriad benevolent eyes any man, by his own will and effort, could free himself
> from the toils of illusion and break the bonds of his Karma. (*The Greeks in India*
> 162)

The progress Ashoka made was lost after his death, however, for later Mauryan kings did not uphold the same commitment to social regeneration (*The Greeks in India* 159-60). In the current state of his own world, Woodcock would not dismiss the important achievements of Unesco, supported by Livesay and others in Woodcock's circle drawn to internationalist movements, emerging as Europe underwent conversion following the horrors of WW2 and the collapse of territorial imperialisms. But Woodcock believed the world does not principally require "rigid, all-inclusive international organizations," but rather "a multiplicity of contacts, of circles of association to dissolve its antagonisms on many levels" (*British Empire* 334). In the long term, small circles of cooperative association and organic culture for Woodcock carried the greatest promise for healing the rupture between east and west. Buddhist art continued to develop and extend well after Ashoka's reign, and as far east as Xi'an, the terminus of the ancient Silk Road, Woodcock would find ripples of Greek influence on Asian sculpture in the Pegasoids guarding the tombs of Qianling (*Caves in the Desert* 126).

In examining the ancient history of his region's own ancestors Woodcock found a participatory structure of human organization to dissolve antagonisms. The highly developed art of the West Coast arose from a system in which its distinct peoples maintained linguistic and social independence while interrelating with one another as a dynamic cultural unity:

> The obvious areas of *difference*—shapes of houses and canoes, different forms of

harpoons, hafted hammers among the northerners as against hand-held ones in the

south, more emphasis on crests in the north and on individual guardian spirit

quests in the south, matrilineal as against patrilineal inheritance, and even the

varying manners of art—all these were enough to prove that the culture was not

homogeneous, but certainly not enough to deny an underlying unity that could not

have emerged merely out of a common environment. Despite their obstinately

sustained linguistic differences, we have to assume that the peoples of the Coast

were in productive contact over a very long period before the Europeans arrived,

and we may also assume that one of the reasons for this contact was the

combination of a highly developed culture with barely developed political

concepts. Culture tends to unite; politics tend to divide. (*Peoples of the Coast*

197)

Woodcock explains that this dynamic unity of Coastal Indigenous culture allowed for the

productive integration of Western tools and other elements after contact. As Europeans

imposed themselves on the region, negative elements of Western culture were imposed as

well:

I emphasize this theme of the dynamic unity of the native culture because the

immediate result of European contact was merely to increase the impetus of an

existing development within the Coast Indian world. In other words, whatever

was productive in the gifts of the new Transformers was used by the native culture

precisely because it was a dynamic culture and open to vital new elements. It

was the negative elements which the culture could not absorb that led towards its

destruction. (*Peoples of the Coast* 198)

Woodcock can be understood to suggest that post-colonialism in Canada must seek a

cosmopolitanism informed by "the people who laid the real foundations of human existence

on the North American continent" (*Canada and the Canadians* 61). In preserving autonomy,

Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism and its political entailments involve organic and

114

permeable borders, actively incorporating the positive elements of other cultures.

Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism helps us to understand how American poetry was accepted into Canadian poetry of the early sixties. It is a case that serves also to show Woodcock's cosmopolitan ethics entailing regional patriotism while rejecting "petty localism." Woodcock was a regular contributor to *The Georgia Straight* and the paper even today evinces the anarchist editorial stance pioneered by *Freedom* and *NOW*. The small but very influential poetry magazine of the sixties, *TISH*, was folded into the *Straight* in 1967 (Dart). *TISH* was first published in September 1961 by a group of UBC students—George Bowering, Frank Davey, David Dawson, Lionel Kearns, Jamie Reid and Fred Wah—under the influence of poetics hailing from Black Mountain College. Several of the founding *TISH* members were Woodcock's students. An American professor in English at UBC, Warren Tallman brought Robert Duncan to Vancouver in 1961 to give a poetry lecture series, covering language and structure, rhyme and composition, the poetics of Pound and Charles Olson, and Duncan's experience running the magazine *Black Mountain Review* (Tallman). Within the context of Canadian cultural nationalism, a number of prominent poets and critics decried establishing links with the American poetry scene in this way. The fear that *TISH* was "U.S. invasion and colonization of a part of the poetic culture of Canada" was most stridently insisted upon by *TISH: Poetry and the Colonized Mind* (Richardson 7). *TISH* explicitly refused any association with the nationalism of its period (Kröller 14).

Woodcock himself had been an influence on American poets of the fifties, because his poems were featured in Kenneth Rexroth's *The New British Poets: An Anthology* (1949). Rexroth, based in San Francisco, was *NOW*'s American correspondent, and in his anthology deems Alex Comfort, Derek Savage, and Woodcock as "the most remarkable of the young men who came first to prominence during the War, and it is significant that they are all anarchists, 'personalists,' and pacifists" (Rexroth xxviii). Henry Miller, a regular contributor to *NOW*, had introduced the magazine to the Californian cultural scene in the early forties. George Leite founded the little magazine *Circle* in 1944 as a sister magazine to *NOW*,

maintaining an anarchist and surrealist focus. Published from Berkeley, *Circle* featured the

verse of Rexroth and other poets involved in what would become the Californian literary

revolution that gave rise to the Beats. The Beats were also influenced by Black Mountain

poetics through Robert Duncan's presence in the San Francisco scene. Woodcock spent half

of his 1951 Guggenheim Fellowship in San Francisco, and on a visit to Vancouver in 1956,

Alan Ginsberg shared with Woodcock his still unpublished *Howl*. Woodcock considered it a

"noisy non-poem" and "in spite of the almost symbolic status it took on in the mythology of

American postmodernism" it is "probably the most overrated poem of the century"

(Woodcock, *Beyond the Blue Mountains* 71). The poetic method outlined in the seminal

Projective Verse (1950) by Charles Olson, professor then rector of Black Mountain College,

Woodcock considered "doctrinaire" and he challenged the *TISH* poets for taking up a leader

and simply emulating his technique ("Of Place and Past"). In 1963, Tallman organized the

three-week Vancouver Poetry Conference, a landmark event in bringing together writers from

major currents in North American poetry of the sixties. Among those teaching at the

conference was Alan Ginsberg, arriving from his lengthy sojourn in India where he had

famously encouraged the Dalai Lama to try LSD (the suggestion was received in good

humour but not taken up) (Snyder 82-84). Tallman had arranged for UBC to provide an

around-the-world ticket in exchange for Ginsberg's participation. Despite Woodcock's own

disinclination to trends within American poetry, when extreme nationalists attempted to have

Warren Tallman removed from the jury for the Governor-General's awards for literature in

1969, Woodcock vigorously defended Tallman's involvements in Canadian writing.

Woodcock's cosmopolitan ethics entail "that petty localism has no place in our assessment of

literature or any other art"; that writing in the country is not to be evaluated on its

"*Canadianness*, if such a quality can be assessed" (Woodcock, "Permutations of Politics"

5).

Frank Davey would come to recognize how *TISH* had contested, from its "marginalized"

position (Barbour 92), the mythopoesis and centralist politics of Ontarian Cold War poetry and

criticism: "Tish marks the turning point of British Columbia poetry away from the shadows of derived, humanistic, Toronto-focused writing and toward the light of its own energies" (qtd. in Barbour 159). As George Bowering would insist in an American periodical, the Canadian poetry that the *TISH* group affected, "is not a branch of U.S. poetry. You will remember that U.S. poetry was once studied as a branch of British poetry … But U.S. poetry became a great poetry that came to overshadow British poetry" (Bowering, "Do you know who the Canadian Poets are" 8). Despite its methodological assertions, early issues of *TISH* suggest the influence Montreal's Irving Layton had on the group, Canada's most acclaimed poet of the fifties. Over the course of the journal, Olson's proprioception overcame the egoism and Romanticism of Layton. But *TISH* appropriated the elements of American poetics that best served the region in which it was produced. Olson had granted to breath the structural foundation of his poetics. In the poetics of *TISH*, language is sound itself. It is in acoustic space that energy is preserved by the poet and transferred to the listener. "I make the case," writes Wah, "for the consonants as beats and the vowels carrying that mellismatic color — our language is that real that it does have tones — essentially collisions of sound" (*Tish* 23). In giving primacy to sound, *TISH* returns West Coast poetry to the energies of radio.

Chapter 6

A Regional Cosmopolitan Canada

> I build no system. I ask an end to privilege, the abolition of slavery, equality of rights, and the reign of law. Justice, nothing else.
>
> *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government* (1840)
> PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON

In the years surrounding his retirement from *Canadian Literature* in 1977, Woodcock was considered by many to have played a substantial role in the development of Canadian literature and its study. Al Purdy asserted that Woodcock was "largely responsible for the regeneration of a country's literature" (iv). For Peter Hughes, Woodcock "virtually created Canadian literature through the journal he founded under that name"—a statement printed in McClelland and Stewart's New Canadian Library series (49). Robin Skelton proclaimed Woodcock "a National Treasure and in a properly constituted society his 80th birthday would have been celebrated with the issuing of a postage stamp, the striking of a medal, and a burst of canon fire on Parliament Hill" ("Record of George Woodcock"). Yet from Canadian literary history of recent decades, one might assume Woodcock's contribution had been slight, or part and parcel of an inevitable maturation in Canadian culture, as History marched progressively forward. The previous chapter articulated Woodcock's anarchist cosmopolitanism and how it sought to relate Canadian literature to a world cultural

continuum. This chapter examines how Woodcock attempted to shape internal Canadian

culture and politics to support Canada's federal political structure against forces seeking to

reconstitute Canada as a nation-state.

Canadian Literature sits uneasily within prominent historiographies of English-Canadian

literature as a field of study or is left out altogether. The collection of essays *Making it Real*

(1995) by Robert Lecker seeks to show how an English-Canadian literary canon and

nationalist criticism were essentially constructed *ex nihilo* in a span of approximately twenty

years by publishers and academic critics. Lecker presents a series of historical developments

that lead to the institutionalization of a unitary nationalist English-Canadian literature. First,

the New Canadian Library series was founded by McClelland and Stewart in 1957 to create an

ad hoc national literary canon. Then *The Literary History of Canada* (1965) served to impart

"the value of the nation" on the entire history of writing in the country. A landmark

conference comprised of both academics and publishers was held at the University of Calgary

in 1978 to identify the "most important" Canadian novels, on the basis of what Lecker

describes as their "national-referential aesthetic" (27,4). These novels, Lecker argues,

"represent nationalist currency through a displaced formal equivalent: mimesis" (37). This

was accompanied by the ascendency of nationally-oriented thematic criticism, taught in

Canadian schools and universities, to locate the Canadian features in Canadian texts.

Woodcock makes a very brief appearance in *Making it Real*. Lecker acknowledges that the

stance *Canadian Literature* adopted towards the country's writing does not congeal with this

elitist and nationalist cultural project; that "Woodcock wanted the study of Canadian literature

to be open to everyone" (Lecker 78). The first editorial of *Canadian Literature* invited

contributions from "independent men and women of letters," promising not to establish any

single critical "clan" ("Editorial"), as Lecker notes. Lecker claims however that the

possibility of Canadian literature becoming publicly driven had already come to an end by

1959, the structures of a hegemonic state apparatus for its control already in place.

Imre Szeman's *Zones of Instability* (2003) gives the postwar construction of Canadian

culture its international and comparativist contextualization. Contending with Diana Brydon that the status of "authentic" colonialism should not be withheld from Canada and its history, Szeman finds Canadian literature an anomaly amongst postwar nationalist literatures. In Nigeria and the British Caribbean, the postwar novel can be read as actively promoting a national identity, but in Canada during the sixties and seventies, the texts Szeman examines in fact appear to undermine the homogenous "imagined community," examining and articulating differences within Canadian society, casting "a surprisingly critical eye on the prospects of a unified, national body, and pay[ing] as much attention to the coexistence of multiple Canadas" (Szeman 162). Szeman follows Lecker in crediting postwar institutional structures for the creation of a hegemonic nationalist approach to the study of Canadian writing. Szeman contends, however, that "There is *nowhere* in Canadian fiction after World War II a national literature that aspires to write the nation into existence" (162). Anthologies, histories, and criticism of Canadian literature sought to produce the nation, not the literature under its examination, so that while in Nigeria and the Caribbean "the nation emerged as a strategy of *writing*, in Canada it can be seen as emerging preeminently as a strategy of *reading*" (164).

The presence of *Canadian Literature* as an institution assists in accounting for how "anti-national" Canadian literature could rise to prominence during the period. It also illuminates the fact, tended to be missed by critics, that early Canadian criticism was not limited to the nationalistic thematic criticism which ascended into pedagogy during the seventies. In 1960 Woodcock would discourage criticism seeking essential Canadian qualities in what he continued to defend as an independent body of literature:

> present-day writing in Canada is something more than the product of the
> remittance men of European traditions, something more than the shadow of
> literature in America . . . to see in it features that are easily and patriotically
> identifiable, may do some obscure service to political nationalism. It can only do
> disservice to literature itself. (Woodcock, "Summer Thoughts")

The first issue of *Canadian Literature* announced its cosmopolitanism in multiple ways. An article by Dwight Macdonald championed Canadian poetry and criticized the Beats. Roy Fuller, later Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, and whose verse appeared in the very first issue of *NOW*, favourably reviews several Canadian poets. There is an advertisement for Woodcock's book *Incas and Other Men* (1959) based on travels in Peru, citing glowing reviews by *Statesman and Nation* and *The Sunday Times*, presenting the journal's founding editor to its new readers as an "educated, civilized mind without a trace of arrogance or pretentiousness. Most important of all, he can write" ("Advertisement for 'Incas and Other Men'" 82). Woodcock's own piece in the first issue, an evaluation of "New Biography in Canada," criticizes the romanticization of Canadian political figures Mackenzie King and Comte de Frontenac, while bringing India and its government into the realm of the reader's concern in discussing a biography of Nehru.

Woodcock's began writing Canadian literary criticism during his first year in Canada. Through Birney, Woodcock received an invitation in 1949 from John Sutherland to write an essay on Hugh MacLennan for *Northern Review*. While recognizing MacLennan's craftsmanship and "touching sincerity," Woodcock was critical of the "strong strain of nationalist didacticism" in his writing. Woodcock came to appreciate the great influence of a critic within the Canadian literary landscape when MacLennan personally responded to what he had written: "MacLennan wrote me a letter of appreciation and explanation. It made me understand that I had entered a literary world which, though it was spread over the breadth of a wide continent, was in fact so small that everything a critic said reverberated" (*Beyond the Blue Mountains* 5). As editor of *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock would maintain an open forum while seeking to foster writing unconstrained by the nationalism and conservatism of Cold War "romantic realism" ("Balancing the Yin and the Yang" 5). By the fifth number of the quarterly, Woodcock took aim at the New Canadian Library. "Many good books with an experimental flavour deserve a wider public," so he was "disappointed by the hesitant and conservative impression which the selection so far evokes" ("Venture on the Verge" 73). The

series had published "no good dangerous books," which is why, Woodcock concludes in reviewing its four latest titles, the series still "is so disappointing; it is more, not less conservative" ("Venture on the Verge" 74). Until the appearance of *Canadian Literature*, the small group of critics in the field were academics and mainly specialists in English literature. Woodcock sought to develop both the field and a group of Canadian critics, requesting submissions from writers new to both critical writing and to Canadian literature. Woodcock was also successful in obtaining submissions from all the most prominent academic critics of Canadian writing in the journal's early years, with the important exception of Frye.

A rift between conceptions of English-Canadian literature and criticism had become apparent already at the 1955 Kingston conference, "The Writer, His Media, and the Public." At Kingston, Smith first introduced his characterization of Canadian literature as essentially one of "eclectic detachment" (Smith, "Electic Detachment"). The nationalistic rereading Frye gave to *The Book of Canadian Poetry* in his 1943 review provided a political dimension to the treatment of Canadian literature that Smith would uphold in abandoning his cosmopolitan versus native distinction. For Daniells, far removed from central Canada's wartime climate and governmental interventions into culture, the interest in Canadian writing remained literary. Already on the flight back to Vancouver from Kingston, Daniells began planning a comparable event for British Columbian writers and critics. The Conference on B.C. Writing was held at UBC in January 1956 (Djwa 310-12). Woodcock presented his "View of Canadian Criticism," calling for the founding of a journal, and a committee was struck at the closing session of the conference to lay the groundwork. The creative writing magazine *Prism* (1959-) arose from recommendations Birney made at the event. UBC President MacKenzie and the Koerner Foundation would agree to provide initial funding for *Canadian Literature*, at a time when only a minority believed Canadian writing warranted such an endeavour (315-16). In 1958, after the scope of the journal had been decided in consultation with English Professor Stanley E. Read and university librarians Inglis Bell and Neal Harlow—who had been independently contemplating a journal of Canadian studies—Daniells

approached Woodcock with the invitation to edit a journal of Canadian literature. Woodcock

would agree to its exclusively Canadian focus on the condition of editorial freedom, which he

would use creatively to bring world literature to the quarterly.[1]

Daniells was also a member of the editorial committee that began to meet in 1956 to

develop what became the *Literary History of Canada* (1965), one of the early projects funded

by the Canada Council. The model its nationalist editor Carl F. Klinck adopted as general

editor, was that of *Literary History of the United States* (1946), edited by Spiller, Thorpe, and

Canby's, which had a nationalistic political agenda (314). Daniells became concerned with

the direction of the project early on, particularly in how Canadian history was to be prioritized

over literary and critical assessment. Klinck took counsel in matters of methodology from

Frye, also an editor, who was intent on treating all of Canadian writing outside the realm of

literature proper. "Northrop Frye who has the catholicity of the true scholar," Smith would

declare, "is able to see the always changing and always developing kaleidoscope of our

literary history as a single pattern" (Smith, "Electic Detachment" 11). In his own chapters on

the Confederation Poets, Daniells disregarded Klinck's editorial guidelines (Djwa 315),

approaching poetry of the early Confederation comparatively and in its postcolonial context.

He shows that a unique perspective on the Canadian landscape emerged with independence,

explaining the divergences and relationships with earlier verse of the English tradition (Klinck

and Bailey 191-207, 389-430). In famously claiming all Canadian writing revealed a common

Garrison Mentality, Frye's Conclusion to *LHC* would make post-colonialism a spiritual

quality that had not been achieved, rather than an actual political event which took place in

1867 with Confederation. While "no Canadian author pulls us away from the Canadian

context toward the centre of literary experience itself" (821-22), Canadian writers have

"identified the habits and attitudes of the country" which can be seen to constitute a "garrison

mentality" (849). In a letter written to Klinck before the printing of the revised edition of

Literary History of Canada, to cover the "explosion" of writing that took place during the

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[1]Robert Reid created the journal's classic design and Charles Morris of Victoria was selected its printer.

sixties, Daniells suggests that his own campaigning to the general editor for a history "in the introductory, critical and appreciative sense," had failed. He notes his, "growing distrust of the influence of [Frye] upon Can. Lit." (Daniells, "Letter from Daniells to Klinck").

The one hundred million dollar endowment of the Canada Council was accessible not only to the academics of *Literary History of Canada*, but also to the country's artists and writers. In surveying Canadian poetry of the sixties for the 1975 edition of the *Literary History of Canada*, Woodcock would trace between 1960 and 1973, "some 1,125 books of verse—not counting anthologies—that had been published by Canadian writers in the English language" (Woodcock, "Poetry" 284). This represented the work of 590 poets, but if younger poets writing in the "fugitive little magazines" were also included, "the total number of poets actively at work during this period would be nearer to 1,000" ("Poetry" 285). This was a far cry from the "twenty or so poets" representing Canadian verse at the outset of the decade:

> Nowadays poetry is not merely—in number of titles—the most published of all
> genres in Canada; it sells more reliably then fiction, and poets, recently derided,
> have become something very near to culture heroes, especially among the young,
> so that almost any modestly-known verse-writer can attract to a reading of his
> work enough poetry fanciers to fill reasonably large lectures halls on most
> Canadian campuses and most Canadian towns sophisticated enough to possess art
> galleries. ("Poetry" 286)

In Canada, radio is the cultural medium that emerged, with coast-to-coast train travel, to unite Canada. In the nationalistic sixties it was a poetry inflected by radio that united Canadian poets into a Confederation. Acoustic poetry oriented to performance, in a poetics that had "passed through" electronic media, was not conducive to the creation of the homogenous atemporal imagined community of the nation-state dependent on visual space produced by print.

Woodcock was a prolific critic of contemporary Canadian writing during the sixties. New

has located personal "preferences" in this criticism:

> He admired MacLennan's narrative sweep but not what he considered to by
>
> MacLennan's puritanical coyness; he found Callaghan's moral niceties laboured,
>
> a judgement that divided the two writers for many years; he has never warmed to
>
> Davies' mythologizing or what he saw as Hodgins's extravagances; but he praised
>
> Laurence's social compass, Atwood's incisive wit, John Glassco's decadent
>
> satires, Pat Lowther's integrity. (n. pag. New)

Woodcock, however, was not capricious in his criticism, and the basis of these assorted "judgements" lies in his adoption of a critical tradition passing through Orwell and Read. Woodcock finds Orwell's criticism to be "pragmatic," "descriptive and discriminative," distrustful of formal and academic methods, "historical," "eminently sociological," and concerned with "the differences in character and outlook" between writers, "rather than the differences in quality, which can never be determined exactly" (Woodcock, *Crystal Spirit* 291-303). This approach of Orwell is constituted by Woodcock as "moralistic" criticism: "Just as his political doctrines were really moral doctrines in disguise, so, ultimately literature also interested him for its moral implications" (*Crystal Spirit* 303). The function of criticism is to discover the moral positions a text has the reader adopt; the writer's success is evaluated in respect to its formal aspects. In Woodcock's 118-page study of MacLennan's work, it is the use of "stock clichès of romanticist fiction"—an unnatural deployment of form and technique—which reveals, "MacLennan incapable of dealing with any aspect of sex except in high-mindedly sentimental terms" (*Hugh MacLennan* 66-67). It is Callaghan's radical laconicism, his desire to puritanically strip language down to pure statement in his novels that produce moral parables without texture—shown, not in itself faulted, by Woodcock—but which become unsuccessful when characters are insufficiently distilled in keeping with this aesthetic strategy (*Odysseus Ever Returning* 26-35). Atwood's incisiveness, like her dominant themes of survival and metamorphosis, arise from a powerful use of metaphor, characterized only at the conclusion of Woodcock's analysis summarily as a "verbal accuracy" productive

of "moral sensitivity," able in Atwood's poetic world, to "accept the irrational as truer than the rational" (*Northern Spring* 284). The psychological, the sociological, the philosophical, and the mythological are invoked in the process of this interdisciplinary criticism—a "Canadian" criticism as Woodcock asserted in "A View of Canadian Criticism"—which focuses upon the integral relationship between a text's form and its moral content.

Woodcock was a late addition to the revised *LHC*'s editorial team. Klinck and Daniells had shot down Frye's recommendation of Margaret Atwood for the chapter on poetry ("Letter 16 December 1972"). Woodcock's contribution was well received by the editors, with the single common concern his remarks denying Frye's influence on the mythopoeic poets. The chapter went to print unaltered after Frye's approval. Woodcock also takes the opportunity to champion the non-academic critics of the period *LHC* did not represent:

> It has often been said that Frye, as a critic, profoundly influenced the
> mythopoeically inclined Canadian poets of the 1950s, but the case is hard to
> prove, as is any case for criticism, as such, influencing the imaginative activities
> of the poet. On the other hand, there is no doubt that poetry has influenced
> criticism ... In Canada between 1960 and 1973 not only was there an
> unprecedented volume of critical writing about our poets (published in essays but
> also in books dealing both with general trends and individual authors), but a
> significant proportion of the best of this kind of criticism was written by poets
> notably A.J.M. Smith, Mandel, Dudek, Bowering, Atwood, Jones, Daniells,
> Skelton, and Woodcock. Perhaps appropriately, it was poet-critics who
> developed most interestingly the mythological insights that came into Canadian
> criticism from Sir James Frazer by way of Northrop Frye. ("Poetry" 294)

In *The Times Literary Supplement*, in 1976, Woodcock would explain these Canadian developments as "poetic participatory democracy" meeting "literary nationalism": "What happened in poetry during the 1960s was analogous to the developments in counter-cultural politics: a kind of literary nationalism accompanied by a kind of poetic participatory

democracy" ("Of Place and Past"). Woodcock observes that Canadian poets established a trans-Canadian network during the period, while preserving, "the strong regionalist feelings that Canadian geography, its vast distances and differences, induces among contemporary Canadian poets as much as it does among other artists" ("Of Place and Past"). Livesay describes how *Canadian Literature* played an essential role in forming this network of links between diverse Canadian poets:

> It was a halcyon time when we believed there could be no more wars.[2] A strong feeling of Canadian nationalism had emerged after the war (as it had done before, after World War I). Book publishing was opening up possibilities for writers and the CBC was actually *paying* for stories, poems, plays! The outcome, eventually, was the setting up of two complementary institutions: the Canada Council and *Canadian Literature* . . . Although the journal *Canadian Literature* did not in its first decade publish verse, its critical reviews and articles on poetry were avidly sought for, devoured and discussed by those poets whose names have become known through publications in the "little mags" . . . (n. pag. Livesay, "Guru")

In discussing the early history of *Canadian Literature*, New observes how Woodcock helped maintain this network of writers through his voluminous personal correspondence and the critical encouragement he provided to unestablished authors ("George Woodcock, Canadian Critic").

In his editorials, Woodcock sought to represent the interests of Canadian writers, speaking out against the censorship of books and obscenity laws, promoting "centrifugal" decentralized publishing, and announcing other literary magazines founded across Canada during the period. As Glenn Deer has rightly observed, Woodcock sought in his editorials "to establish and maintain a lively critical dialogue on Canadian culture," demonstrating "passionate embodiment of the social responsibilities of the literary critic" (8-9). Woodcock would at

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[2]Livesay worked for Unesco in Paris in 1959 before teaching in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) between 1959 to 1963. She would found *Contemporary Verse 2* in 1975.

times adopt the hot voice of radio in using the journal as a *franc-tireur* tower, from which he sniped at centralist policies and bureaucracy. The CBC was a favourite target, particularly in its disregard for preserving and providing access to Canada's cultural history. Woodcock criticized the CBC vociferously in 1972 after discovering that it had destroyed 150 original tapes, "which includes the first acting versions of nearly thirty original Canadian plays." Again he complains that, "radio drama is a genre with which even scholars are not really familiar, because radio plays are very rarely published." Hoping that "the high officials of the CBC will pause for a while in their obsessive pursuit of ratings," Woodcock demands the creation of a complete archive, "adequately staffed and open to scholars who have up to now had very little opportunity to study intensively such interesting forms as the radio drama" (Woodcock, "Give the Corporation a Compass!" 5). The failure of the Crown Corporation to preserve and make accessible the country's *actual* oral, aural, and acoustic, trans-Canadian cultural history, opened the way for the *Literary History of Canada* to ideologically reconstitute Canada's collective cultural history as print-based, pronouncing on the writings of disparate regions and times a common national spirit of fear and weakness, an "imagined community" favourable to centralization. The explosion of "poetic participatory democracy" in the sixties, challenging the structuralism and classical imagery of mythopoeisis, brought the orality of radio to the page. In this way, it contributed to a different form of imagined community.

Throughout his tenure as editor of *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock invited Frye—who had ceased providing annual poetry reviews to the *UTQ* in 1959—to contribute. Frye turned down these requests, only once at length with his first reply of 1962, suggesting that his presence in the journal might inflate Canadian writers' sense of importance:

> the critic is a scholar and teacher ... if he spends more than five per cent of his
> time and energy on the current Canadian scene he is a rather poor creature. I
> suppose your terms of reference prevent you from going outside the Canadian
> orbit, but I do feel that the international context of all literature today is extremely

important for writers who without the sense of that context tend to get an

extremely provincial view of their own importance. (Frye, "Letter 7 May 1962")

Frye at this time was an internationalist in that he considered European and American writing

to meet the criteria of literature proper, while Canadian writing was irredeemably nativist. A

postscript seeks to clarify what Frye meant, implying perhaps, that Woodcock has opened

himself to his own charge against the "special treatment" of Canadian criticism in 1954 in

editing a journal dedicated to Canadian writing alone:

> The phrasing of that last sentence didn't work out properly: I don't mean
>
> Canadian writers are conceited and self-important: I mean that a purely Canadian
>
> context for a Canadian writer is unreal. All through the ten years that I was
>
> writing the UTQ poetry reviews I was conscious of the tension in critical
>
> standards between what was relevant to actual criticism and what was relevant to
>
> presenting Canadian poets to a Canadian audience. This tension grew to the point
>
> of being extremely uncomfortable: for the last year or so I felt trapped in a
>
> pseudo-critical problem. I don't know how much sense all of this makes. ("Letter
>
> 7 May 1962")

With a final failed attempt to extract a contribution from Frye for *Canadian Literature*,

Woodcock writes to him in January 1974:

> Still, I cannot help feeling sad that what may well have been the last excuse I
>
> shall have to tempt the best critic in Canada into writing in Canadian Literature
>
> should have failed. As, after fifteen years, I realize I shall soon have to give up
>
> the editorship of Canadian Literature for someone fresher to take my place, there
>
> does seem a great "voting of the feet," a great judgment on all one has attempted,
>
> in the fact that you alone among the good critics of Canada should never have
>
> appeared except in the small valedictory tribute to Ned Pratt. Perhaps I should
>
> not be saying this, and certainly I do not expect an answer. But there are
>
> moments when Godwinian sincerity breaks out and cannot be restrained.

(Woodcock, "Letter 7 January 1974")

In 1976, near the end of his editorship at *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock could declare that Canadian writing now exhibits a "pride of place and past," a regional patriotism for "experience intensely lived and understood," that has produced "mythology characterized by an almost chthonian attachment to the solid earth and flesh of here and then, memory incarnated into myth" ("Pride of Place and Past" 3). Woodcock would thus criticize the reigning thematic criticism for obscuring what was particular about contemporary Canadian writing ("Pride of Place and Past" 2). Woodcock redeploys Read's term for Surrealism in describing the aesthetic of the new Canadian literature which thematic critics fail to capture in their implicit attachment to the simplistic didacticism of the forties and fifties:

> this, I think, has led them to pay less than sufficient attention to the way in which
> Canadian geography and history are being used by our writers symbolically yet at
> the same time almost super-realistically to create a mythology very different from
> that developed by verse-writers in the 1940's … ("Pride of Place and Past" 2)

Woodcock saw Canadian literature during the long counter-cultural sixties as a phase of postcolonial growth, when the "place and past" of the region, Canadian geography and history, needed to be established. After departing from *Canadian Literature*, he would state that the next phase of cultural life in his own British Columbia would become increasingly transpacific, during when "growing contact with the Asian world will synthesize its Pacific and North American loyalties, as the loyalty to Britain implied in its name becomes a sentimental one, a matter of history rather than actuality" (*British Columbia: a History of the Province* 269). A Canadian literature had been attained so other cultural winds could freely blow within it. Woodcock believed Canadian writing throughout its entire history is devoid of utopias. This is because the country's inhabitants set out to build them: "in Europe men dreamed of utopias, but in North America they set about creating them as concrete entities, and often succeeded in sustaining them for generations, which did not happen in the urban pressures of Europe" ("An Absence of Utopias" 4). In championing writing that incarnated

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lost histories of place in the modern urbanized present—as Woodcock argued the novels of Laurence did preeminently—the "original human environments" of Canada returns to the present, reasserting the country as a diverse confederation of independent regions shaped and reshaped by the social imagination towards increasing freedom. It is the "unobtrusive cultivation of concrete freedoms (as distinct from abstract liberties) which characterizes the Canadian" (*Canada and the Canadians*).

In their critique of "Ontario imperialism masquerading as Federalism" (*Gabriel Dumont* 19), Woodcock's documentary-dramas examining Métis rebellion de-romanticize Canadian history and challenge the ascendant nationalism of the sixties. *Six Dry Cakes for the Hunted* is a documentary-drama produced in 1975 by Don Mowatt in Vancouver, the one CBC producer of the time carrying on the experimental documentary work in radio of Canadian composer Glenn Gould (Fink, "Radio Drama" 934). Through his engagement with McLuhan's work, Gould had introduced the layering of voices and other non-lineal acoustic techniques into his sound documentaries (Cavell, *McLuhan in Space* 164-66). Woodcock's play is an account of the failed North-West Rebellion from the perspective of Gabriel Dumont, adjunct general of the Métis under the leadership of Louis Riel. Merrill Denison was the first radio dramatist to treat Métis rebellion, in *Seven Oaks*, part of the Romance of Canada series. The Canadian National Railways Magazine in 1931 reports that 170 descendants of the Selkirk settlers and Métis were brought together at the Fort Garry hotel in Winnipeg to listen to the play, "carried across the Dominion by the Canadian National Railways' broadcast hook-up." The President of the CNR sent a telegram to the audience during the broadcast, and the audience replied in thanks afterwards, "delighted with the entertainment." In its glorification of the settlers, the article shows how the romanticization of the event by Denison could affect attitudes towards Canadian history:

> The Fort Garry Hotel was a fitting meeting place … Old Fort Garry presented a
> warlike front to the open prairie and the terrors of Indian and rebel halfbreed. It
> was on this spot that Louis Riel first found his power of leadership and it was here

that the crafty son of the old "Miller of the Seine" ordered the young Thomas

Scott to be shot, thus precipitating the rebellion of '85. (Edward)

Woodcock's treatment of the Métis rebellion challenges this English-Canadian aural history. The play incorporates Métis music and more acoustic elements to create scenes than did Woodcock's plays of the sixties. Prior to writing the script, Woodcock wrote the first biography of Dumont, *Gabriel Dumont: The Métis Chief and His Lost World* (1975). He would go on to translate the massive two-volume "The Métis in the Canadian West" (1986) by French anthropologist Marcel Giraud, a project which took Woodcock three years. In short, Woodcock was an expert in Métis history. The play is rich in historical detail that works for radio, but proved a disaster, Woodcock recounts, when the play was eventually brought to the stage. The dramatic action is minimal and largely effected through sound.

The play begins in the United States and unfolds as a recounting of the Rebellion by the exiled Dumont. The illiterate Dumont was a gifted linguist, speaking six languages, and Woodcock recreates his style of oration from existing transcripts. In its complete absence of grandeur and boasting, Dumont's oral epic does not echo the heroes of Homer:

> Our fathers were French, our mothers were Indian. We though we were both, but
>
> in fact we were neither, and our lives were crushed in the gap between. We called
>
> ourselves a nation, but the world did not, because the world is not interested in
>
> little peoples. Why should you be, Monsieur le Commandant?

The play contrasts Louis Riel, religious and utopian, with the guerrilla military strategist Dumont, direct, a person of action:

> RIEL
>
> God will give us the sign, Gabriel. He will tell us how to act, and when.
>
> DUMONT:
>
> God works through men, Louis. On the buffalo hunt we never waited for the
>
> game to search us out. We sought them, and God blessed our diligence.
>
> RIEL:

What do we need that God has not provided?

DUMONT:

More men. More arms. More ammunition. And more deeds.

Riel's faith in providence dooms the Rebellion. Whereas he chooses surrender and martyrdom, Dumont chooses survival and exile. Woodcock had also written a radio play on Riel in 1967, *Defender of the Past*, the title expressing the view Woodcock "always held of Riel." Woodcock wrote the play for the centennial as a way of opposing national sentiment:

> to counter in some way the kind of blind complacency that marked and marred
> the patriotic face we were expected to wear in that year. If others were
> celebrating Sir John A., I preferred to celebrate his most notable victim, and to
> draw attention to the crimes against individuals and minorities that were part of
> the fabric from which the union of Canada, like almost every other major political
> achievement of its kind, was constructed. I gave Dumont—not Riel—the last
> words in the play; my own feelings spoke through them.
>
>> They will hang him. They dare not let him live.
>>
>> But they will not escape his shadow
>>
>> darkening across their future.
>
> (Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont* 8)

In *Gabriel Dumont*, Woodcock reflects on why Dumont, a hero in the classical sense, had been ignored by Canadian writers for countless dramatic treatments of Riel, the martyr. It is because Canadians "distrust heroes," Woodcock suggests, but martyrs should be regarded with similar suspicion:

> But why, rejecting the heroes, do we identify so easily with the martyrs who,
> though they may be imposed upon, impose on us in their turn as much as the
> heroes do, but in different ways: by their weakness rather than their strength, by a
> kind of resigned and destined obstinacy rather than by a wilful courage? Both

heroes and martyrs succeed—even if they die in the achievement—through their

power of *shaming* other men, of making them lose face with themselves, and that

is an irrational appeal which can lead to totally negative ends, which can be and is

exploited. 'The bloom of the martyrs is the seed of the Church' is a statement not

only about faith, but also about power. And Riel's body was hardly cold off the

gallows before his martyrdom was being used for the ends of power of Canadian

politicians like Honoré Mercier. (*Gabriel Dumont* 10)

In mythologizing the prairie's lost world through Dumont, *Six Dry Cakes* makes it difficult for

the listener to impose her own world onto the Métis. The focus remains on the world of a

people brought to an end by a Canadian imperialism moving westward. Woodcock also uses

the play to critique the Cold War Canadian psychography, as he did in earlier plays such as

Maskerman:

direct people like Dumont embarrass us with the unspoken demand that we

imitate their strengths or their virtues. Riel was more devious, with deeper

ambiguities of intent; he belongs to a world more like our own, more conscious of

twilight than of dawn. He seems the personification of a besieged minority and

most Canadians see themselves as members of besieged minorities. (*Gabriel*

Dumont 14)

Writing in the mid-seventies for the *Times Literary Supplement*, reporting to the literary

world he departed twenty-five years before on the current literature of his readopted country,

Woodcock registers his lament for a political federation in the emerging era of globalization

and neo-nationalism: "Often one feels that if a true federalism survives anywhere in Canada,

it does so among the artists with their intense local loyalties and their countrywide links" ("Of

Place and Past" 575). Woodcock would continue to insist, as he does in 1981, that Canada is

"not a unitary nation. We are in cultural terms, as we should be in political terms, a

confederation of regions" (*Meeting* 38). On Woodcock's analysis, Pierre Eliot Trudeau

embraced federalism in the mid-sixties as he manoeuvred into Liberal leadership, then

abandoned it once in office to reassert centralist government in the tradition of Sir John A.

Macdonald (*Confederation Betrayed!* 7-11). Woodcock had placed hopes in Trudeau,

admiring his confederationist political writings of the sixties. In 1969 Woodcock speaks

enthusiastically about the "extraordinary shift" in the country's politics following Expo

67:

> precipitated when the Liberal Party chose for its leader an eccentric and attractive
>
> French-Canadian intellectual, and so placed itself at the head of a movement that
>
> united the alienated young and those of all ages discontented with restrictive and
>
> puritanical outlooks. In the election that followed, in June 1968, Pierre Elliott
>
> Trudeau was swept to power by a majority not only in Ontario and Western
>
> Canada, but also among those French Canadians whose loyalty to Confederation
>
> had so shortly before seemed in the extremest doubt. (*Canada and the Canadians*
>
> 18-19)

Woodcock was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1951 to write what became

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1956), the first intellectual biography in English of the French

theorist of confederation. In discussing Trudeau's shift to centralism, Woodcock cites

Proudhon's experience in parliament after elected to the French National Assembly.

Proudhon observed how he lost touch with the interests and world of the people he sought to

represent because of the isolation created in the bubble of parliamentary life (*Confederation

Betrayed!* 39).[3] Harold Innis had written in 1923 that, "Western Canada has paid for the

development of Canadian nationality, and it would appear that it must continue to pay. The

acquisitiveness of eastern Canada shows little sign of abatement" (294). Woodcock believed

Trudeau treated the West and its people "as enemies," because he knew nothing about that part

of the country (*Confederation Betrayed!* 240). It was during the era of Trudeau as Prime

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[3]While it is true that the ideas of Proudhon had circulation within global flows of the nineteenth century, and that his influence on the Paris Commune of 1871 was "immeasurably" greater than that of Marx, as Woodcock points out in *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, there is no scholarly evidence to suggest his theoretical revitalization of federalism affected the drafting of the British North America Act in 1864.

Minister that the Canada Council became compromised in Woodcock's analysis, reflecting the centralism of Trudeau (*Strange Bedfellows* 62).

In the wake of the October Crisis of 1970, during which Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act, Woodcock wrote an article published in *The Canadian Forum* entitled "A Plea for the Anti-Nation." "We are already living," Woodcock suggests, "at the beginning of what Northrop Frye has called the post-nationalist age (in McLuhan's dim perception, the global village)" (Nelles, Rotstein, and Woodcock 6). Woodcock contends that federalism is the form of political organization best suited to the new realities of this age, giving Canada a head start over most other countries:

> Central to the whole conception of a post-national world is that of federalism, and
>
> here Canada has the kind of start that an ill-considered exercise in centralization
>
> would merely ruin. Already, in name, Canada is a federation, not a nation, and
>
> this fact, which has survived the efforts of centralizers ever since the days of Sir
>
> John A. Macdonald, reflects a realization of our country's destiny, to which,
>
> almost against their wills, the Fathers of Confederation had to bow. (6-7)

Confederation is the political entailment of Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism, to support "a society open within itself because it is fully participatory, and open towards the world, inclusive and not exclusive; a society which other countries, under the spur of disaster, may find an example worth the imitation" (7). Such a society involves changes in how politics are conducted so as to facilitate participatory and cooperative citizenship:

> Today we conduct political life by means of coercion and confrontation. In a
>
> post-national world we shall have to conduct it by co-operation, consensus, and
>
> participation, and to devise the means to make this possible involves a profound
>
> reconsideration of political structures and political goals alike. (6)

In his book *The Monk and His Message: Undermining the Myth of History*, Woodcock defends "'impossible' proposals." He observes that the Tibetans had lived peaceably with animals prior to the invasion, and on accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, the Dalai Lama made

an "impossible" suggestion to transform Tibet into "a Zone of Ahimsa" to restore that harmony (Woodcock, *Undermining History* 5-10). Shortly after, a vast area of wildlife habitat in far northern Tibet was discovered unspoiled and an international agreement was signed to protect it (*Undermining History* 8). Woodcock perceives impossibility to depend on a false reification of History in the interest of political control:

> I have brought forward the Dalai Lama and his "impossible" proposal with a
> broader intent: to challenge the historical assumptions under which we have
> tended to live for many centuries, and especially the assumption that outside
> written history, which is the selective recording of actual events, there exists a
> shaping force with its own laws that is called History (with a capital H) and that
> has been invoked by totalitarians everywhere. (*Undermining History* 9)

A journal of Canadian literature was an "impossible" proposal within Cold War constraints promotive of literary History. Woodcock's article in the *Canadian Forum* is also an "impossible" proposal. A confederate Canada is advocated to foster "pollution control and for the intelligent use of the world's resources." Canada must be a place where people, cultures, and institutions may create themselves without imposition from the "power-hunger tempered by self-delusion"—Woodcock quotes Orwell—that defines nationalism (Nelles, Rotstein, and Woodcock 6). Woodcock demands "that we abandon the image of the pyramid in thinking of society and substitute that of a mosaic" (7), a perspective on Canada first advocated in the thirties by John Murray Gibbon, defender of decentralized radio. Woodcock rejects, citing Proudhon, any formal constitution, "for the society of the future must be based on voluntary decisions, and hence it must be liable to perpetual revision. This means a more varied and flexible kind of social and political organization than we have yet known" (8). As the article is of the sort that opens itself up to debate, the editors of *Canadian Forum*, Viv Nelles and Abraham Rotstein, circulated the essay to numerous political thinkers in Canada for their assessments. The editors received eleven responses and published them with Woodcock's as the book *Nationalism or Local Control* (1972).

The political structure Woodcock advocates is one in which Canada becomes comprised of "free cities … of provincial status, and the devolution of the provinces into federations of regions determined by geographical and economic interests" (9). This would foster "rural nuclei of activity" that might slow metropolitan growth and restore a balance between town and country. True federalism Woodcock suggests, in keeping with Proudhon, involves an economics in which a community of producers control their means of work but not the destination of their product. The model of public decision-making within this structure minimizes remote control, so that rural and small town interests cannot dictate policies in the cities, which readily occurs with provincial governments, while maximizing responsibility through participation and democratic initiative:

> any decision of any kind that affects only a local group must be reached by that
> group alone, and by consensus if possible. District and regional boards would
> consist of elected delegates, subject to immediate recall if they acted against the
> obvious wishes of their constituents. Beyond that level, provincial and federal
> assemblies would be elevated under similar provisions, which should greatly trim
> the arrogance of political leaders, and, to ensure the prompt response to rapidly
> changing social needs that is essential in our era, the referendum and the initiative
> would be brought into all levels of government. (9)

Woodcock concedes that a fully federated Canada will result in lower material prosperity for the wealthy. But the unsustainable and "steady depletion of the world's resources" necessitates an economics that produces equity, participation, and job satisfaction. Woodcock looks to technology "for the simplification rather than complication of production, for the reduction in size of manufacturing units and power grids, for the recycling of materials and the use of renewable forms of energy" (10). Federalism does not limit its conception of progress, as socialism and communism do, to increasing wealth for increasing numbers of people. Rather than systematically imputing its own understanding of the good as materialism onto assorted peoples in differing geographies, federalism admits to social and cultural differences

within large geographical areas, for it arises from a mutual interest for alliance to preserve respective self-determinations under threat of external imperial forces.

The Confederation in 1867, Woodcock shows in *Canada and the Canadians*, resulted from the alliance of very different Canadas that shared a common interest, resistant to becoming part of the United States or be ruled by Britain. As a political ideal it came about through discourse between the regions of Canada and was inevitably conceded to by the centralist Sir John A. Macdonald who himself had desired a legislative union upon which to base a "Kingdom of Canada" (Woodcock, *Canada and the Canadians* 129-136). It is the lingering Victorianism of Macdonald on Woodcock's view that has hindered progress towards complete federalism in Canada, resulting in the historical antagonisms between central and provincial Canadian governments:

> Ideally, the federal form is doubtless the best of all administrative patterns, particularly for a large country, but there is much truth in the anarchist contention that it will be ultimately successful only when the central government is reduced to a coordinating committee between autonomous regions. All confederations which have attempted to balance strong central power against effective local power have experienced recurrent strife between the different levels of authority. (*Canada and the Canadians* 141)

Amongst the responses to Woodcock's "Plea," Desmond Morton and D.I. Davies express their own reservations regarding nationalism without endorsing Woodcock's proposal. Christian Bay advocates internationalism while Norman Ward and George Rawlyk express more traditional regionalist positions. Several socialists are represented, such as New Democrat Party Leader Ed Broadbent, sympathetic to Woodcock's concerns, but advocating a combination of local autonomy and increased state power. A variety of nationalist arrangements are also proposed. In the contexts of an emerging globalization and the proliferation of new nationalisms, Woodcock's confederated regional cosmopolitanism, entailing an environmentalism ahead of its time, thus had "apparently few enthusiastic

adherents among our contributors," Nelles and Rotstein note in their introduction to the collection (vii).

Woodcock would later argue that the establishment of confederate Canada—itself a word of the First Nations—followed the North American precedents set by the Confederation of Iroquois tribes and the Blackfoot Confederacy of the Plains, which were "essentially systems of participatory democracy":

> The tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy would usually meet each summer in a
> common camp on the western plains, and there, matters of common
> interest—usually mutual defence and shared raiding enterprises—would be
> discussed without obligation on any side; there was never, so far as I have been
> able to ascertain, any permanent council of the Blackfoot Confederacy. The
> Iroquois tribes during their pre-Canadian period did have a common council of
> sachems, in whose selection the women, whose influence derived from their
> control of agriculture, played a great role; but this council did not interfere in the
> internal affairs of the tribes, so that it remained the co-ordinating body of a true
> confederation rather than the government of the state. It seems to me that this
> history of anarchic and federalist organization, based on the negation of
> centralized political authority, gives the Indians a position of special advantage in
> the modern world—once they can gain the economic basis of a fair land
> settlement. Then they will be in a marvellous position to *reculer pour mieux*
> *sauter*, to draw on the lessons of their own past to help them rebuild their
> societies. We, the others, might learn a great deal about ways to solve our own
> problems by watching them. They have developed more political sophistication,
> and groups like the Inuit and the Dene, so disunited before, now consider
> themselves "nations," though by this they do not mean "nation-states" but groups
> of people with their own languages, land, and traditions. There is no Indian
> "nation" because the variety of native traditions leaves no room for one, and no

thought of an "Indian" state exists. The aims of native people today lean rather

towards establishing a number of small self-governing sovereignties with federal

links with the rest of Canada. And why not, since Canada's destiny is surely a

confederal one in need of experimental social and political forms? (Finkel and

Woodcock 13)

Critical rapprochements with McLuhan in recent decades have shown that rather than the technological determinist many early theorists dismissed him as, McLuhan's work entails a processive post-Marxian dialectic as Paul Grosswiler has argued in *The Method is the Message* (1998), seeking agency for all members of society conceived as actors and artists. As Richard Cavell has demonstrated in *McLuhan in Space* (2002), McLuhan believed a society understanding of media and its effects is capable of reprogramming psychogeography where "virtual space and physical space are fused as mythic form," as Janine Marchessault explains (213). McLuhan conceived Canada, with its "low-profile identity" constituted by "multiple borderlines"—unwalled "resonating intervals" productively interfacing between differences—as an exemplary social structure for the post-national electronic age (McLuhan, "Canada: The Borderline Case" 246-248). McLuhan's work suggests a geographically situated cosmopolitanism of diversity, rather than one of universality (Cavell, "McLuhan's 'Borderline Case' Revisited" 45). It is from this perspective that McLuhan's efforts to influence Trudeau must be approached. McLuhan, like Woodcock, was a supporter of Trudeau in 1968, and in his first letter to the new Prime Minister, advocates a flexible "mosaic" and "probing" style of politics rather than one of "fixed positions" and "targets." McLuhan explains that Canada had a key advantage in the electric age for not having participated in Europe's 19th century with its mechanical orientation ("Letter to Trudeau 16 April 1968" 351). In his collections of essays *The Century that Made Us: Canada 1814-1914* (1989), Woodcock argues complementarily that the internal tensions Canada experienced and grappled with during the nineteenth century helped create a different sort of nation. Free from the authoritarian approaches of Europe, Canadians were able and compelled to develop a

flexible society accepting of difference, one which could successfully convert radical rebellions into practical reforms.

Later in 1968, McLuhan would begin advising Trudeau on how to use the media to his advantage, while asserting the necessity for political "decentralism":

> Canada is the only country in the world that has never had a national identity. In an age when all homogenous nations are losing their identity images through rapid technological change, Canada alone can 'keep its cool.' We have never been committed to a single course or goal. This is now our greatest asset.
>
> ("Letter to Trudeau 2 December 1968" 359)

The phrase "participatory democracy" was a highly successful campaign slogan of Trudeau, as Frye explains in 1968, for "this was instantly what the Canadian public knew that it wanted. Whether it gets it from Trudeau is another matter" (Frye and O'Grady 94). In the context of escalating attacks of the *Front de libération du Quèbec*, leading up to the October crisis of 1970, McLuhan would caution Trudeau that "any conventional bureaucracy becomes a police state when speeded up by a new technology"; that existing "political structures become 'works of art' as they are scrapped by new technology" ("Letter to PM Office 2 March 1970" 401). As an alternative to regressing towards a police state, McLuhan suggests a program that would involve people more directly in their tribalized corporate world, to address the "learned ignorance" and "trained incapacity" that "flourishes as never before in our bureaucratic society" (McLuhan, "Letter to PM Office 2 March 1970" 401). It is no longer possible to prevent people from directly participating in their corporate environment, and enabling their involvement, McLuhan argues, is the appropriate solution. The planet has become "a global theatre with the audience as actor. Hence the new politics of 'unrest'. The public has no intention of remaining in the spectator role" ("Letter to PM Office 2 March 1970" 402).

O'Grady has noted the shifting cultural importance Frye grants the nation, the international, and the region over the course of his career. In "Canada and Its Poetry," the 1943 review of Smith's *Anthology*, it was the nation that was the right unit for culture:

The province or region . . . is usually a vestigial curiosity to be written up by

some nostalgic tourist. The imperial and the regional are both inherently

anti-poetic environments, yet they go hand in hand; and together they make up

what I call the colonial in Canadian life. (Frye, "Canada and its Poetry" 29)

During the sixties, Frye's writing appears to advocate a cosmopolitan internationalism.

O'Grady draws attention to the 1966 essay "Design as a Creative Principle in the Arts," which

conceives all culture in the electronic age to originate from major centres—rather than

emanating from the margins as McLuhan argued in "Canada: A Borderline Case." Frye

writes in his "Conclusion" to *LHC*: "There are no provinces in the empire of aeroplane and

television, and no physical separation from the centres of culture, such as they are.

Sensibility is no longer dependent on a specific environment or even on sense experience

itself" ("Conclusion" 822). He foresees in this world an aesthetics of pure imaginative

structure. The "poetry of the future," as the poems of Pratt hint, is that in which "physical

nature has retreated" and "only individual and society are left as effective factors in the

imagination" ("Conclusion" 848). The later Frye would acknowledge that a Canadian

literature had come into existence: "there is such a thing as Canadian literature now"

("Communications" 594); a "growing recognition," as he puts it in a 1980 interview, "of

Canadian literature outside Canada, and a growing response to it which I find almost

miraculous. I don't understand what people on the continent of Europe get out of Canadian

literature" (*A World in a Grain of Sand* 183). Frye would also join the majority in the "voting

of the feet" by claiming that this Canadian literature was regional and decentralized. In 1980,

Frye states that "regionalism and literary maturity seem to grow together." Woodcock is

mentioned in a disconnected way:

In his book *Odysseus Ever Returning* George Woodcock quotes a review by Oscar

Wilde in which Wilde praises an American writer for being concerned with the

literature he loves rather than the country in which he lives, adding "the Muses

care so little for geography." . . . But the last comment seems to me dead wrong.

> No Muse can function outside human space and time, that is, outside geography
>
> and history. (Frye, O'Grady, and Staines, *Northrop Frye on Canada* 552)

Again in 1981, Frye expresses his view of a decentralized Canadian literature. The meeting
of time and space is conceived as a law of maturation that is in keeping with Frye's model of
cultural development derived early in his academic career from the work of Oswald
Spengler:

> The Canadian critic George Woodcock, reviewing English Canadian poetry for
>
> the decade 1960-1970, found himself confronted with a thousand volumes,
>
> exclusive of anthologies . . . Much of this increase is a by-product of a socially
>
> decentralizing movement, especially in fiction. As one previously inarticulate
>
> region after another has formed an orbit for the imagination, we discover that
>
> "Canada," culturally speaking, is really an aggregate of smaller areas stretching
>
> from Vancouver Island to the Avalon peninsula in Newfoundland. Here Canada
>
> has followed the rhythm of American literature, which has always been strongly
>
> regional. It seems to be a law of literature that the more strictly limited its
>
> environment is, the more universal its appeal. (*Northrop Frye on Canada* 149)

Frye's incipient decentralism is first apparent in 1968. Consulted by the research arm of
the newly formed Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, Frye
perceives a connection between anarchism and Canada in an advocation for localized and
decentralized radio and television in the country. During Canada's Centennial the year
before, Paul Goodman who began his career publishing in *NOW*, gave the CBC Massey
lectures published as *Like a Conquered Province*, advocating Canada's unique
decentralization as a challenge to the "moral ambiguity" of America. In the recorded
conversation with André Martin and Rodrigue Chiasson, Frye argues that the Canada of the
"two solitudes" is an inherently anarchist country:

> Thirty years ago the great radical movement was international Communism,
>
> which took no hold in Canada at all . . . The radical movement of our time is

anarchist and that means that it's local and separate and breaks down into small

units. That's our tradition and that's our genius. Think of Toronto or Montreal

… after the Second World War, we took in displaced persons from Europe to

something like one-quarter to one-fifth of the population. … Because Canada is

naturally anarchist, these people settled down into their own communities; they

work with other communities and the whole pattern of life fits it. I do think we

have to keep a very wide open and sympathetic eye towards radical movements in

Canada, because they will be of an anarchist kind and they will be of a kind of

energy that we could help liberate … the ideal of anarchism is not the shellfish,

the carapace, the enclosed, isolated group. It's rather the self-contained group

that feels itself a community and because it's a community it can enter into

relations with others. (Frye and O'Grady 92-93)

The confused response Frye received from the term "anarchist" likely discouraged him

from using it again. Woodcock would conceive this Canadian "genius" as not "ours," but

originating with the First Nations peoples who settled the continent. Europeans had depended

on learning from Aboriginal peoples from their very arrival. In his geographical history of

Canada *Canada and the Canadians*, written in the late sixties, Woodcock shows how

European settlement into Canada hinged crucially on the hospitality of Aboriginal peoples

and the techniques that had been developed to integrate into Canada's challenging

geographies. It was only by imitating the practices of the First Nations, "by borrowing and

adapting their inventions" (Woodcock, *Canada and the Canadians* 62), that the *coureur de

bois* and the voyageurs were able to undertake exploration, hunting, and trade:

Debate swirls around the question of federation and the status of Quebec and one

hears constantly the phrases 'founding races' and 'founding peoples'. To the

stranger's surprise, these are not Indians and Eskimos, but French and English.

The people who laid the real foundations of human existence on the North

American continent are referred to as 'native peoples'. The implications of this

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distinction are that the Indians and the Eskimos merely occupied the land, as the

buffalo and the cariboo did. The building of a civilization and of a nation was the

achievement of those who came afterwards. (*Canada and the Canadians* 63)

For Woodcock, the betrayal of the Canadian Confederation began well before Trudeau.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The regionalist and cosmopolitan dimensions of Woodcock's work started to take shape in the thirties and forties, within currents outside the dominant strains of Leftist modernism and socialism. Through his pacifism, Woodcock became an anarchist, adopting Read's philosophy of art. The regional dimension of his thought, as we have seen, is partly indebted to the epistemological realism that accompanied British modernist art and poetics. It is a philosophy in which the world produces beliefs, as the prairies themselves determined the form of Hulme's imagism. To this Woodcock added the sociopolitical dimension of history, the past critiquing and integrating the present through its artistic remediation. This was a recasting of the Surrealist inheritance of Woodcock aesthetics. He maintained an interest in ancient cultures as having sociopolitical import for the modern world, but would come to challenge the primitivism and Romanticism associated with this anti-imperialist perspective. Romantic or symbolic impositions of meaning to the artefacts of another culture, as the radio drama *The Island of Demons* suggests, are rejected by Woodcock as an act of imperial de-culturation. In "the meeting of time and place" he proposed a deromanticized aesthetic for Canadian literature to empower the surrealist imagination for regional and confederate ends. His own travel writing participated in the post-Surrealist development of psychogeography. Woodcock's regionalist perspective and his cosmopolitanism were deepened through an

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attention to history he had learned from Kropotkin. As Anderson has observed, Kropotkin and the nineteenth-century anarchists involved with Freedom Press had unprecedented mobility and global engagement, and this was reflected in Woodcock's *NOW* and *War Commentary* which had transoceanic distribution and reflected sociopolitical concerns extending beyond the London milieu. *NOW* was crucial to the global fusion of anarchism and the arts that contributed to the rise of sixties' counter-culture.

The idea of cultural exchange fostering world peace was globally institutionalized in a particular form after the horrors of WW2. While rejecting the artistic utopia and the universalism it entailed, Woodcock would uphold Read's understanding of the dialectical relationship between art and society in seeking to theorize the emergence of a postcolonial Canadian culture. With Orwell, Woodcock grants art a moral purpose, finding through his criticism the specific ways in which literature affects the attitudes and behaviour of a society. In the temporal and geographical specificity of its content, art is able to resound beyond its own region, and Woodcock succeeded in helping shift Canadian literature towards greater democratization in introducing this regional cosmopolitanism to the Canadian cultural landscape at a decisive moment. Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism became elaborated and de-universalized through interdisciplinary study of societies and their cultures, first in Asia. Intercultural exchange involves a dialectical and active process of learning: a poetics, a philosophical idea, the understanding of an artistic work, a scientific theory, undergo transformation in the spacetime of another region. Woodcock's work shows that the cosmopolitanism of culture, its mobility, is what produces healthy societies capable of responding to global dynamics. This is a departure from Read insofar as the static exchange of meanings through archetype and the "universal" unconscious is rejected.

In Canada, Woodcock regionalized his language. He took to the radio to challenge the Canadian cold war psychography, a psychogeography he believed to be infected by European imperialism, attempting to instil a consciousness of responsibility and political critique. As an early critic of Canadian literature, he challenged nationalistic didacticism and moral

prudery as lingering elements of the Victorian age. In editing *Canadian Literature* he sought to define the study of Canadian writing through a cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary criticism, eschewing nationalistic thematics and the formalism of New Criticism. In developing a postcolonial Canadian literature, he championed socially and historically engaged writing of the Canadian region, believing that work eliding its own environment was colonialist. His ethics encouraged the influx of new cultural trends, even those that did not personally appeal. As editor of the journal, he spoke out against political impositions that would curtail a writer's freedom, and promoted regional federation of Canadian arts and literature. Woodcock challenged the centralist efforts of the Canadian government to reinforce the nation-state through the institutionalization of national culture, and sought to give the Canadian public its actual cultural history, through his own historical writings and in demands of the CBC to provide open access. The cultural future of British Columbia, Woodcock asserted, lay in both its Asian and North American loyalties, a place where art becomes neither East nor West.

His normative region-to-region cosmopolitan engagements in Asia, beginning with the relationship he formed with the Dalai Lama, led to the establishment of Vancouver affinity groups that provide material support to exiled Tibetans and Indian villagers whose plight under the caste system had not been improved with national independence. His cultural activities in India, where modernist writers were already developing a postcolonial literature, would lend support to the regionalist cosmopolitanism he sought out for Canada. His regionalism did not reject national-level policies in support of the arts, provided administration of funds was entirely to facilitate the intentions of the artist herself. Hopes that the culture of difference and dynamic unity he saw developing during the sixties would lead to political changes were disappointed, and Woodcock considered the centralizing efforts of the Trudeau government a betrayal of confederation. His dramatic writing of this period sought to show how the imperialism of one Canadian region destroyed the organic societies of others. He suggested that the First Nations of Canada might offer more sophisticated political models

for the integration of Canadian society and its regions in a post-national age, once they have achieved their full and rightful independence. He encouraged Ottawa politicians to devolve power to the regions and to their cities to foster greater civic participation and environmental responsibility. Woodcock advocated a regional patriotism, productive of care for one's environment, its inhabitants, and the restitution and negotiation of local history. A patriotic regionalism extends into active concern for the planet as a whole by restoring an innate sense of responsibility at the regional level.

In its regionalism, derived from anarchist geography and epistemological realism, Woodcock's cosmopolitanism differs from all "adjectival cosmopolitanisms" arising from the philosophical tradition of idealism passing through Kant and Hegel. It rejects any conception of culture as a conceptual scheme somehow separate from society. It also spurns the romantic concept of "nature" as something separate from society and art. For Woodcock, culture itself is the endless interplay of traditions within a specific region. Regional cosmopolitanism thus rejects multiculturalism insofar as that model implies static cultures separate from one another in a homogenous space and disengaged from dialectic relations to social development. As a postcolonial theory it suggests that independence as nationalism, in a country as large and as disparate as Canada, exchanges one imperialism for another. In this, he was in agreement with Frye and McLuhan. These three theorists can be seen as the foundational representatives of a diversified Canadian critical school that emerged in dynamic unity from the unprecedented cultural conditions of Canada's long sixties: people living side-by-side take on the responsibility of their own governance, united with others through dynamic cultural exchange. This is an open confederation, dependent on the influx of persons and cultures. Woodcock's regional cosmopolitanism provides a model for the post-national global age in which the world's manifold places are connected to each other and to the earth itself in all its diversity. In this, human beings share common ground.

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