

HOWARD O'HAGAN'S "TAY JOHN": MAKING NEW WORLD MYTH

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SITTING IN THE ROCKIES in the fall of 1913, Rupert Brooke reflected on the differences between the Old World and the New: "Look as long as you like upon a cataract of the New World, you shall not see a white arm in the foam. A godless place. And the dead do not return."¹ His conclusion that the New World was defective in its lack of an indigenous mythology was a critical commonplace at least a century old.² Because a foundation of oral literature — myth, legend, epic, and folktale — has been regarded since the early nineteenth century as essential to a great national literature, anxiety about Canada's lack of such a foundation has been recurrent, as recently as in George Grant's *Technology and Empire* (1969):

When we go into the Rockies we may have the sense that the gods are there. But if so, they cannot manifest themselves to us as ours. They are the gods of another race, and we cannot know them because of what we are, and what we did. There can be nothing immemorial for us except the environment as object.³

Like Grant, Howard O'Hagan sensed a "presence"⁴ in the mountains. He has, however, written a novel deriving its impact from the consistent refusal of the divine to manifest itself, a novel in which revelation is invariably suspect. The failure of revelation that causes Grant, a Platonist and a Christian, such regret, inspires O'Hagan to produce an anti-Platonist and agnostic text which, paradoxically, is filled with mythic power.⁵

The passage in O'Hagan's *Tay John* that most clearly begs to be considered as the author's own manifesto on the relation of myth and reality is this description of the nature of story by the novel's main narrator, Jackie Denham:

[Tay John's] story, such as it is, like himself, would have existed independently of me. Every story — the rough-edged chronicle of a personal destiny — having its source in a past we cannot see, and its reverberations in a future still un-lived — man, the child of darkness, walking for a few short moments in unaccustomed light — every story only waits, like a mountain in an untravelled land, for someone to come close, to gaze upon its contours, lay a name on it and relate it to the known world. Indeed, to tell a story is to leave most of it untold. You mine it, as

you take ore from the mountain. You carry the compass around it. You dig down — and when you have finished, the story remains, something beyond your touch, resistant to your siege; unfathomable, like the heart of the mountain. You have the feeling that you have not reached the story itself, but have merely assaulted the surrounding solitude.⁶

Tay John's story is his life, which has the same "presence," plenitude, and reality as a mountain. Thus Denham's version of it is of necessity incomplete, since "what [reality] is no one ever knows in a world of make-believe." Even to tell the story is a violent reduction of it, a kind of warfare ("siege"), and a kind of assault. The analogy made in this passage to mining is carried further in the novel: Tay John, on his initiation fast, goes up a river valley, where he discovers some heavy, glittering, black, bitter sand, which he brings back as proof that he did not lie about where he went. Later, white men discover it to be gold ore, and their subsequent intrusion on the territory of the Shuswap reduces that tribe to a starving, diseased remnant. Thus, even though Denham is "refining" Tay John's story into gold, the refining process is reductive and violent. The "essence," the "pure" element is inadequate.

O'Hagan inverts the values of light and dark throughout the novel: the dark sand is, as ore, more valuable than the processed gold. The unknowable, labelled variously *shadow*, *mystery*, *reality*, is what makes the light valuable. Thus any story, if it is to be of value, must constantly allow the unknown upon which it is built to intrude. The story must reveal itself as a facile explanation for the inexplicable:

For your backwoodsman is a thorough gossip. . . . He pays for a meal, for a night's lodging, with a tale. His social function is to hand on what he has heard, with the twist his fancy has been able to add. . . . What he has not seen he deduces, and what he cannot understand he explains.

In making the point that no story is complete, O'Hagan undermines to varying degrees several dominant and interconnected Western ideologies: idealism, Christianity, patriarchy, class, and capitalism. In fact, O'Hagan's text, in its self-consciousness about the fictive quality of *all* versions of reality, elicits the label "post-modernist" despite its 1939 publication date. O'Hagan's replacement of divine authority in the making of myth, indeed his replacement of even a human author by a collective "intertextuality" connects him to post-structuralism. His definition of story in terms of material, historical, and ideological constraints rather than in terms of individual artistry can be connected to Marxist criticism. But O'Hagan's epistemological concern is not obtrusive. Rather he works at the level of myth, dismantling the famous "stories" used to shore up these ideologies. *Myth* is used here loosely, as O'Hagan appears to use it, to include a wide variety of conventional patterns: native myth and local legend; literary genres, modes, and archetypes; popular stereotypes; and even intellectual categories. All are or

have been accepted widely and uncritically as true, and used as valid ways of viewing the world.⁷

Although particular myths can be revealed as instruments commonly used more to oppress than to liberate, they can only be dismantled, never destroyed — at least not without destroying Western culture itself. O'Hagan therefore rigs up a new myth out of the pieces of the old ones, revealing in the process how it's done. His "enemy" in this novel, then, is not myth, but the belief in one complete immutable myth: the Truth. It is impossible to think or talk without believing in something, starting from somewhere, standing on some taken-for-granted ground. But in *Tay John* those who refuse to shift ground, or to feel the ground shifting under their feet, are defeated, while those who wonder and doubt survive. Since realism panders to the reader's desire to think the world can be comprehended, O'Hagan wages war on this mode in particular, forcing his readers out of its illusory "real" world, making them consider interpretations other than the "commonsense" ones. The world he moves them into is filled with the elements of myth, but, unlike the Old World myth, immutable, authoritarian, timeless, and universal, his New World myth is rather a paradigm of myth, revealing how myth is created to suit a particular need in a particular time and place. In the middle section of the novel, narrated by Denham, O'Hagan undermines various Western ideologies. In the "frame," he shows how a borrowed indigenous myth can be adapted to immigrant needs in a way that will distinguish Canadian novels from others.

One of O'Hagan's short stories, simple, even slightly sentimental, outlines the process of myth-making that is articulated in much more detail in *Tay John*. In "The White Horse" Nick Durban, the hero, discusses the problem of naming the local pass with his friend Olaf: "Olaf had said that in the Old Country all such places had names, but he did not see how in these foothills, a pass, especially a low, gentle pass, that had no name, would acquire one."⁸ If one takes naming as analogous to myth-making, this story encapsulates the problem of finding myth in a new country. How does one consciously create something that has to have existed as Olaf says, "longer than anyone could remember"? The assumption that an immemorial native mythology rather than an invented or borrowed one is essential to a great national literature excludes colonies populated by immigrants from literary greatness, a quality reserved for the Imperial centres. But Nick proves to himself that naming is possible in a new world.

When he finds that his beloved old pack-horse, Bedford, has wandered off and frozen to death, he considers putting a notice in the newspaper. Finally he makes a sign describing Bedford and offering a reward for his return, and puts it up beside the trail through the pass. After a while, Olaf takes the sign down and replaces it with one that says "Bedford Pass." Pleased, Nick looks forward to the time when the sign will rot, and Bedford and his story will be forgotten. Then

Bedford, transformed from horse into name, will "endure so long as men climbed rivers to their source and spoke into the wind the pass's name they travelled."⁹ Names and myths have an origin, explicit and human. Once the original "sign" has rotted, however, they survive only if they have a use, usually an exploitative one. And they gain authority precisely because they are detached from their human origins. "Because it has always been so," or "because the gods say so" is far more difficult to dispute than "because I say so." The naming in "The White Horse" seems perfectly innocent, even touching, but of course it is part of the conquest of the west of Canada by the white man. In *Tay John* the violence of the conquest is made clear: "Out on the prairies the white man's breath had blasted the Indian and the buffalo from the grass lands, now his plough turned the grass under." Jackie Denham compares naming to rape, and, through his role as a surveyor, shows how naming is related to the exploitation of what was formerly virgin and "unnamed country."

O'HAGAN, WHILE CLEARLY he agrees with the belief that myth is essential to great literature, would deny myth its ultimate authority, its divine origin. That myth is not divinely fixed means people have the freedom to think and imagine for themselves. Therefore O'Hagan's myth has a popular origin, being formed in the main by indigenous oral genres: myth, legend, tall tales, gossip, rumour, and hearsay. He dismantles the old myths, including the old critical myths, to produce a transitory synthesis of old, adapted, and invented myth that takes possession of a new literary territory. This territory is not the Alberta/British Columbia mountain region which provides his setting, but an intellectual territory formerly excluded from literature, the "colonial."

O'Hagan begins the process of rewriting myth in *Tay John* by importing a version of Judaeo-Christianity and a version of Platonic idealism into the traditional beliefs of the Shusway tribe into which Tay John is born. Unlike the historical Shuswap,¹⁰ Tay John's Shuswap believe in a promised land and in a fair-haired messianic leader. They also, in a paraphrase of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (*Republic*, Book 7) believe "that the world was made of things they could not touch or see, as they knew that behind the basket their hands made was the shape of the perfect basket. . . . Each man sought the shadow beyond his work." Plato's ideal basket is ironically named "shadow" in O'Hagan's passage, for in *Tay John* the ideal remains inaccessible, unknowable, and possibly non-existent. In Plato's cave the chained prisoners can only see shadows and hear echoes, but when led from the cave (although at first blinded and deafened) they are able to perceive "reality": the Truth. In *Tay John*, revelation is not so revered, as indicated by Jackie Denham's description of the limitations of his own

perceptions: "Of what was around me I caught only flashes here and there — as in a thunderstorm when briefly under the lightning the countryside is revealed, trees standing, a glimpse of a river still flowing, a horse on a hillside, tail sucked between his legs." What produces powerful art in *Tay John* is not the revelation of truth (a wish-fulfilling delusion) but the communication of these flashes of light as flashes: as incomplete, mysterious, and transitory. Those who claim to know most completely are the most seriously deluded. That the Shuswap get half way to their Promised Land, and their messianic leader, *Tay John*, lives among them for a while before deserting them, is a symbolic comment on the undogmatic nature of their beliefs.

The desire for truth, even the conviction that one has found it, may seem harmless enough. The desire for it, however, leads to credulity, and the conviction of it to what Denham calls "the callous incapacity to doubt." Worse, the convinced are tempted to impose the authority of their "truth" on others. The arrogance of conviction is embodied in the Rorty brothers. Red Rorty comes to convert the Shuswap to evangelical Protestantism:

"Only those who believe . . . will be saved. All the rest will be destroyed. . . ." He threw his voice up against the rock cliffs beyond them, and it stayed there and murmured till they heard him speaking to them from above and behind, while they beheld him standing, his mouth moving and his shadow upon the ground before them.

Clearly he speaks in the cave, his back to the light. He seduces the married Hanni, and the women of the tribe crucify him. His youngest brother, a Roman Catholic priest, similarly tries to impose his beliefs on others, lecturing Ardith/Aeriola about her immoral life while burning with lust for her. In order to strengthen himself against temptation, he seeks a revelation, "a light, so awful, so stupendous, never before seen by man, that standing before it my shadow will make a trough in the ground behind me." Attempting an imitation of Christ, he ties himself naked to a tree, becomes trapped, and dies of exposure.

These, then, are the religious mythologies. The modern secular ones reveal an equal arrogance in the figure of Dobbie, a capitalist entrepreneur who attempts an imitation of the divine in building his "small new world," his resort, in the mountains. Like the Shuswap and the Rortys he believes in the unseen, and lives in the future implied by his belief in Progress: "Illusions were more real to him than the dark pine-trees which gave logs for his buildings." Finally, however, the work is abandoned, there are rumours of bankruptcy, and Dobbie leaves "barely a trace behind him." The aspiration to divinity fails in each case; the more serious the aspiration, the more horrible the failure.

Although the whole novel can justifiably be labelled "mythic" in tone, content, and structure, the first part is, as Michael Ondaatje puts it, raw myth point blank.¹¹ Entitled "Legend," it is narrated by an omniscient and oracular voice

that distinguishes itself from the human in the first sentence: "The time of this in its beginning, in men's time, is 1880 in the summer, and its place is the Athabaska valley." Authority is derived for this section from the authenticity of O'Hagan's sources for much of the first part of Tay John's story, the Tsimshian myth "The Dead Woman's Son," which he uses with little revision, and the legend of Tête Jaune, which named Tête Jaune Cache and Yellowhead Pass.¹²

In the Tsimshian myth a pregnant woman dies; her grief-stricken husband sleeps on her grave until winter comes. In spring when he returns he finds playing on her grave a little boy, whom he captures and takes to the wise men. In their hands the boy shrivels almost to nothing, but they restore him. He is not happy, and cries and refuses to eat, so the villagers call in a wise woman, who says: "What he wants is only a little thing. He craves for the full free life of man, not the half-life he enjoyed in the grave."¹³ In the original myth, the boy is cured of his unhappiness by a ritual ablution, but in O'Hagan's variant the boy continues his quest, only partially satisfied by the wise woman's gift of a human shadow.

His people regard Tay John as a god, because of his yellow hair (interpolation in the myth that O'Hagan derived from the legend of Tête Jaune). But he has no divine aspirations, unlike his putative father and uncle. He brings back from his initiation fast "only what another man might see . . . and less than another man might hear," and admits that he feared to go further. Later he leads the people on their trek to the promised land, but expresses no opinion about it. All the initiatives come from others. When the tribe refuses him a woman, he leaves. He walks out on myth, only to find himself the hero of Jackie Denham's epic romance.

"Jackie's Tale" begins when Jackie, surveying for the railroad, takes a Sunday walk up a creek. Tay John appears on the other side of it. A female grizzly bear attacks him, and he kills her with a knife. On one side of the creek is the event; on the other side is the tale-teller. More important than either man, perhaps, is the creek:

It wasn't wide. Twice as wide as a man, standing, might jump, perhaps, but deep and swift. Boiling. There were rapids. That creek — it was white. It was jagged. It had teeth in it. I felt it would cut me in two.

The creek prevents Denham from helping Tay John, and its roar prevents them from communicating. It, in its various guises, is the distance between reality and what human beings make of it. Those who try to cross it, to participate in the mystery of reality, subject themselves or others to violence, as do all human beings who aspire to "divine" knowledge. Jackie does take his experience as a revelation, describing Tay John's departure as if it were the departure of god.

He vanished, as though he were leaving one form of existence for another. For a

moment or two I saw his yellow head, a gleam of light being carried away through the timber. He had come down from the high country to do his job, and having done it, left.

Jackie feels compelled to tell his tale: "It was a faith — a gospel to be spread, that tale, and he was its only apostle." His audience's reaction to the tale is mixed: "Men winked over it, smiled at it, yet listened to its measured voice, attentions caught, imaginations cradled in a web of words." In fact, the narrator describes the story as a tall tale that Jackie "stretch[es] . . . the length of Edmonton."

THE TALL TALE, if it has a didactic purpose at all, teaches the inexperienced and naive not to believe everything they hear. An old-timer, relying on his experience and age to add authority to his words, regales a greenhorn or two with a story that "really happened," either to him or to a close friend or relative. As the story proceeds, it becomes more and more incredible, until the listeners begin to realize that they have been taken in, and must reluctantly give up their belief in sidehill gougers, or in winters so cold that people's words freeze.¹⁴ The tall tale refuses listeners the ease of the familiar, and moves them into that peculiar territory between true belief and total scepticism, an unsettling zone where anything seems possible and nothing certain. This zone finds its geographical equivalent in the mountain country that Denham calls "the country of illusion" where "men saw themselves cast in strange shapes by their shadows flung upon untutored ground."

O'Hagan moves his readers into this territory repeatedly. Jackie's Tale, for example, is a narrative filled with elements of epic romance, regarded by its teller as gospel truth, while described by the narrator who introduces Jackie (probably a member of Denham's audience) as a tall, and therefore untrue, tale. The genre tension here makes interpretation a complex task. The movement from one literary mode to another, the violation of conventional expectations, occurs throughout the novel, showing how each genre and mode reveals a different, incomplete "reality." Tay John refuses the role of god proper to the "myth" of part one. When Denham sees him, he imposes the conventions of epic romance on him: Tay John is not a man, but "Man," victorious over the powers of darkness. He is a "bronze and golden statue" with shining hair, who faces the dark bear and wins. Tay John, however, despite the fixity of Denham's image of him as a statue, will not stay put. He moves from myth, to epic romance, to realism; escapes irony by moving into comedy, and finally moves into myth again. But this myth is a peculiarly transitory myth, held in tension with all the major literary modes at once.

When Denham first encounters Tay John, Denham says that Tay John has "something of the abstract about him — as though he were a symbol of some sort or other." This is an understatement: Tay John is almost all symbol. One of the many things he stands for is the literary protagonist. He becomes a character unsuccessfully trying to avoid an author, rather than in search of one. The next time Denham sees Tay John, the former god/hero appears shorter; his hair, once "a flame . . . to light the hopes of his people" now leaves its "dark stain of oil" on his collar, one of his hands is missing, and his horse has begun to age. Realism has set in. But he is guiding the beautiful Ardieth Aeriola, who wants him to take her, alone, over the mountains. Tay John has had trouble with beautiful white women before, and resists. Dobble, near whose resort Aeriola is camping, has fallen for her, and offers Tay John a job, hoping to keep her nearby. Like everyone else, he sees Tay John in literary terms: "Tay John will be a good choice to greet tourists at the train because he is "a man of the country — the sort of thing they've read about." Denham's response is that first Dobble will have to capture Tay John, then "stuff and frame him."

Dobble, who is given to taking "a realistic view," is the kind of American George Grant has warned Canadians against becoming. Dobble sees the mystery of Father Rorty's death only in terms of publicity, is filled with a myopic belief in progress, blind to the beauty of the inexplicable, and aware of the environment only as object. The murderous reduction of this attitude explains Tay John's move from god to wooden Indian and from myth to irony, at this lowest point in his career, as well as the parallel fate of the native people in the face of twentieth-century technology. O'Hagan's opinion of the fate of literature in the hands of the "scientific objectivity" proclaimed by naturalism and realism is clearly negative. O'Hagan, however, does not want to move back to belief. When Dobble tries to hire Denham to "take charge" of Yellowhead Lake, the resort, Denham refuses, commenting "I was no god of waters." He, like Tay John, wants to avoid becoming either a materialist's lackey or a divine being; he too wants the full free life of a man.

Tay John succeeds in avoiding capture by Dobble. Instead he defends Aeriola's honour against Dobble, and, by getting the girl, moves into comedy. It is a comedy constrained somewhat by Denham's initial insistence on regarding the move as a defeat. For Denham, thinking in the epic mode, "woman [is] the death of heroes and the destruction of heroes' work." His description of Tay John's "capitulation" is an odd combination of battlefield and erotic St. Valentine's imagery:

Through the canvas wall of [Aeriola's] tent a lantern hung from the ridge pole, pulsed and glowed, a heart beat in the darkness. I lifted the door flap. Inside one of the beds spilled a flood of crimson blankets. On its edge Tay John sat, head hanging between his knees. From his brow great drops of blood dripped to the

floor, staining it in sudden, separate splotches as if through the white-pine boards at his feet rosebuds burst and bloomed.

Since he is a screen on to which each observer projects his interpretation, Tay John has a look which remains "enigmatic as a bird's, with no expression [Denham] could catch." Of course this doesn't stop Denham from interpreting what has happened to his own satisfaction.

The last report of Tay John comes from a trapper, Blackie, who meets Tay John dragging Ardith Aeriola's body on a toboggan. Tay John and the trapper part in a blizzard, and the next day Blackie trails Tay John as far as he can: "He had the feeling, he said, looking down at the tracks, that Tay John hadn't gone over the pass at all. He had just walked down, the toboggan behind him, under the snow and into the ground." The simple conclusion that Tay John has probably frozen to death is not easily permitted by the text, which provides powerful alternatives. The most "realistic" conclusion has to compete with strong interference from other literary modes. First, the mythic ending balances and echoes the mythic beginning: Tay John is supposedly born out of the earth of his pregnant mother's grave. It seems logical that a semi-autochthonous culture hero would return to the earth like this. Further, an earlier report of the couple suggested that Ardith was pregnant at the time of her death, like Tay John's mother Hanni. This hint of a possible return of the hero, of a cycle, is mythically irresistible. Denham's comment that woman is the death of heroes is made prophetic, and Aeriola's body, dragged on the toboggan behind Tay John, becomes the shadow the divine child cried for at the beginning.¹⁵ Then, O'Hagan resorts to the grotesque to disrupt the tragic sense of an ending implied by Tay John's "heroic" role, and the pathos implied by the conclusion's extended allusion to Duncan Campbell Scott's sentimental poem "On the Way to the Mission."¹⁶ Unlike the corpse of the dead Montagnais woman of Scott's poem, whose features are "as sweet as they were in life," Blackie reports that Aeriola had one eye open and one closed: "It was like she winked at me." Unlike many mythic couples, Tay John and Ardith are not long separated by death, but disappear together. The ending's hint of a "marriage," and its hint of a resurrection or cycle, seem comic. No one simple emotion, mode, or interpretation is allowed to prevail.

BY THE END OF THE NOVEL, its repetition has escalated beyond the point that can be called mythic, to the point Ondaatje calls incestuous.¹⁷ The last six pages of Tay John encapsulate and echo the whole work, giving the vertiginous effect of infinite regression that matches the ending's promise of a return of myth in each generation. Blackie is, like Denham, a

mountain man fond of telling stories. The setting is the strange "unnamed country" that provides the setting for the novel's most mysterious incidents. Blackie's encounter with Tay John takes place in a howling blizzard which, in a familiar way, confuses the senses. Tay John appears to Blackie like "something spawned by the mists striving to take form before mortal eyes," and this echoes the magic boy's resurrection/creation by the medicine men: "for three days the wise men sang and shook rattles and blew on the wisps of yellow hair that at times were so few and thin that they thought they had been deceived and saw nothing and had nothing between them." Not only does this passage allude to four other passages in the book but it also parallels a scene in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* where Marlow confronts Kurtz, who has crawled away from the ship; "He rose, unsteady, pale, indistinct, like a vapour exhaled by the earth, and swayed slightly, misty and silent."¹⁸ Echoes and allusions like this fill the novel as echoes resound in caves, with an effect similar to the effect created by setting one genre or mode against another. The reader must constantly reconsider.

This has not been the only reference to Conrad. To examine the narrative of parts two and three is immediately to recognize its similarity to those of Conrad's "Marlow" fictions.¹⁹ Denham is, like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, telling the story to a group of friends; in the course of his account of his first meeting with Dobble, he remarks that it was in "this very bar" and complains that none of his audience of cronies had been present to help him out: "one of you might have been there, you know, to give me a hand." Kenneth Bruffee, in his *Elegiac Romance: Cultural Change and Loss of the Hero in Modern Fiction* argues persuasively that in novels like *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* Conrad invented a fictional sub-genre, which Bruffee calls "elegiac romance." The sub-genre includes such novels as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. Bruffee states: "The necessary conditions for elegiac romance fiction are the narrator's prolonged hero worship of his friend, and his friend's death before the narrator begins to tell the tale."²⁰ *Tay John* meets both of these necessary conditions. Tay John is dead before the story, at least that part of the story narrated by Jackie, begins. (The "Legend" section and Blackie's conclusion are a "frame" around the "elegiac romance" middle.) Denham regards Tay John as a hero through most of the novel. And there are many other minor resemblances between *Tay John* and the novels examined by Bruffee. But however fruitfully Bruffee's model may be applied to *Tay John*, it does differ from the "standard" elegiac romance in several important ways. These differences result from O'Hagan's attempt to re-make not only Old World mythology, but also Old World literary genres, to suit the New World. He is engaged in a process that Robert Kroetsch has argued is characteristic of recent Canadian fiction. The Old World inheres in the language of the New; and Canada has a further difficulty with American influ-

ences. How does a Canadian novel differ from an English or an American one? Kroetsch says that "In recent Canadian fiction the major writers resolve the paradox — the painful tension of appearance [of being English or American] and authenticity — by the radical process of demythologizing the systems that threaten to define them. Or, more comprehensively, they uninvent the world."²¹ Denham, like the typical narrator of Bruffee's elegiac romance "undermines the influence of the failed institutions he carries within him."²² He, "confronted by a complexly rooted resistance to change in himself, and by a surrounding cultural, social and political milieu undergoing profound, irresistible changes . . . sets out to create something new, a self adaptable to the new needs of a new world, a self that can live without heroes."²³ Although Denham knows the landscape "better than he knew the lines of the wide calloused palm of his hand," he has more trouble mapping his intellectual structures on to a resistant society. He, like Bruffee's narrators, has a "European mind"²⁴ and spends the novel overcoming a kind of culture shock that overcomes even the "Canadian-born" who confront a wilderness armed (the expression itself is telling) only with a European education. Denham must learn to change the European attitude that sees nature (and the associated women, native people and indeed, reality itself) as objects to be mastered by male heroes. Generally, in elegiac romance, the hero's death is announced early in the narrative, as its inspiration. Thus the story takes a "contrapuntal" form, combining the narrator's recollection of events with his reflections on them.²⁵ *Tay John*, however, leaves the story of the disappearance of Tay John and Ardith Aeriola to the novel's end. Denham, unlike the elegiac romance narrator, nowhere singles out the death as his inspiration, comments on its effect on him, or states his desire to memorialize his hero. Nowhere does he explicitly contrast his feelings at the time of a particular event with a later reinterpretation. A partial explanation for this divergence from the form is that Tay John's death *as a hero* for Denham occurs before Tay John's actual death. During Denham's last encounter with Tay John, Dobble's men attack Tay John. Of the fury of the workers, Denham says: "That fury would pull him down, change his shape, make him one with those who fought against him. He stood alone, above them. . . . They didn't get him down." Here, clearly, Denham still sees Tay John as exceptional and heroic. Later, at Aeriola's tent, however, it is as if she and Denham struggled for possession of the hero: "It was as though his thick shoulders between us were in dispute." She wins. Woman is the death of heroes. Denham backs away and leaves early the next morning. In Jasper, although he hears rumours of trouble at Lucerne, he says his "interest was not sufficient to hold me in the small mountain town" and he proceeds to Edmonton, where he rather predictably goes on a binge.

Significantly, what Denham had found most heroic in Tay John during the encounter at the creek was his appearance (projected, it seems safe to say, by

Denham) of certainty: "At least he had no doubts — this other man. No doubt about himself." Later Denham remarks: "He did the one thing, the only thing he could have done, and did it well." Although theoretically, Denham promotes doubt: "when we doubt we begin to learn," at the time he encounters Tay John he longs for certainty. He wants clear heroes, clear enemies, and clear-cut victories. He had wanted to kill a bear himself: he had "sometimes dreamed of — of meeting a bear one day close up, hand to hand so to speak, and doing it in. An epic battle: man against the wilderness." Although he cannot participate directly in the battle between Tay John and the bear he does so vicariously, calling out "Yellowhead," "Yellowhead," and explaining "I had to give him a name so that I could help him — morally, you know. I had to align him with the human race." He quickly attributes evil qualities to the bear, calling the fight a "struggle against the powers of darkness," and a victory for mankind. His formulation of the story is a parallel victory, produced after he finds his way back to camp through darkness "black as the inside of a bear."

Tay John's version of events is never given, but it seems clear that his version and Denham's would probably differ as radically as do their cultures. In Denham's culture, the killing of big game is a proof of male prowess, and of man's domination over nature. Tay John, however, appears to fight the bear because he is cornered by her, just as she appears to attack him because of her nearby cubs and because she too feels trapped. After he kills her he cuts her head off and places it in a tree, according to a native custom recounted in the novel, in order to show respect for her spirit.²⁶ However he may have seen the fight, it would certainly not have been as a struggle against the powers of darkness, since the bear is his "guardian spirit." Denham's projection clearly takes a literary form (he describes the event as "like a play being put on for my benefit") as well as fulfilling a psychological or moral need. His "gospel" contains all the elements needed to reveal it as a wish-fulfilment fantasy and a literary construct, as indeed, does O'Hagan's novel at a more sophisticated level.

IN THE ELEGIAC ROMANCE, the narrator often comes to terms with the weaknesses in himself that led him to worship another — another who may indeed have been mainly his own creation. Denham, during his last appearance in the novel, is talking to Inspector Wiggins, who wonders why Aeriola was attracted to "a half-breed fellow with yellow hair." Denham replies: "Perhaps as good a man as she's met," and then later comments, "Tay John, her guide, was at her side, a man no better or worse than the others, but different." Interestingly, he has not only accepted that Tay John belongs to common humanity (being as good as, but not, as a hero must be, better than other men), but also

defends a union he had previously disliked. Yet he never comments on how his own viewpoint has shifted.

Nor is it clear that Denham ever comes to comprehend entirely that opposites, light and dark, life and death, male and female, could have a co-operative as well as an antagonistic relationship. Perhaps this explains why the narrative is handed over to the suggestively named Blackie, who is, incidentally, fascinated by "hybrid creatures." Certainly Blackie's narrative resolves some of the problems posed by Denham's vision of a polarized and antagonistic world. Another explanation for the shift in narrators, so close to the novel's end as to have been seen as a weakness by Ondaatje,²⁷ is again to make the reader aware that all narration is incomplete, and that stories exist independently of their authors. Certainly the shift from the omniscient narrator of "Legend" to Jackie's far less unified narrative, to Blackie's short and inconclusive account, parallels the novel's move from certainty to doubt. The headings of part 2, "Hearsay" and part 3, "Evidence without a Finding" also parallel this movement.

This is not to say that O'Hagan turns to radical irony. He wants us to believe in doubt, to make myths while understanding that they are of necessity inadequate, and will be replaced by the versions of others. Thus there are passages in Denham's account which echo the oracular voice of the first part, which are intended to promote O'Hagan's world view.²⁸ These passages usually reveal a rift between Denham's theoretical understanding of the transitoriness and incompleteness of human understanding, and his emotional desire to see his heroic version of Tay John's story as truth. Yet Denham's acceptance that Tay John has a life outside Denham's version of it is not the final focus of the story. Blackie's tale is separate from the main narrative because it is O'Hagan's myth, the myth that is to replace the myths of gods and heroes, however temporarily. Myth does not die. The heroic myth may be replaced by Dobble's "publicity" and turned to selling goods instead of imposing a hierarchical authority, it may become implicit, rather than explicit, but it does not ever disappear. O'Hagan wants to show readers how myth is made, and how it rules us, even though we make it, and to argue that if we are going to be ruled by myths we should make them as liberating and beneficial in their effects as possible. Thus, this is a New World myth, egalitarian, popular, practical, peaceful, agnostic. In that it rejects both Dobble's American and materialistic realism, and Denham's Anglo-Irish and aristocratic romance, it is also specifically Canadian.

So far the underside of myth, its failures, its reductive violence, have been stressed. Myth's power comes, however, as much from its capacity to direct and assuage human desires, and from its beauty, as from its effectiveness in controlling and exploiting. O'Hagan sets up a loose series of analogies to try to convey the simultaneous pleasure and pain (or Beauty and violence, as Father Rorty explains it of myth-making.) Its violence is like economic exploitation, like territorial

conquest, like the Crucifixion, like rape. Its beauty is like striking gold, like reaching the Promised Land, like Divine Revelation, like orgasm. Not all of these analogies are given equal emphasis: the two that receive the most development are the religious and the sexual.

The resolution of opposites found in the conclusion takes the form of a "marriage" and concludes the battle of the sexes that forms much of the action of the novel.²⁹ Woman's allure is closely associated with the unknown, assaulted constantly by men eager for revelation. Thus sexual assaults parallel other assaults on the ideal. Denham comments on the river valley where he first encountered Tay John: "A new mountain valley leads a man on like that — like a woman he has never touched." Here is virgin territory, and the consummation of the relationship, the violation, comes in language: "It is physically exhausting to look on unnamed country. A name is the magic to keep it within the horizons. Put a name to it, put it on a map, and you've got it." Here is O'Hagan, staking out his intellectual territory with a new myth, here is the surveyor, mapping the landscape in order to exploit it, here is Denham calling "Yellowhead." But the finality of the "you've got it" is quickly undermined.³⁰ The unique ideal, seen, touched, possessed, turns to common stereotype:

His common experience tells him it [the mountain valley] will be much like the others he knows — a canyon to go through, a meadowland or two, some forest, and its head up against a mountain or trickling from a grimy glacier. Yet he still goes up it hoping vaguely for some revelation.

The orgasm of "revelation" becomes post-coital guilt; "grime" sullies the ideal, much as Tay John's longing fingers smudged the kitschy pin-up in McLeod's cabin. (The "kitschiness" of the pin-up is O'Hagan's comment on the ideal as a reduction of reality.) The rise and fall of desire and disillusionment form a vicious circle. Only recognition of its unproductive nature can lead to escape, and that escape can only be into a new myth, which will ultimately itself prove unsatisfactory.

The tension between ideal and stereotype, two sides of the same debased coin, comes forward again and again. For example, the greenhorn Mountie Porter is sent out to bring Tay John to a hearing. He sees Tay John as the stereotypical "mad trapper" of adventure novels: "Here was the chance for him to do the kind of thing he had read about — like a story in *Chums*, chasing a half-breed hunter through the mountains." For Porter, the coin flips quickly; on his return, he "implied that, as a result of his two days on the trail with Tay John, life for him had taken an entirely new turn. The hidden was now revealed." This farcical repetition of various more serious, if equally suspect, encounters with the unknown, undercuts them all.

Women are more obviously stereotyped or idealized in the novel than men. Dobble compares Ardith to the stars until she rejects him; then he calls her "a

railroader's tart." For Denham, naturally, she is Woman. Mounted Police Inspector Wiggins compares her to a "piece of bad meat," while his Sergeant Flaherty, a married man almost impervious to her beauty, describes her in quite homely and domestic terms. Virgin, whore, wife, or wise old woman: these are the roles available. Yet, despite the firm narrative focus on their cleavages, both Julia Alderson and Ardith Aeriola are shown to be wiser than the men around them. Julia asks ultimate, unanswerable questions. When she and Tay John go off hunting, she is described as "a brown-headed girl searching for something she had lost." When she returns, her face resembles "the face of an old woman in repose" in contrast to her husband's which "was like the head collared with canvas at a country fair at which the customers shy wooden balls." She at least is on a quest to answer an important question, whatever one makes of her accusation that Tay John "impose[d] himself" on her, and her later retraction of it.³¹ Father Rorty says that Ardith is "a more spiritual woman than I a man. . . ."

The battle of the sexes is graphically represented. Just as each encounter between the story-teller and the story is seen as analogous to a violent male-female encounter, so the novel can be seen as a series of such encounters. For Tay John, encounters with Shwat, with the female grizzly, with Timberlake's mare, with Julia Alderson, with Ardith Aeriola, all end in violence. The women feel violated, the grizzly is killed, and the mare lost in a river. Tay John is beaten, clawed, cuts off his own hand, and is hauled before a police inquiry. The violence and mutilation indicate the inevitable violence done to reality by language, but also the violence done to human beings by myth. The violence is generally aimed at those who are commonly equated, like Indians, and women, with nature rather than culture.

The nature-culture battle is reflected in what happens to the Rorty brothers. Their sky god is at war with a shadowy earth mother of mystery, sensuality, and darkness, what D. G. Jones calls in his account of the novel, the "Dionysian world of women."³² Red Rorty is crucified by women because of his violation of a sexual taboo. Father Rorty dies fleeing Aeriola, seeking a divine revelation to protect him from a human one. Significantly, the tree on which he is found is a type called locally a "school-marm tree." That both men die with their feet well off the ground is emphasized. Neither one can deal with women; each flees into a misguided search for "truth." Tay John, however, emerges from the feminine earth, and when he descends into it, he takes Ardith, a woman, with him.

Part of Tay John's quest for the full free life of a man appears to have been a quest for a woman. Red Rorty's sexual crime, Father Rorty's celibacy, the Shuswap's refusal to let Tay John marry are all symptoms of a fear and misunderstanding of women — a misunderstanding that Denham and even Tay John appear to share. When Tay John tries to move into the white world, his first major desire is for Timberlake's mare, which he wins only at the cost of a

hand. She runs away, and Tay John trails her, finally losing her while swimming across a river. When he reappears, guiding the Aldersons, he is riding a gelding. And the white way of life that the Aldersons represent would ultimately geld him, as Dobble's parallel attempt to "stuff and frame" him makes clear. Dobble's pathetic aphrodisiac, the "Aphrodine Girdle" carries the theme of sterility and impotence further. Neither the rigid taboo-bound world of the religious, nor the white world of progress is a fertile ground: not for Tay John, not for writers, and not, O'Hagan implies, for human beings.

MALE AND FEMALE MEET and complement each other, however, in the characters of Tay John and Ardith Aeriola. This is emphasized by O'Hagan's descriptions of them: her hair is dark, his fair, but they share a peculiar line on their brows. They share an attitude to the conventional, too:

Each of them . . . in manners distinct, stalked the boundaries of society without ever fully entering. They had that in common. They had in common, too, the obedience to impulse, seizing the precarious promise of the moment as a trout will seize a fly, opposed to the rest of us whose security is the measure of our denials.

Ardith has been made into a "kept woman"; she owes her apparent freedom and wealth to "the Canadian man of railways." She, like Dobble, tries to control Tay John by hiring him. He resists, and makes no attempt to possess her. Finally they flee together, their relationship uncontaminated by the mutual violence that marks most encounters in the novel. The freedom they attain is tenuous, however, possible only beyond the borders of "civilization."

Despite the fragility of their freedom, and its brevity, they create a new myth. At the centre of it is not the shining male figure, combatting, as Tay John fought the nursing she-bear, a "monster" symbolic of feminine mystery, fecundity, and threat, but a fertile couple, with what Inspector Wiggins describes as "a working arrangement." And if the mythic cycle follows the pattern set by Tay John's own birth, the hero/ine of the new myth that will be resurrected by those who seek one will be the child of Ardith Aeriola and Tay John, a mixture of her obscure Central European past, and his Irish-Indian heritage: a new Canadian. Myth, therefore, in O'Hagan's creation, is not immemorial, immutable, and universal, but flexible, time-bound, and appropriate to its setting.

Of course, given the novel's theoretical assumptions, the myth undermines itself. Myth is collective, as Denham emphasizes in noting that he is not the "author" of Tay John's story, which exists "independently," mainly in the local bars. An individual writer can produce a mythic story, but, strictly speaking, only a group can make it into myth. The extent to which O'Hagan's myth seems

"ahead of its time" is the extent to which it remains outside of myth proper. That Tay John and Ardith Aeriola can survive only at the edges of society, and of a rough, frontier society at that, is an indication of how far O'Hagan's myth was from the society he worked in as a writer. In elevating the illicit relationship of a "half-breed" and a Central European "whore," O'Hagan elevates two who would inevitably be the centre of racist, sexist, and moralist discrimination in Canada, even today.

He is also flouting the dogmas of "Imperial" criticism in creating a colonial myth. Denham trails behind him into virgin territory the whole European literary heritage, the dreadful burden of the colonial writer. Yet it proves fruitful. He supplies from local materials those things identified as lacking by critics like Rupert Brooke. Indigenous popular genres — myth, legend, the tall tale, gossip, rumour, and hearsay — form the text, which buries its references to "high" culture in allusions and echoes that are not essential for its comprehension. And O'Hagan single-handedly moves an indigenous myth through all the genres considered essential for a "proper" literary history: myth, epic, romance, tragedy, comedy, the novel.³³ He not only turns from "high" to "low" cultural forms, but he produces an egalitarian myth: Tay John is "as good as" other men at the novel's end, although Denham, an aristocrat of sorts, as an Anglo-Irish remittance man, must come to terms with this egalitarianism gradually.

Despite these "victories" over old ideologies, the survival of the myth is problematic. After all, the defeat of Dobble is temporary. He was only forty years ahead of his time and the capitalist "development" of the region that pushed Tay John out of context after context would proceed inexorably, its reductive vision transforming the environment to object. Tay John and Ardith are pushed, not only to the fringes of space, but to the most "precarious" point in time: the present moment. Here Terry Eagleton's comments on the relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* seem applicable:

Their love remains an unhistorical essence which fails to enter into concrete existence and can do so, ironically, only in death. . . . Catherine and Heathcliff's love then is pushed to the periphery by society itself, projected into myth.³⁴

Similarly, given social forces, neither Tay John nor Ardith Aeriola can enter history, despite the power of the mythic resolution their love represents. And O'Hagan's myth is inevitably marked by the forces he attempts to combat. The identification of women in the novel with everything that is not conventionally "male" leaves the woman outside, and out of power. The men represent the subject, culture, reason, while women are primarily objects and bodies, associated with the mysterious "reality" that men must try to possess and comprehend. This representation can be defended as a reflection of the social relations of the period. But even the idealized freedom that O'Hagan's final myth presents is problematic.

Ardith is "freed" only to become part of another male myth, where she does the cooking, and depends on Tay John for survival. And economic forces still impose themselves in this remote, barely touched wilderness. Even Tay John's ability to live off the land is legislated, since Sergeant Flaherty could have arrested him for hunting out of season. Denham can produce his satiric account of Dobble, free of the usual fears and restraints, precisely because he is economically "free." He not only has the self-assurance of his birth, but also its economic power, in the form of quarterly remittances that lift him, if only temporarily, out of the power of the local economy and its employer-employee relationships. It is easy for him to regard Tay John as a noble savage, because, unlike the guides and cooks and trappers of the novel, he is not in direct competition with Tay John for a living. Clearly, the full free life of a man or a woman is an unrealizable ideal: Denham comments that "Freedom, for most of us, brief, evading precise definition, is only the right to seek a further bondage."

Certainly Tay John dies bound, not free: bound to mortality and humanity. His love for Aeriola kills him, as her love for him, her pregnancy, has presumably killed her. And so O'Hagan himself is forced into bondage. But his is the bondage of the escape artist, of a mental traveller who moves from place to place, adapting himself to his context, who continues to seek and wonder, accepting that he speaks "in the country of illusion":

Then we cry, we of the West, we Westerners, we who have come here to sit below the mountains — for your Westerner is not only the man born here, blind, unknowing, dropped by his mother upon the ground, but also one who came with his eyes open, passing other lands upon the way — Give us new earth we cry; new places, that we may see our shadows shaped in forms that man has never seen before.

For O'Hagan, the future is not simply determined by the past. In the precarious present, the moment of action, of "promise," clarity of vision can create a new and perhaps less oppressive myth.

NOTES

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¹ Rupert Brooke, *Letters from America* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1917), p. 156.

² See *The Search for English-Canadian Literature*, ed. & intro. Carl Ballstadt (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. xxxii-xxxv.

³ I found this extremely apposite quotation from George Grant, *Technology and Empire* (Toronto: Anansi, 1969, p. 17) in Leslie Monkman's discussion of *Tay John* in his *A Native Heritage* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 44; perhaps this lament is partly a reaction to Grant's paternal grandfather's prosaic

- account, in *Ocean to Ocean*, 1873, of the Sanford Fleming Expedition's crossing of the Tête Jaune Pass in 1872.
- ⁴ Rev. of Howard O'Hagan's *The School-Marm Tree, Quill & Quire* 44, No. 6 (1978), p. 36.
 - ⁵ Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, "George Grant," in *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Oxford, 1983), p. 317.
 - ⁶ Howard O'Hagan, *Tay John* (1939; rpt.: Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), pp. 166-67; all further references are to this edition.
 - ⁷ Adrian Cunningham, in his "Myth, Ideology and Levi-Strauss: The Problem of the Genesis Story in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Story of Myth: Six Studies*, ed. Adrian Cunningham (London: Sheed & Ward, 1973), 132-76, outlines the problems of definition surrounding the terms *myth* and *ideology*; see also Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 130-71.
 - ⁸ Howard O'Hagan, "The White Horse," in *The Woman Who Got on at Jasper Station and Other Stories* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1977), p. 56.
 - ⁹ O'Hagan, "White Horse," p. 65; Derrida's comments on the connection between proper names and violence in *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), pp. 164-68 inform this section.
 - ¹⁰ For information on Shuswap customs, and religion, see James B. Brow, *Shuswap of Canada* (New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area File, 1972) and James Teit, *The Shuswap*, 1909 (rpt. ed. New York: AMS Press, 1975), the latter an account of journeys made between 1887 and 1904. Ralph Maud's *A Guide to B.C. Indian Myth and Legend: A Short History of Myth-Collecting and a Survey of Published Texts* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1982) is a useful bibliographical guide.
 - ¹¹ Michael Ondaatje, "Howard O'Hagan and 'The Rough-Edged Chronicle'" in *The Canadian Novel in the Twentieth Century*, ed. George Woodcock (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1975), pp. 276-77.
 - ¹² O'Hagan acknowledges his discovery of the Tsimshian myth in Diamond Jenness' *The Indians of Canada* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1932), pp. 197-99; the Tête Jaune legend is fully discussed in John Grierson MacGregor's *Overland by the Yellowhead* (Saskatoon: Western Producer, 1974), p. 1, 26-27 and following. Tête Jaune, according to MacGregor, an Iroquois, Pierre Hatsinaton, who moved west with the fur trade, was said to have "discovered" the Yellowhead Pass in 1823, and was finally murdered by local natives. Although O'Hagan's version of the legend seems to be an adaptation, I have no idea which of the several versions of this legend he knew.
 - ¹³ Jenness, p. 199.
 - ¹⁴ I am grateful to Michael Taft, editor of *Tall Tales of British Columbia* (Victoria, B.C.: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1983), for my information on tall tales. Sidehill gougers are animals that have evolved lopsided so as to be able to run around mountains more easily.
 - ¹⁵ Ondaatje, p. 279.
 - ¹⁶ D. G. Jones, *Butterfly on Rock* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 50.
 - ¹⁷ Ondaatje, p. 278.
 - ¹⁸ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 66.

- ¹⁹ Ondaatje, p. 277; see also Gary Geddes, "The Writer that CanLit Forgot," *Saturday Night*, November 1977, p. 86.
- ²⁰ Kenneth Bruffee, *Elegiac Romance: Cultural Change and Loss of the Hero in Modern Fiction* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983), p. 51.
- ²¹ Robert Kroetsch, "Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction," in *Canadian Novelists and the Novel*, ed. Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman, (Ottawa: Borealis, 1981), p. 239.
- ²² Bruffee, p. 66.
- ²³ Bruffee, p. 66.
- ²⁴ Bruffee, p. 66.
- ²⁵ Bruffee, p. 51.
- ²⁶ See *Tay John*, p. 31; according to Brow, "the [totem or guardian] spirits only brought good to their owners" (p. 133). According to Teit, "Respect was shown to animals to please them and to ensure good luck in the chase. When a bear was killed the hunter sang the grizzly or black bear song, as the case might be and prayed. . . . Before the hunter returned to camp he painted his face all black with charcoal. . . . Then the people knew he had killed a bear. He himself never told, for the bear would be angry if he boasted. . . . Skulls of all bears killed were raised on the tops of tall poles" (p. 602).
- ²⁷ Ondaatje, p. 283.
- ²⁸ Ondaatje, p. 279.
- ²⁹ This point deserves more attention than I can give it here. In a sense the whole novel is a repetition of the same violent incident, worked out at various metaphorical levels. Story-telling is to rape is to economic exploitation is to exploration and naming is to. . . .
- ³⁰ As Denham points out, "Possession is a great surrender" (p. 113). For more on metaphor in a new world see Annette Kolodny's "Honing a Habitable Landscape: Women's Images for the New World Frontiers" in *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, ed. Sally McConnell-Ginet, and others (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 188-204. Women did not use the metaphor of rape to describe their encounter with the new world.
- ³¹ Susan Gingell pointed out to me that there is a parallel between Julia Alderson and Adela Quested of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). Both women seem to have been so overwhelmed by the impact of a foreign culture, landscape, and male "guide" that they can articulate it only in terms of sexual violation.
- ³² Jones, p. 71.
- ³³ References to this order are common in early Canadian criticism; see, for example, Sara Jeannette Duncan "Saunterings," *The Week*, 3 (30 Sept. 1886), p. 107. In 1916, Alfred Baker, in his Presidential Address to the Royal Society of Canada, "Canada's Intellectual Status and Intellectual Needs," comments regretfully "We are scarcely ingenuous enough to write Sagas. . . ." *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd ser. 10 (1916), app. A, p. LXIV. The "correct" pattern, of course, was the Old World one.
- ³⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 109.