English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950:
Defining and Establishing a National Literature

by

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Abstract

The views of the critics who attempted an explicit definition of Canadian literature between 1890 and 1950 are the main focus of this study. English-Canadian literary criticism (defined here as criticism written in English of Canadian literature written in English or French) was dominated during this period by a theoretical approach that used the concept of nation as a starting point. The approach originated with German Romantic philosophers and critics, notably J.-G. Herder (1744 - 1829). The ideas of Romantic nationalism spread rapidly through the West as part of the ideology of nationalism, and were firmly established in Canada well before 1890.

The central tenet of this theory is that great literature is the expression of the national soul; indeed a great literature is regarded as essential to national self-definition. Canada's lack of such a literature, therefore, was seen as a political, as well as a cultural defect, and as a result, English-Canadian criticism's main project was to establish, against heavy economic and cultural odds, a Canadian literature. Thus, the definition or analysis of Canadian literature came second to setting up the various institutions deemed necessary for its development—literary societies, periodicals, a body of critical and reference works, and university courses. The concerns and ideas derived from Romantic nationalism can be traced, not only through the
work of earlier critics such as Archibald Lampman, Wilfred Campbell, Duncan Campbell Scott, John D. Logan, James Cappon, Pelham Edgar, and Archibald MacMechan, but also through later critics such as Ray Palmer Baker, Vernon Rhodenizer, Edward McCourt, Lorne Pierce, William Arthur Deacon, Lionel Stevenson, and E. K. Brown, and finally, to A. J. M. Smith, and most significantly, in view of his influence, to Northrop Frye.

The Romantic nationalist critic typically tries to link the literature written in a nation with what are considered distinctive characteristics of that nation—its language, geography, climate, race, history, myth, and folklore. Since Canada has two national languages, and was felt to be lamentably lacking in racial homogeneity, history, folklore, or myth, the Canadian critical focus shifted to those elements of Canada that seemed likely to prove Canada a unified nation distinct from both the United States and Great Britain.

The desire to link literature to the land led to some very deterministic models of artistic development. Critics often believed that a writer had an almost biological tie with his birthplace, and that once "uprooted" or "transplanted" he could not write well of another place. Other writers argued that it was not birthplace that was significant, but that the nation where a writer had spent his "impressionable years," his childhood, imprinted itself permanently on his mind, and therefore, on his art. The national spirit moved from the land and the people through the poet, in a model that obviously downplayed such foreign influences as education, reading, and imported cultural conven-
tions. Modern critics still write as if there was an essence of Canada, a national spirit, which, working on a writer's unconscious, manifests itself in Canadian literature. They cite as evidence repeated themes in works widely separated in time and outlook. This "national spirit" is, I argue, simply a learned literary convention, transmitted from Europe, adapted to Canadian needs as well as possible by English-Canadian critics, and adhered to quite closely by those writers who wished to be considered Canadian. Rather than calling this tradition "Canadian Literature," critics might more accurately name it the "national convention."
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Preface

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INTRODUCTION

To use the expression Canadian literature is to embark on a process of definition, whether explicit or implicit. The views of the critics who attempted an explicit definition of Canadian literature between 1890 and 1950 are the main focus of this study. English-Canadian literary criticism (defined here as criticism written in English of Canadian literature written in English or French) was dominated during this period by a theoretical approach that used the concept of nation as its starting point. This approach originated with German Romantic philosophers and critics, notably J.-G. Herder (1744-1803) and Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829). The ideas of German Romanticism spread rapidly throughout the West, and, as part of the ideology of nationalism, still flourish, especially in regions struggling for cultural or political self-determination. Romantic nationalist critics, then, were not necessarily sentimental patriots (although they may have been), but critics who, using a set of assumptions first developed during the Romantic period, saw the nation as the primary literary category. These critics could not, ultimately, conceive of literature outside the national context. For them, literature was by definition the expression of a nation. That Canada had little literature,
most of it imitative or crude, depressed some of them profoundly; far from waving the flag, these critics came close to lowering it, since a nation that did not have a literature was not a true nation. Pelham Edgar, for example, strictly applying the assumptions of Romantic nationalism to the Canadian literary situation, concluded, half-facetious, half-despairing, that Canada could never develop a literature: "Let others write our books. Mr. Carnegie will arrange for their storage."¹ Goldwin Smith, also working from Romantic nationalist assumptions, logically extended Edgar's conclusion; since Canada had no literature, she could not be a nation. For Smith, annexation to the United States was a regrettable, but sensible, even inevitable solution.² Fortunately, perhaps, for both Canada and Canadian literature, few Romantic nationalist critics were so pessimistic, so "un-nationalistic."

Most, indeed, were nationalist in both the critical and the popular senses. The latter type of nationalism often swayed their judgments too far in favour of badly-written verse that was, however, patriotic, or badly-written prose that was, however, "distinctively Canadian."

Romantic nationalist ideas were firmly established in Canada well before 1890, but it was only when poets such as Charles G. D. Roberts, Archibald Lampman, Bliss Carman, and Wilfred Campbell had produced a body of poetry widely accepted as both well-written and "Canadian" that critics began to apply the inherited theory to specific Canadian works and writers. Between 1890 and 1930, critics who discussed Canadian literature did so in Romantic nationalist terms; there was no alternative view. As E. K. Brown,
reviewing A. J. M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, 1943, points out, "to react against romantic and nationalist standards is almost to disown the whole past of Canadian criticism."³

By 1930 modernism had become the official opposition; its rise is well documented in Louis Dudek's and Michael Gnarowski's *The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada*, 1967.⁴ As well, some left-wing criticism began to appear during the 1930s. But the general shift in poetic taste from Romanticism to modernism or in fictional taste from romance to realism was not matched by an equally distinct shift in the theory of the national literature; the modernists might condemn Canadian literature for not being "universal" or "cosmopolitan" enough, but they defined it in the same terms as the earlier critics.

Although the protests of the younger generation of critics are very significant in retrospect, they were almost completely inaudible to the contemporary audience. Control of all the significant literary institutions and media was held until the Second World War, and sometimes after, by men who could be accurately described as Romantic nationalists. By 1950, however, control had begun to shift to a younger generation with modernist tastes and a new critical methodology. The *Report* of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (the "Massey Commission"), published in 1951, both sums up and marks the end of an era. Its provisions ensured the achievement of goals the Romantic nationalists had begun working for before the turn of the century.

If English-Canadian literary theory is examined alone,
separate from its cultural context, it seems inexplicably repetitive, derivative, and unsystematic. More critics than Edgar and Smith must have realized that the European theory, designed for nations unified by language, culture, and geography, fit Canada very badly. Yet it was the dominant theory, the dominant "myth of the nation," and could not simply be abandoned. People believed in it, and their belief was necessary to English-Canadian criticism's main enterprise: to establish, against heavy economic and cultural odds, a great national literature. Thus, the definition of English-Canadian literature came second to setting up the various cultural institutions deemed necessary for its development, and to securing it a respected position in the leading intellectual forums of the day. Establishing an "infant" literature was a process that involved promotion as much as definition or analysis, and significantly, most of the main battles in English-Canadian literary criticism have been fought over standards of taste and evaluation, rather than over theory or analysis. The history of English-Canadian literary theory, then, can only be understood in the whole critical context; this includes the promotion of Canadian literature, a function of literary criticism that is either unnecessary in older cultures or overlooked by their high-minded literary historians.

Although English-Canadian Romantic nationalist critics have most often been noticed only to be condemned, Brown was right. There are several reasons why it might seem desirable to disown these critics, yet their ideas have pervaded the literary atmosphere for almost the whole of Canadian literary history. And it should be remembered that to assume that critics elsewhere at the time were uniformly objective, analytic, and urbane is to
partake of the same colonialism as the early English-Canadian critics. The standards and beliefs of the best of them were not very different from those of their contemporary English-speaking peers. The familiar charge that English-Canadian critics were undiscriminatingly kind might be answered in the context of John Hayden's comment in his *The Romantic Reviewers, 1802-1824* that even those fierce reviewers who supposedly hounded Keats to his death gave "judgments favorable in excess of their merits, at least as those merits have been sifted by time" to Southey, Scott, Byron, Moore, and "the first two volumes of Keats's poetry." As for taste, anyone who cares to can compile, as Henri Peyre has done in his *The Failures of Criticism*, a list of great critics who initially either condemned what are now seen as classics, or over-praised the mediocre. And on the question of analytic ability, John Gross, in his *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, points out that the first professor of English literature at Oxford, Walter Raleigh, appointed in 1904, lectured mainly by "reading out favorite passages from the authors under discussion" while Arthur Quiller-Couch, appointed in 1912 to the same position at Cambridge "seldom did much more than ramble cheerfully around the subject, shedding a vague glow of enthusiasm." English literature was a new subject in universities at the turn of the century, and approaches to it varied between a historical, philological, and usually pedantic approach adapted from the teaching of the Classics to a sort of inspirational, somewhat impressionistic, and periphrastic chat, adapted from the newspaper columns of Sainte-Beuve (aptly called *causeries*) and,
(perhaps working from Arnold's suggestion that literature might replace religion), the Sunday sermon.

An understanding of early critics is not only desirable for its own sake, but also is essential for a clear understanding of early English-Canadian literature. These critics have left their mark on our contemporary literature and criticism as well. The concerns of Edward Hartley Dewar in his introductory essay to Selections from Canadian Poets, 1864, are the concerns of E. K. Brown in his On Canadian Poetry, 1943. And these concerns can be traced further still, to A. J. M. Smith, who found it one thing to condemn the low standards and bad taste of the earlier critics and another to replace their theoretical categories, and, perhaps most importantly in view of his influence and eminence, to Northrop Frye.

Chapter one, "The Study of Literary Criticism" justifies the examination of critical texts and critical activities together. Many faults and quirks of English-Canadian Romantic nationalist criticism can only be explained by examining not only its theoretical attempt to define Canadian literature, but also its practical attempt to promote, preserve, and establish it. Yet some modern literary theorists argue that texts, whether critical or literary, should be examined separately from the biographies of their authors or the social and literary context out of which the texts emerge. The concept of the literary institution is suggested as a useful one for reuniting the textual, biographical, and sociological approaches that were all once
acceptable in the methodology of literary history.

Chapter two, "Defining Canadian Literature: The Local Landscape and the European Example," examines the European Romantic nationalist assumptions most common in English-Canadian literary criticism, and shows how these ideas, applied in a quite un-European situation, affected English-Canadian critical theory, standards, and judgments. The loose collection of criteria considered essential for a national literature, derived at some distance from European Romanticism, is the framework for this chapter. It is organized therefore by subject—the need for a national language, "race," spirit, and so on—rather than by the date of publication of the various critical statements examined.

Chapter three, "Establishing Canadian Literature" surveys some of the attempts that critics made to ensure that Canadian literature would not only survive, but also achieve greatness and international recognition. Because of the precarious economic position of Canadian writers, many English-Canadian literary critics came to feel that their most important task was to promote the production of literature, rather than to evaluate, analyse, or even theorize about the meagre canon already in existence. Until there was a respectable Canadian literature, securely integrated into Canadian life, the other activities seemed misdirected. The critical focus on promotion affected what critics wrote, how they wrote, and where they published their work. It also explains the wide range of literary activi-
ties considered normal for English-Canadian literary critics—they established and edited periodicals, formed literary societies, and involved themselves in publishing, the copyright issue, and the question of author's incomes. These activities were intended to establish Canadian literature as an important and integral part of Canadian society. Two of Lorne Pierce's and the Ryerson Press's publishing ventures, the Makers of Canadian Literature series and the Ryerson Poetry Chapbooks, are examined as examples of this kind of "institutionalizing" activity. The history of the teaching of Canadian literature in the university is discussed as part of the same process.

Chapter four examines the literary career of Pelham Edgar (1871-1948), professor and head of English literature at Victoria College, University of Toronto between 1903 and 1938, and one of the more influential figures in the Canadian literary world from his undergraduate days until his death.

Chapter five, "Consolidating and Modifying Romantic Nationalism, 1920-1950," begins in the 1920s, when post-war nationalism coupled with economic prosperity resulted in unprecedented Canadian literary activity. While the main opposition to Romantic nationalism was confined to the pages of low-circulation little magazines and student publications, what was for Canada a flood of books on Canadian literature permeated by Romantic nationalist ideas was published. The most comprehensive and theoretical of these are surveyed: Ray Palmer Baker's A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation, 1920; John D. Logan's and Donald French's Highways of Canadian Literature,
1924; Archibald MacMahan's *Head-Waters of Canadian Literature*, 1924; Lionel Stevenson's *Appraisals of Canadian Literature*, 1926; Lorne Pierce's *An Outline of Canadian Literature*, 1927; and Vernon Rhodenizer's *A Handbook of Canadian Literature*, 1930. Of course, Ryerson's the Makers of Canadian Literature series, 1923-41, discussed in chapter three, is part of this same flood. The Depression stemmed the flood, and in the next two decades only W. E. Collin's *The White Savannahs*, 1936, E. K. Brown's *On Canadian Poetry*, 1943 (discussed in chapter six), and Edward McCourt's *The Canadian West in Fiction*, 1949, examine Canadian literature seriously in book form. With the exception of Collin's work, none of these departs dramatically from the ideas surveyed in chapter two, but social changes--increasing tension between English and French, the flood of immigration to the West, urbanization, the rise of technology--did affect English-Canadian criticism after the First World War. Gradually, hesitantly, and often inconsistently, critics began working away from a formulation that assumed that extrinsic factors, such as geography, language, and "race," totally determine national literature. They did not abandon the theory, but they began to adapt it slightly to Canada's needs.

Chapter six examines the literary career of E. K. Brown (1905-1951), one of the more influential critics of the 1930s and 1940s. Not only was he among the first to introduce Canadian literature to the students of the University of Toronto, but he was also an associate editor of both *The Canadian Forum* (between 1930 and 1933) and *The University of Toronto Quarterly* (between 1932 and 1941), and wrote many important reviews for these journals.
Both Edgar and Brown are Romantic nationalist critics; A. J. M. Smith and Northrop Frye are not. Smith countered the Romantic canon with the austere, modernist taste expressed in his several widely-admired anthologies; Frye countered Romantic nationalist theory with a theory that put literature, rather than any social construct such as the nation, first. But both, at least in their consideration of Canadian literature, can be said to be working with Romantic nationalist categories. Both made their first important critical statements about Canadian literature in 1943; A. J. M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry* contained an influential and controversial introduction; Frye has described his review of this anthology as "perhaps my first critical article of any lasting importance."³⁹

Chapter seven, "Revising the Canon and Renewing the Theory: A. J. M. Smith and Northrop Frye," examines the criticism of Canadian literature by both these critics to date, and links it with the Romantic nationalist tradition.
Chapter One

The Study of Literary Criticism

Stephen Porter, in his *The Muse in Chains*, a satiric and revealing study of the introduction of English literature into the English university curriculum, gives the "not very affectionate" nickname of "Lit." to that part of literary criticism which those who would like to pretend it is, or could be, a science, tend to leave out.¹ Even historians of science have come to realize that science cannot be regarded simply as a self-generating process of rational thought about nature, but must also be seen as "an irreducibly social and cultural phenomenon, subject alike to rational and irrational influences, to magic as well as mathematics, religious sectarianism as well as logic, politics and economics, as well as philosophy."² Historians of criticism tend to focus on the ideas and theories of the best critical minds--on exemplary texts, usually theoretical--and forget the vast activity of "Lit." on which these texts are raised. Literary criticism is not only, perhaps not even mainly, a body of texts, but also, along with the literature it studies, a cultural institution. A critical commentary is often as concerned with striking a blow in an institutional battle as it is with analysing a piece of literature. That this is so should not necessarily be regretted or deplored; it is what happens. This institutional quality is
especially evident in the study of national literature where the political and cultural concept nation is explicit in the literary category. The process that Max Weber calls "the institutionalization of charisma" takes the original, the transcendent, the sacred, the beautiful and turns it into something ordinary human beings can understand and work for. "Lit." chains the muse.

Indeed, and this is not wholly facetious, in Canada, "Lit.," or the literary institution, was trying to find the Muse, or even be her. What is, and in most cases what probably should be the central concern of literary criticism--the definition and illumination of great literature--was impossible here. Critics turned to the next best thing--to establishing an atmosphere in which great Canadian literature could flourish. Although some might argue that this is not really literary criticism, it is difficult to know what else to call it, since it was concerned with the application of literary theory to works of literature, the evaluation of literary works with the goal of establishing a national canon, the writing of literary history, and, although there was less of this (but there was less of this everywhere), with the analysis of texts. And, since the theory espoused by English-Canadian critics argued that each nation had to follow its own course in developing a literature, that the only true, and therefore the only great literature for each nation was the one developed within national borders, their concern was ultimately with a great literature, even if only a hypothetical one.

English-Canadian literary criticism, especially in the early period, is more concerned with establishing the national literature than with originality either in theory or analysis. As a
result, a small set of fairly simplistic ideas and themes, most originating abroad, is repeated over and over again in an attempt to convert the Canadian audience. Hugo McPherson, in his "The Literary Reputation of Bliss Carman," notes: "That fourteen of the twenty-six notices of Carman published in Canada between 1888 and 1914 dealt, in one form or another, with the patriotic theme, is convincing evidence of the nation's concern over its internal unity and external prestige." It is this repetition that marks English-Canadian literary criticism on the textual level. English-Canadian criticism does more, however, than parrot imported ideas and opinions. The distinction comes, not from any unusual ideas or methodology, but in an almost obsessive concern with the national literature, not simply as subject matter, but also as theoretical constraint. Only when the theory and the Canadian situation seemed to be impossibly at odds did the critics revise it, or drop it, and this they usually did as unobtrusively as possible, since their interest was in using the theory's authority to demonstrate that a great Canadian literature would inevitably come to be, not in undermining the theory that was the foundation of their argument.

The purely textual examination with which this study began (wide reading of literary criticism about Canadian literature, by writers from the most justly anonymous to the best known and most influential), led to the initially rather discouraging discovery that the main concepts used in English-Canadian criticism were already the clichés of European Romanticism, and rapidly were made clichés here as well. Indeed the similarities between one piece of early criticism and another, given the modern preference
for the original, are so striking as to be depressing. Both S. M. Beckow, in his "From the Watch-Towers of Patriotism: Theories of Literary Growth in English-Canada, 1864-1914" and T. D. MacLulich, in his "Literary Attitudes in English-Canada, 1880-1900" are able to summarize vast quantities of undistinguished text very briefly, simply because the same issues arise again and again. Obviously, then, a purely textual and theoretical examination of English-Canadian criticism, given its derivative qualities, would be foolish, but it is a point of entry. The methodology used to draw these preliminary conclusions was that of the history of ideas, which Michel Foucault, in his The Archaeology of Knowledge describes as having two categories of formulation: those that are highly valued and relatively rare, which appear for the first time, which have no similar antecedents, which may serve as models for others, and which to this extent deserve to be regarded as creations; and those, ordinary, everyday, solid, that are not responsible for themselves and which derive, sometimes going so far as to repeat it word for word, from what has already been said.

With few exceptions most of the ideas in English-Canadian criticism fall into the second category. It is obviously important to know the origin of the major critical ideas of the period, but the wholesale adoption of the method of the history of ideas leads to a somewhat hopeless and self-abnegating search for original and highly-valued influences which reduces English-Canadian criticism to a footnote of European criticism, and a rather trivial one at that. It also leads to the discounting of what ordinary critics do as in any way relevant to the history of literary criticism.
Knowledge of their activities is seen as only useful to set
the originality of the great thinkers into high relief.

Canadian intellectual historians have been troubled by the
problems raised by the methodology of the history of ideas.
A. B. McKillop, in his "Nationalism, Identity and Canadian Intel-
lectual History" uses the distinction between the history of ideas,
which traces "idea clusters" through time, and intellectual history,
which places its emphasis on the relationship of ideas to society,
to argue that intellectual history suits the Canadian situation
best. 7 Canadian thinkers, however derivative their ideas
(or clichés) might appear to the outside observer, were using
them in a new context to try to explain and influence Canadian
society, no matter how these ideas had been used elsewhere. Indeed,
much confusion arose when the "universal" ideas derived from Euro-
pean or American reality manifestly did not fit Canada. S. F. Wise
points out that the Canadian historian must come to grips with
Canadian thinkers in the context of Canada: "His major task,
surely, is to analyse the manner in which externally derived ideas
have been adapted to a variety of local and regional environments,
in such a way that a body of assumptions uniquely Canadian has been
built up, and to trace the changing content of such assumptions. 8
Both Wise and McKillop make it clear that if historians wish to
write the intellectual history of Canada, and not a history of
Western ideas, they must try to keep their focus within national
borders. This, of course, is not to advocate ignorance of sources.
What is to be avoided is the essentially impossible attempt to
account for every idea in the writing of a Canadian by tracing it to a specific foreign source when its unoriginality is already clear. (The need to establish every idea as "original" or "derivative" is one of the less useful biases of the history of ideas.) It is quite possible that the Canadian was unaware of the foreign source himself, having picked up the idea (often by that time a commonplace) from another Canadian. Why writers selected a particular idea from the mass available to them, and how and where they used it, are more important than its origin.

The expression Romantic nationalist literary theory creates the impression that a clearly worked out and consistent set of principles was adhered to by the critics under consideration. The "theory," however, was rather more a "family" of loosely related assumptions, a set of clichés usually found in collocation. Most critics who began with the premise that literature was the expression of the nation touched on several of these assumptions, but rarely did any one critic work through all of them or present all of them in the same way or as of equal importance. Therefore, the set of assumptions discussed in the next chapter was derived inductively from a large sample of English-Canadian critical texts; each assumption is found over and over again.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann point out in their The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, that "theoretical knowledge is only a small and by no means the most important part of what passes for knowledge in a society."

They continue:
Theoretically sophisticated legitimations appear at particular moments of an institutional history. The primary knowledge about the institutional order is knowledge on the pretheoretical level. It is the sum total of "what everybody knows" about a social world, an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs, myths, and so forth, the theoretical integration of which requires considerable intellectual fortitude in itself, as the long line of heroic integrators from Homer to the latest sociological system-builders testifies.10

English-Canadian literary criticism has barely arrived at the stage where "theoretically sophisticated legitimations" have begun to appear. This study itself is an attempt at "theoretical integration." During the period under study, much of English-Canadian literary criticism was working with "knowledge on the pretheoretical level."

Not only was the "theory" Romantic nationalist critics worked with clichéd, derivative, inappropriate to Canada, and inconsistently applied; their standards, taste, and judgment often were questionable. Understandably, the few serious studies of this criticism draw rather negative conclusions. Most of these studies concentrate on the period before 1900. In general, they make the attempt to analyse the policies and views of particular literary periodicals rather than the critical theory or attitudes of individuals, since few individual critics writing before 1920 published enough on Canadian literature to make a detailed analysis of their work worthwhile. And some critics, like Claude T. Bissell, in his "Literary Taste in Central Canada during the Nineteenth Century," 1950, deliberately avoid the focus on criticism of Canadian work:
So far this analysis of Canadian literary taste has been based entirely on comment and criticism of non-Canadian writers. I have done this not merely because the literatures of other countries offered a richer field for the exercise of literary judgment, but because taste in the native literature was deficient even in those modest powers of discrimination that I have been trying to describe.\textsuperscript{11}

Hugo McPherson’s "The Literary Reputation of Bliss Carman: A Study in the Development of Canadian Taste in Poetry," 1959, considers American, British, and Canadian reviews of Carman's works between 1888 and 1950 and concludes that compared to British and American reviewers, the Canadians were old-fashioned, careless, rigid, and lacking in knowledge of the poet's work. He is, in general, reading the average book reviewer rather than the leading literary men of the time, and exempts James Cappon's and Pelham Edgar's work from his charges.\textsuperscript{12}

T. D. MacLulich in his "Literary Attitudes in English Canada, 1880-1900," 1971, records his conclusion in the title of his final chapter "The Philistines in Canada," although he qualifies his judgment somewhat by remarking that "the work of these critics probably does not represent the best that was thought and said in Canada at the time."\textsuperscript{13}

As Robert L. McDougall points out, however, in "A Study of Canadian Periodical Literature of the Nineteenth Century," 1950, the importance of the early periodicals where most of this criticism was published resides elsewhere than in the quality of either their ideas or their literary judgment:

The fact that this outlet often channelled trash or near-trash to the reading public does not challenge the
argument [that these publications were important];
for those who had something of value to say, and were
able to say that something well, found a heartening
medium of expression in these pages. And alike in the
weakness and the strength of their contributions, the
significant role of these publications in offering
stable centres for a developing culture is plain. 14

In these few comments on English-Canadian literary criticism are
exemplified two approaches; a universalist one that sees criticism
as performing the same function (in most of these cases that of
choosing the best literature) in all societies, and a more rela-
tivist one, put forward by McDougall, that sees criticism as varying
in its function. It seems likely that a developing culture produces
a distinctive kind of literary criticism. For McDougall the func-
tion that redeems the poor quality and lack of discrimination of
the criticism in many of the early periodicals is simply that
they opened a channel for future good writing, either critical or
creative. If one cannot find quality, one can at least ensure that
when it does appear it will have a forum, a mouthpiece, a "stable
centre." Or, as Sara Jeannette Duncan puts it in The Week, 30
September 1886: "We cannot compel the divine afflatus; but we can
place ourselves in an attitude to receive that psychical subtlety
should the gods deign to bestow it on us." 15

In order to see Romantic nationalist English-Canadian literary
criticism as a valid object of study, therefore, it is useful to
accept the idea that literary criticism varies in its function,
or at least in its functional emphasis, depending on its histori-
cal, intellectual, social, and artistic context. Although the
idea of a literary institution helps explain English-Canadian
literary criticism for the period, it is not claimed that it is
useful for explaining all literary criticism in all periods or in all places. Similar struggles to "institutionalize" national literature could be expected in countries with historical and literary backgrounds similar to Canada's—Australia, for example, or the United States. 16 (Even English literary critics showed some of the same concerns; Romantic nationalist ideas were widely appealed to in order to promote the teaching of English literature in the universities and schools. 17) Once a literature has become accepted, however, critics are able to focus more and more on the national literature as literature, rather than on providing it with a secure economic and social context.

This social and institutional concern of English-Canadian literary criticism has certainly not been overlooked by later critics, but it has usually been seen as the ignoble self-promotion of a small nationalist clique. A. J. M. Smith, for example, both defines and condemns the Romantic nationalist critics in his rejected preface to New Provinces, 1936:

> A few patriotic professors, one or two hack journalist critics, and a handful of earnest anthologists—these have tried to put the idea across that there exists a healthy national Canadian poetry which expresses the vigorous hope of this young Dominion in a characteristically Canadian style, but the idea is so demonstrably false that no one but the interested parties has been taken in. 18

Granted, there was a great deal of self-glorification in the early criticism. Nonetheless, the best, most stringent critics were engaged with the same concerns as the "boosters." James Cappon refused to call Roberts "the Canadian Wordsworth" but he
wrote two books about this "minor poet." Smith was not alone in his negative feelings about the institution-building undertaken by Canadian literary critics; perhaps understandably so, given the excesses of the Canadian Authors' Association after 1920. Stephen Leacock, in his "The National Literature Problem in Canada," 1928 comments that "it seems part of the age and place in which we live that we must keep on substituting the artifice of collective organization for the inspiration of individual power, the appearance for the reality, the mere body of the thing for the soul of it." John Sutherland complains in 1947 that critics "go on evading the issue, wasting time and energy on theories of poetry whose existence is largely illusory." Robert Fulford sums up this vision of Canadian literature most vividly:

We have a kind of artistic autonomy, and we have a sort of cultural apparatus, but the people who make the apparatus work--the fiction writers, the playwrights, the other creative artists--are often hard to find. From this angle Canada looks like a giant tomato cannery: dozens of canning machines, hundreds of workmen trained to run them, scores of trucks waiting to transport the finished product--but no tomatoes.

The implication is that something--the place, an irredeemably backward colony; or the time, the technology-ridden and materialist twentieth century--has caused Canada to fail where other nations have succeeded in producing a literature without any vulgar "booming." All these writers appear to believe that literature can develop without a literary institution, that art that needs economic support and promotion cannot be the best--for that would win itself a place by merit alone. Just because the Canadian literary institution
went to extremes is no reason to assume that the same thing has never happened elsewhere, or that this promotional effort has only negative effects. To build a canning factory without tomatoes at least shows foresight, while a field full of rotting tomatoes is, especially in an undernourished nation, a tragedy. Literary manifestoes like Smith's tend toward generalizations that sweep away the past too cleanly. Perhaps it is time to wonder why so many early English-Canadian critics, many of them well-educated at Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Göttingen, and the Sorbonne, not to mention the University of Toronto, joined the conspiracy to promote this non-existent literature.

This, then, is partly a study of the construction of the tomato factory—the literary institution. All nations with national literatures have a "literary institution"—a broad and fluid group consisting of writers, critics, and readers—that communicates mainly by the written word in literary periodicals or on book review pages. Gradually this institution creates "myths," or "social constructs" about the literature and its authors, determines the canon, and regulates literary interpretation. Clearly some members of this loosely-constituted institution are more influential than others. Literary society in English-Canada has always been small, and the number of those who control the major outlets of literary opinion—university lecture platforms, publishing companies, media, literary clubs, professional societies of booksellers, authors, and publishers, award committees—smaller still. Like Canadian business, the English-Canadian literary institution has a kind of
interlocking directorate. A fairly clear picture can be drawn then not only of literary critical opinion in English Canada, but of how this opinion is communicated and how much power its purveyors wield in the literary world.

Although this study grants membership (in its loosest possible sense) in the literary institution to all those who communicate their opinions about literature to others (including poets in their poems), either in their speech, in their writing, or by their actions, in general it focuses on the most articulate members of this institution. The audience for literature or literary criticism—those who buy books, join societies, enroll in literature classes—can be studied statistically, but the significance of these acts is hard to determine without some verbal context. The motives of those who write the criticism or found the periodical are often far clearer, and better documented. When, for example, Lorne Pierce decides to publish a "Makers of Canadian Literature" series, his decision about who should be represented is as much a critical decision as whom he would discuss in an article entitled "The Makers of Canadian Literature." (The canon-building function of the literary publisher is perhaps more important in Canada than in most other "new" countries because of the difficulties of publishing anything profitably in a country where British and American material has always dominated the market.)

In the establishment of a new literary institution, actions, although they do not precisely speak louder than words, can have a similar (or even greater) impact, and therefore the critical writings of literary publishers, periodical editors, and university
professors will be considered in the context of their literary activities.

Although this chapter has emphasized the importance of the social context in the examination of English-Canadian criticism, and the importance of the literary institution as a real factor in the making of a literature, this does not mean to imply that other approaches are worthless. Both an idea-oriented textual approach or a biographical approach that considers all the ideas of an individual critic are valuable because of their limited focus; the example of the Romantic nationalists themselves shows the dangers of trying to generalize about society or literature without detailed reference to specific texts and social facts. Further, of course, both these approaches are based on information that is more likely to be available and accessible than the kind of general cultural history needed for the study of the literary institution. Indeed, in Canada, even the texts are buried in private papers, newspapers, and periodicals, and the biographical information limited to Who's Who entries and necrologies. All three approaches--textual, institutional, and biographical--have their strengths and their weaknesses; taken together each approach acts as both corrective lens and reflector for the others. In this study an attempt has been made to allow this kind of correction to take place; chapter two focuses mainly on "ideas," chapter three on "institutionalization," chapters four and six on individual critics (Pelham Edgar and E. K. Brown), and chapter seven on those ideas of two modern critics, A. J. M. Smith and Northrop Frye,
that fit into the earlier pattern. Chapter five attempts to show how social realities modified the original European ideas by analysing the major critical books published between 1920 and 1950.
Chapter Two

Defining Canadian Literature: The Local Landscape

and the European Example

Literary criticism in Canada began in the virtual absence of a literature. Yet English-Canadian critics, familiar with the history of national literature elsewhere, were quite confident that they knew what Canadian literature should be like. Early critics were not as much concerned with defining Canadian literature, in fact, as with explaining why Canada, contrary to all the expectations aroused by current literary theory, while evidently a nation, did not have that essential prerequisite for nationhood—a literature.

Grip (Toronto, 1873-1894) could satirize English-Canadian literary anxiety as early as 1889, an indication that we had a literary criticism then, whether we had a literature or not:

Your principal theme will, of course, be Canadian Literature. You will write articles entitled, "Have We a Canadian Literature?" "Need of a Canadian Literature," "Progress of Canadian Literature," etc. As everybody knows, it was by writing about English literature, the necessity of having it, and the means of encouraging it, that it got a start.¹

Although the constant fuss about Canadian literature was amusing, this satirist, in his assumption that Canada's literary development
must mimic England's, is as colonial as his targets. Only in 1976
did Northrop Frye feel able to drive the last spike through the
heart of this anxiety, which he terms the "National Neurosis."²
In the interim, English-Canadian critics often borrowed their titles
from Grip. Pelham Edgar wrote "Have We a National Literature?"
in 1904, S.E. Dawson "A Plea for Literature" in 1908, Douglas Bush
"Is There a Canadian Literature?" in 1929, and E.K. Brown "Our
Neglect of Our Literature" in 1944.³ This kind of critical concern
may or may not have encouraged Canadian writers—but why was there
such a need to encourage in the first place? Solly Bridgetower
in Robertson Davies' Leaven of Malice puts this question with a
passion that reflects the centrality of the issue in Canadian
literary history:

Why do countries have to have literatures? Why
does a country like Canada, so late upon the
international scene, feel that it must rapidly
acquire the trappings of older countries—music
of its own, pictures of its own, books of its
own—and why does it fuss and stew, and storm the
heavens with its outcries when it does not have
them?⁴

Stephen Leacock argued in his "The National Literature Problem
in Canada," 1928, that "the conception of the republic of letters
is a nobler idea than the wilful attempt at national exclusiveness."⁵
Although Solly Bridgetower might have agreed with this sentiment,
the majority of English-Canadian critics would not, because according
to Romantic nationalist theory, a nation without a literature is a
nation without a soul—an unnatural, patched-together political
construct—a kind of geographical Frankenstein.
René Wellek, in his "English Literary Historiography," describes the German Romantic origins of the belief that literature is the expression of the national soul and the English development of this idea through Coleridge, Southey, and Carlyle. It "survived most persistently in the Victorian age," and as a result "literary history . . . became the history of national ideals, and literature the mouthpiece of the nation." This idea was well-established in Canada long before Confederation, as Carl Ballstadt demonstrates in his "The Quest for Canadian Identity in Pre-Confederation Literary Criticism," 1959. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, first Irish, then Canadian nationalist, writes in his newspaper The New Era (Montreal, 1857-58) that "every country, every nationality, every people, must create and foster a National Literature, if it is their wish to preserve a distinct individuality from other nations"; otherwise, he ominously concludes, they "will soon disappear from the face of the earth, or become merged in some more numerous or more powerful neighbour." Edward Hartley Dewart is also concerned with the political implications of a lack of national literature in his introductory essay in Selections from Canadian Poets, 1864:

A national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character. It is not merely the record of a country's mental progress: it is the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy. It may be fairly questioned, whether the whole range of history presents the spectacle of a people firmly united politically, without the subtle but powerful cement of a literature.
(Of course, Dewart, by collecting literature before Confederation and labelling it "Canadian" is helping to construct the myth of the nation himself.) Clearly a national literature was seen as the major element of national self-definition, and was expected to perform a vital political function. Charles G.D. Roberts comments that "our literature will be false to its trust, will fail of that very service for which young nations have ever relied upon their literature, if it does not show itself the nurse of all patriotic enthusiasms, and the bane of provincial jealousies." Although many English-Canadian critics put a great deal of emphasis on the moral function of literature, and some considered its aesthetic qualities, they, when defining their national literature, could hardly ignore its political functions.

Sixty years after Dewart, Archibald MacMechan, in his Head-Waters of Canadian Literature, 1924, still saw literature as the primary element in the establishment of national identity:

When [Canadians] apply for admission to the great family of nations, they do not present as credentials their wealth, their cities, their harvests of a thousand million bushels, but a few printed books, some songs, a tale or two. They say to the world in effect: "We are a people, not because we have cleared the land, built roads and cities, thriven in trade, but because we have a voice." . . . Literature, then, is the voice of a people. Through its literature, the life, the soul of a people may be known.11

That Canada's lack of a national literature could be seen as a real threat to Canadian sovereignty is demonstrated in the discussion of annexation to the United States in the late 1880s and
early 1890s. Goldwin Smith, applying the Romantic idea that a
nation had to have a homogeneous culture and geography, concluded
that the young and economically-troubled Canada could never be a
nation except in name, and therefore should join the United States:

Canada is a political expression. This must
be borne in mind when we speak of Canadian
Literature. The writer in Ontario has no
field beyond his own Province and Montreal.
Between him and the Maritime Provinces is
interposed French Quebec. Manitoba is far
off and thinly peopled. To expect a na-
tional literature is therefore unfair.12

Since most Canadian intellectuals of the time believed that litera-
ture was the highest manifestation of national life, and admitted
that Canadian literature was still weak, this was a powerful argu-
ment. At this point for the many English-Canadian critics who
regarded the United States with both fear and dislike, a distinct
tension arose between their belief in Romantic nationalist theory
and their Canadian nationalism. The only "received" theory of
nation and national literature appeared to imply that Canada could
not survive. The solution was not to abandon the theory; it was
the only weapon with which the nation's opponents would agree to
engage. Two compromises were adopted. The first was to minimize
or ignore the parts of the theory which, if applied, would exacer-
bate French-English tension, and to revise other parts of the theory
so that they could be used to promote both national unity and
literary productivity. The second was to invent a literature.
This conjuration was done with varying effectiveness, depending
on whether the critic involved was more devoted to Canada or to
literary quality. Some critics concluded that Canada was a hopeless colony, and would never develop a literature of her own. Moderate critics looked hopefully to the future. In 1894, an anonymous writer to The Week (Toronto, 1883-1896) modestly, yet optimistically, countered Goldwin Smith:

Perhaps it is not strictly accurate to say that there is a national feeling in Canada, for a Colony is not a nation; but there is a Canadian sentiment strong and vigorous and animating, and this sentiment must and will find expression in native production and from a native press.\textsuperscript{13}

The moderates spent their time encouraging literature, or as Barry Davies describes the collective concern of Wilfred Campbell, Archibald Lampman, and Duncan Campbell Scott, the authors of the Toronto Globe column "At the Mermaid Inn" (1892-93), in attempting to "create an atmosphere in which art and artists could flourish."\textsuperscript{14} Other critics solved the problem by pretending that the great future had already arrived, like John George Bourinot, in his Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness, 1893:

When some men doubt the future and would see us march into the ranks of other states, with heads bowed down in confession of our failure to hold our own on this continent and build up a new nation . . . I ask them to turn to the poems of Joseph Howe. . . .\textsuperscript{15}

In contrast to most of the writers dragged forward as national saviours in this kind of argument, Howe was great. Indeed, many of the critics to be dealt with in this study can be found among the "boosters" at some point, however disingenuous this approach
might appear. It is easier to pretend to a great literature than
give up a country, or repudiate one's patriotism, even if that
literature has to be created retroactively, out of somewhat in-
tractable materials.

The differences of opinion concerning Canadian literature
among English-Canadian critics were great. G. W. Ross, then the
Minister of Education for Ontario, describes the extremes in his
"Literature and Canadian Writers," 1898:

On the one hand it is alleged that no such
literature exists, and this is held up as a
proof of the sterility of the Canadian mind
and our utter poverty of thought and sentiment.
On the other hand it is claimed that we have a
Canadian literature of rare excellence, and
that only the pedant and pessimist would ever
think of controverting such a self-evident
proposition.16

But these differences were not often theoretical ones—they usually
resulted from different applications of Romantic nationalist
assumptions. No one argued that Canada could be a nation without
a literature; but how or if this literature was to develop was in
constant question. The durability of this belief in Canada is not
surprising, since the same insecurity was widely manifested in
American literary criticism, in a nation that had political inde-
pendence, a "national character" that was definitely not English,
and no fears of annexation.17

The specifically nationalist aspects of European Romantic theory
were emphasized most, logically enough, in those countries that
sought self-determination, unification, or self-definition. France
and England, whose literary greatness and national identity were
in little doubt, were rarely troubled by discussions of "national
literature"; nationalism was one literary concern among many. In
those parts of Britain and Europe that had a national culture but
no national state, the pre-existent native culture, securely founded
on the national language (occasionally resurrected, like Gaelic in
Ireland, for political purposes), was the major justification for
political and military attempts to found a nation-state. Germany,
which had a national culture but no national state until 1871, was
the source of the most important nationalist theory. The culture
of the German élite had traditionally been French. During the
struggle for unification, the native culture was used to justify
the creation of a state whose borders followed the cultural borders
of language and "race." Thus nation became as much a cultural as
a political concept. Since the best evidence, according to these
nationalist theorists, for the existence of a nation is the exis-
tence of a great national literature, Romantic political and literary
theories are inextricably related. Friedrich von Schlegel writes
in his Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern,
1815:

If literature be considered as the
quintessence of the most distinguished and
peculiar productions by which the spirit of
an age and the character of a nation express
themselves . . . it must be admitted that
an artistic and highly finished literature
is undoubtedly one of the greatest advan-
tages any nation can possess.18
Not only Germany, but also Ireland, Norway, Italy, Russia, Hungary, and Poland went through a process of national re-definition, and literary nationalism was well-entrenched throughout Europe early in the nineteenth century.

The Old World origins of this literary theory created problems in the New World. Men of letters writing in colonies of Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain, colonies where the state was established before a national culture had had time to develop, or where a national culture was needed to justify cutting the Imperial tie, and where the "national" language was imported, had difficulty applying the old theories to their reversed situation. K. R. Minogue explains the reversal in his Nationalism, 1967:

Nationalism . . . began by describing itself as the political and historical consciousness of the nation, and came in time to the inventing of nations for which it could act. The point we have to emphasise about modern nationalism is that the politics comes first, and the national culture is constructed later . . . This amounts to saying that the concept of the nation is almost entirely empty of content until a content is--arbitrarily--supplied from local circumstances.19

And local men of letters did (and do) supply the content. They were forced to try to disguise their ex nihilo methodology, however, since Romantic theory insists that literature arises naturally and spontaneously from the spirit of the people and the land, and is the result of a long poetic tradition. These disguises irritate the modern reader, who cannot understand why they are necessary. Yet even today it would seem wrong to set out openly to manufacture a
heroic national past, a useful set of myths, and a great literary history; it seems necessary, in order to compel belief, to pretend that they "evolved naturally," or, better still, to discover that they were there all along.

Romantic nationalism is not only a system of ideas designed to show the connection between a people (whose character, or soul, is revealed in their institutions--political, religious, and literary) and the land they live on, but also, and more important, although often more covertly expressed, a method of justifying their claim to possess and control that land. It was the function of Romantic nationalism in establishing this claim that was as important to English-Canadian critics as the content of the theory, which might explain why it was used, but never refined or analysed. Many factors besides Canada's lack of a long-standing national culture made it difficult to fit Canada to the Romantic model of a nation. For example, Canada was not a single geographical region, and contained two officially-recognized linguistic and cultural groups. Yet it was precisely this internal fragmentation, coupled with occasional external threats from the United States, that made the fervent espousal of a theory of national unity so attractive; its flaws were easily overlooked.

Although any summary of the main ideas concerning national literature in English-Canada must look to European theory, Romantic nationalist ideas were so widespread in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Western culture that it is usually impossible to trace them to a specific source. An Australian critic,
Herbert Piper, aptly calls them "foundlings." In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the theory had been evolved, indeed originated (with a small debt to Montaigne) by J. G. Herder (1744-1803), and comprehensively worked out by him, Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), Madame de Staël (1766-1817), and Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893)—a later popularizer of these ideas), as well as a host of lesser writers. Samuel Taylor Coleridge adapted (some said plagiarized) von Schlegel's ideas and introduced them to the English public in his lectures. Thomas Carlyle, in his "The State of German Literature," 1827, and other writings, introduced the English-speaking world to the importance of German literature, and praised the German method of approaching the literature of foreign nations, studying "each, with its own peculiarities, in its own special manner of existing; not that they may praise it, or censure it, or attempt to alter it, but simply that they may see this manner of existing as the nation itself sees it." Carlyle also made his admiration for de Staël public. His focus on the individual "Great Man" as the exemplar of a nation, did not, however, appeal much to critics in a country that greatness seemed to shun, and Carlyle is rarely mentioned by English-Canadian critics in connection with the idea of national literature. Indeed, Romantic nationalist ideas by the end of the nineteenth century were rarely connected with their originators' names, and in formulaic and reduced form became simply "what everybody knew" about literature.

To cite only three examples from English textbook writers who were familiar to a wide sector of the literary institution is to
become aware of the pervasiveness of these ideas, which were used
to organize most of the bulky literary histories of the century.
David Masson, Professor of English at University College, London,
from 1852 to 1865, wrote in his "Scottish Influence on British
Literature," 1852, that "under every possible form of mental com-
bination or activity, there will be found in every Scotchman some-
thing distinguishable as his birth-quality, or Scotticism."24 And,
in predictable fashion, he goes on to explain this quality in terms
of climate, national history, especially military, and the develop-
ment of a national spirit. Henry Morley, his successor, whose
First Sketch of English Literature, 1873, sold almost 40,000 copies,
begins his English Writers (left unfinished at eleven volumes) with
the remark that "in the literature of any people, we perceive, under
all contrasts of form produced by variable social influences, the
one national character from first to last."25 George Craik, Pro-
fessor of English at Belfast, and author of A Manual of English
Literature (probably the most-used and most-hated English textbook
in Canadian universities during the 1880s and 1890s), distinguishes
the pronunciations of High and Low Germanic and Scandinavian
tongues by referring to the "bracing mountain air of the south,"
the "milder influences of the plain," and "the chill and pinching
hyperborean atmosphere" of the north.26 Craik, in typical Romantic
nationalist fashion, here rather arbitrarily links climate and
language as others did geography and literature.

The difference between literatures produced by a northern or
southern climate, or written by Celt or Anglo-Saxon, was obvious
to any Victorian undergraduate, whether he had read de Staël and Arnold or not, just as a modern undergraduate "knows" about the ego without having read Freud. And to be fair, many undergraduates did read these critics. For example, the University of Toronto *Varsity* (Toronto, 1880-) for 27 October 1891 informs its readers that the Modern Language Club is reading de Staël; her *De l'Allemagne* was on the Pass French course. Early English-Canadian critics usually base their study of Canadian literature on formulae derived from European criticism without naming a specific source. Although, with a few exceptions, it cannot be proven that the presence of Romantic nationalist ideas in English-Canadian critics meant that they had ever read Herder, de Staël, von Schlegel, or even the later and more popular Taine, Masson, or Morley, occasionally these European critics will be cited to show a parallel, if not the parent, idea.

The whole complex of Romantic nationalist assumptions about national literature must be summarized in order to discover which were adopted, which modified, and which ignored by English-Canadians. Romantic nationalism's model of the perfect nation assumes a national language and a unified geography which, along with climate evolves a distinctive "racial" type. This type is best exemplified by those who live close to the soil, usually the peasant, sometimes Rousseau's "Noble Savage." The poet, although from a class given the leisure for writing by the nation's prosperity, is the mouthpiece of the common people and is required not only to voice their inarticulate emotions and concerns, but also to appeal
to them as an audience. Therefore class division is seen as relevant to literary production. Poetry's appeal to the people is made by descriptions of the nation's natural beauty, or by referring to the glorious national past, or to national myth and folklore. Most important, the national literature reflects the people to themselves; through reading it they recognize what they truly are most clearly. A people's pride in the nation—the national "spirit" so necessary to literature—can only be manifested in a free state, that is, a state with some provision for democracy, or at least national political independence. Certainly, a colony does not have the kind of independence necessary for the development of literature. Cultural as well as linguistic and "racial" homogeneity is necessary for complete nationhood, and therefore some critics emphasize the importance of national religious, educational, and cultural institutions. Some critics see material prosperity as evidence of the progress of the national spirit, and therefore as a harbinger of great literary production. Clearly, few European nations fit this model perfectly; colonies, and even former colonies, are hopelessly far from the ideal.

Passages taken from writers of various English-speaking nations show how these assumptions tend to occur in clusters or families; how pervasive these ideas were; and how frequent is the colonial tendency to argue from the European standpoint. It is from passages like these that the assumptions discussed separately below were abstracted. Bertram Steven's pessimistic introduction to The Golden Treasury of Australian Verse, 1909, was, of course, strongly
criticized by writers who were more nationalist in the popular, rather than the Romantic sense:

The absence of those broad outward signs of the changing seasons which mark the pageant of the year in the old world is probably a greater disadvantage than we are apt to suspect. Here, too, have existed hardly any of the conditions which obtained in older communities where great literature arose. There is no glamour of old Romance about our early history, no shading off from the actual into a dim region of myth and fable; our beginnings are clearly defined and of an eminently prosaic character. The early settlers were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with nature, and in the establishment of primitive industries. . . . There has been no leisurely class of cultured people to provide the atmosphere in which literature is best developed as an art; and, until recently, we have been content to look to the mother country for our artistic standards and supplies. . . . We have not had time to settle down and form any decided racial characteristics; nor has any great crisis occurred to fuse our common sympathies and create a national sentiment. Australia has produced no great poet, nor has any remarkable innovation in verse forms been attempted.29

Henry James, in a famous passage from his *Hawthorne*, 1879, makes much the same point concerning the United States as Stevens does concerning Australia:

One might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left. No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed, barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great universities nor public schools—no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums,
no pictures, no political society, no sporting class—no Epsom, nor Ascot! 30

In sum, no hope. No wonder James left. His subject, although in agreement with James on the literary disadvantages of such a nation, did not equate the situation with barbarity; Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote in his preface to The Marble Faun, 1859:

No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. 31

Catharine Parr Traill, in her The Backwoods of Canada, 1836, produced a similar passage with respect to Canada:

Even the Irish and Highlanders of the humblest class seem to lay aside their ancient superstitions on becoming denizens of the woods of Canada. I heard a friend exclaim, when speaking of the want of interest this country possessed, "It is the most unpoeitical of all lands; there is no scope for imagination; here all is new—the very soil seems newly formed; there is no hoary ancient grandeur in these woods; no recollection of former deeds connected with the country. The only beings in which I take any interest are the Indians, and they want the warlike character and intelligence that I had pictured to myself they would possess."

"This," she continues, "was the lamentation of a poet. 32 What might be viewed now as a defect in the theory was seen as a defect in the country, and oddly, since theories seem easier to change than nations, writers started out to change Canada to fit the theory. In the manner of a Macpherson writing Ossian, poets
dredged up superstitions and ghost stories, history was written in a way that matched the European example, and the hoariest bits of Canada, usually Quebec and the Maritimes, came in for more than their fair share of literary attention.

In 1901, John Marshall, in his "Archibald Lampman" (whom he terms the "least futile of our Canadian writers of verse") gives a similar explanation for the absence of literary culture in Canada, in one of the few articles Queen's Quarterly (Kingston, 1893–) published about Canadian writers in its early years:

Various restricting conditions have rendered rather abortive as yet the seeds of literary genius, which of course are sown in Canada as elsewhere. First there is the apparent lack of inspiring theme. The country is young. It is without historic halo. It has no antiquity, no legends, no impressive monuments, no places hallowed by memory of impressive achievements, no noble architecture past or present. Everything seems new, raw, and somewhat pretentious. The poetry reading public is small and not very discriminating. Excitable enough, Canadians are deficient in imagination and emotion. Part are intensely practical, while the smart set, imitating the externals of English civilization, identify culture with certain conventional ways of speaking and behaving, with dress, equipage and manners. Neither are capable of an affection for so ideal and disinterested a thing as genuine poetry. . . . Our poets in consequence have a vague and cloudy idea of their mission. 33

John Marshall's last line is true only to a point. Writers knew they had to write literature that gave Canada the historic halo, the nobility, the glorious deeds found in European literature, while at the same time making this literature distinctively Canadian. Their problem was not so much that they could not write—
they had the European models—it was that there was nothing here to write about. Their traditional subject matter was lacking, and only gradually did subjects such as the War of 1812 become "mythic" enough to be widely accepted as suitable literary material.

Most English-Canadian critics shared the set of Romantic nationalist assumptions outlined above, such as the idea that geography and climate affect, even determine and define the national literature, or that a glorious national history is crucial to a glorious national literature, but there was very little consensus about the meaning of these beliefs for Canadian literature. For example, another Romantic nationalist commonplace, that different "races" produce different literatures, the thesis of Matthew Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867, permits a wide variety of applications in Canadian criticism. A critic might conclude that since most Canadians are of Anglo-Saxon origin, Canadian literature will always be a branch of English literature. Or he might conclude that since Canada contains many races, Canada cannot produce a literature. Or that Canada will have a national literature, but only after a "Canadian race" develops over generations as the result of intermarriage or the effects of climate. Or, since climates produce different races, and Canada has a distinctive climate, that there already is a Canadian race. Or he might get around the problem of the "two races" in Canada—the English and the French—by arguing that they are really derived from the same Norman racial stock,
and therefore can produce a unified national literature after all. At times there is a fairly wide agreement on which application of the core assumption is "correct"; in other cases, although many critics discuss the idea, there is no apparent consensus. Only one issue, the desire to include French Canada in the theory, seems to have inspired English-Canadian critics to modify or break with European assumptions in a consistent way. Otherwise the applications of these assumptions seem fairly idiosyncratic.

The remarkable conformity of opinion on which European ideas were applicable to the Canadian situation, and the equally obvious lack of conformity on how the ideas were to be applied to the Canadian situation reflects the strength of the European literary institution and the weakness of the Canadian one.

Despite the variety found in its application, this literary theory sees literature primarily as the product of external forces, either natural or social. The founder of this tradition is Herder, and the foundation of his ideas is language. Herder first "firmly established the principle that language was the most natural and hence indispensable basis of sociopolitical association. ... ",35 The shift from the use of Latin or French by the educated élite to the use of the vernacular, in progress for centuries, received new impetus from this idea. Friedrich von Schlegel, in his Lectures on the History of Literature, notes that Leibniz and Keppler wrote mostly in Latin, while Frederick the Second knew only French: "The learned and the noble alike neglected their mother tongue. National recollections and feelings were abandoned to the
guardianship of the people. . . ."36 Some American critics, inheriting the idea that a national language was essential, felt that a new American language had to precede a truly American literature. 37 The Canadian critic B.K. Sandwell writing in 1947 reveals what an advantage a distinctive national language was felt to be: "Whatever may be the new language of this melting-pot culture, it is not likely to be as vigorous as a purely national language."38 John E. Logan ("Barry Dane") considers the subject in 1884, and his model, based on the English intermarriage between Norman and Anglo-Saxon, produces gloomy conclusions for Canada: "We will produce a great writer, or even great writers; but will they be founders of a 'distinctive literature'? I think not, unless they write in Anglo-Ojibbeway and educate a nation to look upon Nano-bo-johu as a Launcelot or a Guy of Warwick."39 Northrop Frye, in his "The Narrative Tradition in English-Canadian Poetry," 1946, also sees the lack of a national language as a disadvantage: "The Canadian poet cannot write in a distinctively Canadian language; he is compelled to take the language he was brought up to speak . . . and attempt to adjust that language to an environment which is foreign to it, if not foreign to himself."40 Few other English-Canadian critics ever touch on the subject. David Haberly, in his "The Search for a National Language: A Problem in the Comparative History of Postcolonial Literatures," notes that this English-Canadian neglect of the topic is the "one major exception" in a "hemispheric" pattern observed in the United States, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, and French Canada, and concludes that "the
normal and natural development of linguistic nationalism has apparently been blighted by the peculiar condition of Anglo-Canadian culture, caught between the Scylla of England and the Charybdis of the United States."41 Surely if the problem of sharing a language with England stimulated discussion in the United States, it should not have blighted it so thoroughly in Canada. The real problem was that Canada had two languages, both enshrined in law as equally national, and any insistence on the necessity of linguistic unity would have split the nation.

Geography and climate were very important to the Romantic theorists of the nation, because geography was precisely what nationalists were claiming. Both geography and climate contributed to the national character essential to literature. Unfortunately, too much dependence on geography in Canada led inevitably either to regionalism (since the Rockies, the prairies, the Laurentian shield, the Maritimes all obviously produce different "national characters"), or to continentalism. Pelham Edgar runs into the last problem, concluding in his "Have We a National Literature?" that "on geographical grounds we would find it... difficult to discriminate between, let us say, a poet living in Windsor, and a native singer of Detroit."42 William Arthur Deacon is still concerned by this problem in 1946: "Our geography has been so excessive, the variety of scene... so full of contrasts that many said it was impossible... to prove that Canada has a separate national soul."43 The solution was not, in this case, to ignore this facet of Romantic theory, since French and English
Canada shared a geography, or at least part of one. As Jean-
Charles Bonenfant notes in his "Le rôle comparé de la critique
littéraire au Canada anglais et français," 1952, geography is one
of the common denominators of English and French Canada. The
solution was simply to select. For at least two reasons, the
North was the region chosen to represent Canada, despite Frances
Brooke's tart comment that "genius will never mount high where the
faculties of the mind are benumbed half the year." First, most
other regions in Canada are not geographically distinct from the
various regions of the United States. Second, Madame de Staël had
firmly established the idea that a northern climate produced the
best literature:

Il était assez généralement reconnu qu'il
n'y avait de littérature que dans le nord
de l'Allemagne, et que les habitants du
midi se livraient aux jouissances de la vie
physique, pendant que les contrées septen-
trionales goûtoient plus exclusivement celles
de l'âme. Beaucoup d'hommes de génie sont
nés dans le midi, mais ils se sont formés
dans le nord. On trouve non loin de la
Baltique les plus beaux établissements, les
savants et les hommes de lettres les plus
distingués, et depuis Weimar jusqu'à
Koenigsberg, depuis Koenigsberg jusqu'à
Copenhague, les brouillards et les frimas
semblent l'élément naturel des hommes d'une
imagination forte et profonde.

Carl Berger in his "The True North Strong and Free" argues that "detac-
ched observers and patriotic spokesmen alike have fixed upon the northern
caracter of Canada as one of the chief attributes of her nationality."
The glory and the mystery of the north and the wilderness became
a recurrent English-Canadian critical theme, and both the north and
the cold climate were frequently selected by critics as crucial influences on Canadian literary development. Archibald Lampman uses the selective method in his optimistic consideration of Canadian geography and climate in "At the Mermaid Inn", 9 April 1892:

In Canada with the snows and frozen months of Stockholm or St Petersburg we combine the long days, the blue sky, and the splendid sunshine of the north of Italy. There has never been any other nation on earth so situated, and we cannot but suppose that our people will in future develop an unusual buoyancy and novel energy of character.⁴⁸

Some critics resisted the emphasis on the north. Lionel Stevenson complained in his *Appraisals of Canadian Literature*, 1926, that "the whole of Canada has come to be identified with her northernmost reaches," and that "in modern folk-geography Canada means the North..."⁴⁹ The Group of Seven was similarly criticized for focusing its attention on Georgian Bay and northern Ontario, rather than the inhabited parts of Canada. When asked why the Group did not do pastorals—a common genre in England and the United States—A. Y. Jackson answered that "the supply is greater than the demand," but of course the distinctiveness of the northern landscape was another explanation for this focus.⁵⁰

The climatic theory was vague enough to result in positive or negative results, depending on its application. John D. Logan, in a comparison of the Australian and Canadian climates, applies the theory to Canada's advantage:

Both countries depend on England for their
literary standards and poetic forms. But in changes of seasons and their effects on the beauty and call of objective Nature, Canada has greater variety, and Nature makes a deeper impress on the soul, than is possible by climatic changes and Nature's varying face and garb in Australia.51

Duncan Campbell Scott, like Lampman writing in "At the Mermaid Inn," 6 February 1892, uses the same features seized upon by Logan to prove our literary advantage over Australia and wonders if they are sufficient to distinguish Canadian poetry from English:

In Canada we have a decent old-fashioned climate, which corresponds in all essential points to that which has bronzed the poets of old England, and our poets can sing of the season in their old round and cannot fail to be understood. . . . In the main we must depend for local colour [i.e., national distinctiveness] on whatever there is of real difference in our manner of looking at the old world with its changeful beauty.52

Although one critic here is optimistic about the effects of climate on the emergence of a national poetry and the other negative, both feel that climate is an important influence on poetry, and that a distinctive national climate will produce a distinctive national literature.

Geography and climate are more important perhaps in forming the national character, or soul, or type, or "race," than they are in providing subject matter for poetry. The national character is seen by some writers as quite inflexible—equivalent to the modern definition of race—while others see it as far more variable,
basing their definitions of it less on genetic or biological factors, and more on the social and physical impact of the nation on the individual. Frequently the word is used as a synonym for cultural identity, or even nationality. 53 James Cappon, leading up to a discussion of the formation of the Canadian national character in his Charles G. D. Roberts, 1925, runs through a set of what a modern critic would refer to as national stereotypes, but what might well have been described as racial characteristics by a contemporary:

The poetry of a country will naturally reflect the outstanding features and conditions of its existence, as that of France, for example, reflects the intellectual liberalism of its people, its frank curiosity about life and its critical sense of art; or that of Germany its love of systematic exposition and philosophical interpretation of life; or that of Norway the imaginative mysticism of the Norseman, the unforgettable glories of its early Hakons and Olafs, and the charm which its rock-bound coast, its fiords and lonely gaards or farmsteads have for the Norwegian mind. So in Canada, which as a united Dominion is still in its youth, one might expect that the natural aspects of the land, which are so varied and on so vast a scale, would exercise an exceptional influence on the minds of her poets. 54

Here, the factors that form national character are a mix of geography, and psychological or mental qualities that may have in turn been shaped in turn by political institutions or may be biologically innate.

Race in a more rigid sense, however, is formed over many generations through intermarriage. This formulation led to pessimistic conclusions for Canadian literature as John E. Logan in his
"National Literature," 1884, makes clear. He is working not only from the model of English literary history, but also using biological analogies to forward his argument. He asks how Canada can have "a 'distinctive literature' without the protoplasm of a remote national infancy?" He continues: "Had the Normans overrun England, obliterating almost every trace of the Saxon, as we have the North American Indian, the England of to-day might be but a differing branch of a Continental race and language" (p. 601). The native people were "moulded by the natural features of our land," whereas "we have come almost full grown into the world, not unlike some unbred specimens of the canine race" (p. 601).

Maurice Hutton, in a lecture "The Canadian National Character," delivered to the Empire Club in 1904, neatly solves John E. Logan's problem and the French-English problem by arguing that "all great civilizations are created by a blend—are created when a people of one type meets another people of quite a different type and by force of circumstances are compelled to blend with them and to add their joint civilizations together." As Classics professor at the University of Toronto, he found satisfaction in the discovery that Anglo-Saxons "are sharing our country with a people nearest of any people in the world to the genius of ancient Greece. ... We are blending with Frenchmen in Canada."

The most rigid formulation of race (the one that appealed to Hitler), was the theory that there were several founding races (descended, for the religious, at least, from the sons of Noah); these races lost their "purity" through the generations if they
married with other races. Even after centuries, distinctive racial qualities were recognizable. Hippolyte Taine's *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, 1863, first translated in 1871, became a standard work, and had a wide influence. Taine's version of Romantic nationalism is a naturalistic, that is, an over-optimistically "scientific" one. He believes that all social products—art, religion, philosophy, government—are the result of interaction among three general influences that he labels in his most famous formulation "Race, Surroundings, and Environment"—"la race, le milieu, et le moment." He argues that a race "like the old Aryans, scattered from the Ganges as far as the Hebrides, settled in every clime, and every stage of civilization, transformed by thirty centuries of revolutions, nevertheless manifests in its languages, religions, literatures, philosophies, the community of blood and intellect which to this day binds its offshoots together." Very few British critics, and even fewer English-Canadian ones used this most rigid definition as a basis for argument, simply because Great Britain was felt to have been founded on a principle of racial mixture, and because it contained several races—the Scotch, the Irish, the Welsh (the Celts) and the English (the Anglo-Saxons). Just as in English Canada, where critics were trying to reconcile the French and the English, too much emphasis on the purity of one race seemed unwise.

In Canada, some English-Canadian critics ignored the issue of the two races, in the simple confidence that the French would gradually be assimilated to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture.
Gradually for some, and quickly for others, it became clear that assimilation could not be relied upon to solve the "problem." A solution which maintained the superiority of both races seemed appealing. Carl Berger draws attention to an attempt to create a broader racial category for Canada found in Robert Grant Haliburton's speech "The Men of the North" delivered to the Montreal Literary Club in 1869: "Equating the adjective northern with toughness, strength, and hardihood, he argued that the diverse nationalities within Canada all shared a northern ancestry, and that the climate tended to instil and maintain the strenuous attributes of the Nordic races." Haliburton quite specifically argues for a modification in the standard theory: "We must in our national aspirations take a wider range, and adopt a broader basis which will comprise at once the Celtic, the Teutonic, and the Scandinavian elements, and embrace the Celtic, the Norman French, the Saxon and the Swede, all of which are noble sources of national life." Again Canada's northern location is used to ease problems in applying the Old World theory.

The perennial problem of how to assimilate the French into Canadian literary theory, if not into the Canadian "race" was eased by this kind of approach to the question. English-Canadian critics commonly pointed out that in the Normans, the English and French had common ancestors, and Pelham Edgar and S. E. Dawson, among others, use the expression Anglo-Norman to refer to Canadians in general. William Arthur Deacon makes much the same point, quickly glossing over the language differences:
Let us start with the idea that language is an expression of the people who use it; that it has an independent power of its own to mould thought, but is a minor factor in the formation of character. . . . Descendants of French and British pioneers in Canada are of the same family biologically. Both are Celtic and Norse; both have a liberal dash of Teuton.63

Ronald Sutherland provides a modern example of the same argument used for similar federalist purposes in his Second Image: Studies in Quebec/Canadian Literature, 1971, when he states that "so far as I can determine, there is no true racial divergence between French and English Canadians."64 Here he begs many questions, questions similarly, but perhaps more forgivably ignored in the nineteenth-century criticism: what is race? if there are races, do their qualities affect literature? and finally, does political unity necessarily depend on cultural or racial unity? The argument that cultural unity supported and justified political unity was very useful to nineteenth-century European nationalists; it does not fit large federal states settled by immigrants of many nationalities well at all. Perhaps modern Canadian nationalists would be better off reconsidering the ways in which culture and nationality interact in the New World, rather than attempting to apply theories based on faulty premises and derived from a reality far from us in both time and space. Sutherland continues his argument, supplying more romantic detail than most of the early critics:

Les Canadiens, having come largely from Normandy, Brittany and Picardy, are the result of a
mixture of many strains, including the Celts, Germanic tribes such as the Franks, Jutes and Frisians, as well as the Norsemen or Normans, not to mention a number of exiled Highland Scots and wandering Irishmen. English-speaking Canadians, strange as it may appear to some, are more or less a blend of the same elements, with a good measure of Norman-French blood thrown in besides.65

The idea that "racial" characteristics explain literary ones is straight from de Staël.

When Charles G. D. Roberts wrote his popular History of Canada in 1897 the issue of two races was on the verge of becoming considerably more complex, as boatloads of non-British, non-French, and non-Nordic immigrants began to arrive to settle the West:

Our climate, though it varies enormously over an area so vast, is such as has always bred the strongest and most enterprising races of mankind. . . . We have a people blended of two dominant races—a people tracing its origins to freedom, religion, and loyalty—a people which has kept itself free from the taint of criminal and pauper immigration. 66

Note the oblique and invidious comparison between Canada and Australia. This attitude would not seem likely to bend to easy acceptance of mass immigration of poor farmers from Eastern Europe. A clear national identity, and the development of the patriotic spirit essential to literature demanded a homogeneous people.

Wilfred Campbell, in "At the Mermaid Inn," 20 February 1892, writes:

But in these days of rapid emigration from country to country, where a community is
composed of peoples of diverse origin, who
have been compelled by the duties of citizen-
ship to forget old hereditities of custom, lan-
guage, and religion, it is impossible to
expect a real, natural patriotism to blossom
into being.67

Archibald Lampman, writing in the same column, made the same point:

We have no magnificent race history behind
us, nor visible memorials of its beauty and
splendour; we have not even a homogeneous
people; we are indeed, only the scattered
and intractable materials of which a nation
may be made. We cannot have, therefore, any
impulse of patriotism.58

Many writers were convinced that in their work their central
function was to discover and describe the "national type." Pelham
Edgar, in his "English-Canadian Literature" in the Cambridge History
of English Literature, 1917, says, as an explanation for the
poverty of English-Canadian literature, that "our racial pecu-
liarities are, perhaps, not yet sufficiently consolidated to afford
suggestive material to the novelist."69 Duncan Campbell Scott
comments in "At the Mermaid Inn" of Henry James's The American,
that the qualities of Christopher Newman are "characteristic of
a type of the neighbouring republic."70 Since Romantic nationalists
believed that the central focus not only for the novelist, but
also for the poet, should be human life, the lack of a national
type was a serious deficiency in Canada. An editorial in The News
and Advocate of St. John, Quebec, 3 February 1899, makes the ideal
quite clear:
Dr. Drummond in the "Habitant" has given us a type, but a passing type. It is local and temporary, and is dependent upon boundary and atmosphere and environment. It is fascinating to a degree; and we owe the doctor a debt of gratitude for his charming studies, which are at once whimsical and pathetic and undeniably veracious. Quebec is peculiar in many respects, by reason of history and tradition . . . which strikingly differentiates them from the more stolid Anglo-Saxon types of the other provinces. What we should seek for is the abiding type which will stand for the vital feature of a single nationality. How long must we wait for this common type which, whether limned in prose or verse, shall be instantly and universally recognized as standing for what is essentially Canadian! Are we singing localities while awaiting that amalgam which shall create the strong national figure . . . courageous, facing the future with confidence, containing within itself the best features of the Celtic and the Anglo-Saxon, and illustrating, in physique and mentality, the grandeur of our mountains, the poetry of our lakes and rivers, the wholesomeness (moral as well as physical), of our bracing climate!

This writer appears to be asking the impossible—that one type or literary character should represent a whole, varied people. Yet many believed Canada was inevitably moving toward the ideal state of unity prescribed by nationalist theory; regionalism was an amusing diversion for some, a dangerous one for others.

The phrases "national character" and "national type" occur with regularity in English-Canadian criticism, especially before 1920. It is often difficult to decide whether writers felt that the national type would emerge through intermarriage, the action of geography and climate, the result of cultural and social forces, or a mixture of all three. One of these themes, that of inter-marriage, occurs frequently in English-Canadian literature.
Since Canada is far from the ideal of one people of one "racial" background speaking one language, the English-Canadian writer often uses intermarriage between "races" to move Canada closer to ideal nationhood. Catharine Parr Traill, in a children's story, Canadian Crusoes, 1852, writes of three children lost in the wilderness. Two, Hector and Catharine, are the children of Catharine Perron and Duncan Maxwell. (Catharine nursed Duncan back to health after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.) The other child is their cousin, Louis Perron. The two boys, as Clara Thomas points out in her "Traill's Canadian Settlers," "inherit their fathers' temperaments."72 Hector the Highlander, as Traill describes him, is "stern, steady, persevering, cautious," while Louis the Frenchman is "hopeful, lively, fertile in expedients and gay as a lark."73 Catharine inherits the best qualities of both her ancestries. Not surprisingly, the children survive in the wilderness, as did their literary model. They discover a little Indian girl, whom they name, rather unimaginatively, Indiana, rather than Friday. She too, as Thomas points out, is described according to the firmly established racial stereotypes of the time. Nonetheless, all four children work together in harmony, and at the end of the novel, Catharine marries Louis and Hector, Indiana. Thomas connects the ending to the "author's own fantasy of wish-fulfillment for the future peace, prosperity, and Christian brotherhood of the Canadian people."74 There is no doubt of the ending's nationalist significance. Here we see British, French, and native, the three "races" with a
claim to the land, united in peace, order, and good government. Their children will be the new national "type." This theme recurs in later English-Canadian literature, with French-English, Métis-English, or native-English marriages in several novels.

In Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes, for example, Heather Yardley marries Paul Tallard at the end of the novel; in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners, Pique Tonnerre Gunn, one of the "inheritors" of the novel, has Scottish, French, and Cree blood.75

In much European Romantic theory, a long time was deemed necessary before the land could exert its influence on the people sufficiently to produce a new "race." Herder believed that national characteristics could be modified by migration only very gradually. Setting forth a "few empirical generalizations drawn from recent history," he concludes that "too sudden, too precipitate transitions to an opposite hemisphere and climate rarely benefit a nation" and notes that Europeans in North America die young while the native Indians live long and healthy lives.76 According to John E. Logan, if a Canadian race evolved at all, it would take at least seven hundred years.77 For those who felt that Canada would not last that long without a national literature, short-cuts were necessary. Some, like Archibald MacMechan, simply use the expression Canadian race without question. As far as MacMechan is concerned, only one generation is necessary to produce a race, since he says "a whole generation had to be born and grow up in the new conditions [after Confederation] before a national literature was possible."78 For many, the
proximity of the birth dates of many important Canadian writers to 1867 confirms the connection. John D. Logan notes that Roberts, "Ralph Connor," Carman, Lampman, Campbell, Pauline Johnson, M. M. Saunders, F. G. Scott, Duncan Campbell Scott, and Gilbert Parker were all born between 1860 and 1862, and began writing "under the influence of the awakening spirit of Canadian nationality..." 79 "Canadian-born" is a significant adjective applied frequently to writers in early criticism.

For Frederick Philip Gove, the process, depending on where one lived, took even less than a generation, and did not require Canadian birth. He describes the effect of the neighbourhood of "Spalding District" on its people in his chronicle, Fruits of the Earth, 1932:

Such as live here, brought by those accidents of choice which commonly determine location in a new country... are developing what is so far, exceeding rare on this cosmopolitan continent, namely, a distinct local character and mentality.

If they have lived here for some time, a decade or longer, and have stayed on in the face of all the inevitable and unforeseen discouragements and difficulties, so that the landscape has had time to enforce in them a reaction to its own character, they seem slow, deliberate, earthbound. 80

Although this shortened evolution has obvious advantages for the English-Canadian literary theorist, there are precedents for it in European theory. The land, it seems, can imprint itself on the citizen, most commonly during his childhood, at every generation.

Romantic theorists make the connection between child and
birthplace, citizen and nation, far more powerful and more spiritual (or in Taine's case, more "scientific") than common experience seems to warrant. As Susanna Moodie points out in her introduction to the third edition of *Roughing it in the Bush*, 1854, emigrants "sacrifice . . . those local attachments which stamp the scenes amid which [their] childhood grew, in imperishable characters upon the heart" in order to "exult in the prospect of their children being free and the land of their adoption great."\(^{81}\) Moodie, although feeling herself a "stranger in a strange land" exhorted "British Mothers of Canadian sons . . . learn to feel for their country the same enthusiasm which fills your hearts when thinking of the glory of your own. Teach them to love Canada. . . .\(^{82}\)

In making this firm distinction between British mothers and their Canadian sons, her country and his country, Moodie is simply repeating a widely-held tenet of Romanticism, which insists that the scenes of childhood, the soil of one's birthplace, leave an indelible impression in "imperishable characters" on the native heart. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Sonnet to the River Otter," 1796, is a typical expression of this idea. Despite the many "various-fated" years which have passed since he has last seen the Otter, "so deep impressed" are the "sweet scenes of childhood" that he can recall them in exquisite detail.\(^{83}\)

This point became a well-established cliché in Canada; John Ford MacDonald writes in his *William Henry Drummond*, 1925, for example, that although Drummond loved his "adopted home" dearly, he "had all the sentimental attachment and romantic feeling of the
true Celt for his native Ireland"; as well, of course, Drummond had passed his "most impressionable years" (he left aged ten) there. Modern English-Canadian criticism and literature both testify to the vitality of this belief. Northrop Frye, in his introduction to The Bush Garden, 1971, explains that the difference between the painting of a Ghanaian and those of some Canadians was caused by the African's spending his "impressionable years . . . in a world where colour was a constant datum." Wallace Stegner, in his Wolf Willow, 1955, strengthens the force of this idea by connecting it with the scientific theories of animal imprinting popularized by Konrad Lorenz. Stegner writes: "Expose a child to a particular environment at his susceptible time and he will perceive in the shapes of that environment until he dies." Although no one has ever precisely demarcated the "impressionable period," nor does Stegner ever convincingly explain what it means to "perceive in the shapes of [an] environment," the learning here seems to be both irresistible and unconscious, and to occur separately from formal education. The insistence that there was such an indelible, imperishable impression stamped by the land on the people was essential in making that people's claim to that land good. Since the link between the people and the land cannot be proven scientifically (despite Taine's and Stegner's opinions to the contrary) a great literature is taken as evidence that such a link exists. Although it is created by popular social myths and in the literature, the national character is therefore attributed to the effects of
geography and climate. Certainly a great literature is evidence of a strong emotional bond between the writer and his region or nation, and this literature may encourage the formation of such a bond in others, but an emotional bond is not a biological bond. Yet a biological bond is so much more inevitable, so much more defensible than an emotional one in asserting nationalist claims. And the link between the land and the people has to be asserted as an a priori of any discussion of national literature, and has, to give it the weight of scientific truth, most often been presented as natural, organic, and determined, like the genetic link between parent and child—hence Fatherland and Motherland.

No one would seriously dispute the idea that the region where we spend our "impressionable years" has an impact on our imaginations. But why insist on such an overwhelming, inevitable, and permanent imprint, one, according to most of these critics, that cannot be changed? Because if the link is defended as a fact of nature, the claim to the land becomes significantly strengthened. In Romantic nationalist theory, literature was a vital part of the social and political process, and performed the same kind of function as a charter, a constitution, or a boundary. William Arthur Deacon writes in his "The National Character," 1920, that "if we see the Canadian Race emerging, a distinct, a unique people; and if we believe that the world's salvation depends . . . upon the development of that type—then we are justified in erecting about ourselves walls of words, like constitutions, or walls of stone, like the great wall of China."
Note the "race" must come first; then the words, the literature, are justified. If there is no link between a people and the place they live, then they have at best squatter's rights. If a foreigner can write as powerfully about a nation as a native, this puts the legitimacy of the native claim to that nation into question. This is why we still persist in seeing Louis Hénon (who spent only two years in Quebec) and Frederick Philip Grove (who was definitely past his impressionable prime when he hit the prairies) as "exceptions," even though they have as integral a place in the literary tradition as any writers who passed those vital impressionable years here. If foreign writers write well about us, they are quietly naturalized; if they write badly, the reason is simple—spiritual dual citizenship is, it seems, impossible. Edward McCourt, in his *The Canadian West in Fiction*, 1949, accounts for Frederick Niven's "comparative failure to write of the Canadian West in a manner worthy of his very great talents" by asking rhetorically "Does a native of one country ever write really well of another? Can a writer whose roots are deep in the soil of his native land . . . ever be transplanted with complete success?"89 Of course the answer he expected and the one I would give are not the same. For one thing, few writers try to write about countries other than their own; those who do are often mining the exotic, like the large number of English writers, notably Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who rode across Canada "on the cow-catcher" in order to gather material for stories doomed in general to superficiality.90 But writers who live in
another country for some time, and make a serious effort to know the land and people often write extremely well about them—Margaret Laurence's *The Tomorrow Tamer* is an excellent contemporary example.91

In general, then, most English-Canadian critics agree that a writer has to be born in Canada, or at least have spent a large portion of his childhood here, in order to write Canadian literature. John George Bourinot excludes Heavysege from the Canadian canon since he was a "man of mature age when he made his home in this country."92 Wilfred Campbell, in his introduction to the *Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* argues that "only he who has been closely associated with a country from early childhood and has spent all the years of his youth and maturity within its borders, can fitly interpret its life and dramatize its problems."93 This was a very rigorous definition, because many of the best writers left Canada, usually for economic reasons, including John Richardson, Robert Barr, Gilbert Parker, Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts, Sara Jeannette Duncan, and Arthur Stringer. Deacon, like many critics, also considered it possible to weaken one's "Canadianism"; since Duncan Campbell Scott "spent his life in Canada . . . he has absorbed the place-spirit as an expatriate like Carman could not do in his mature years."94 One problem with a rigid definition of "Canadian" was that Canadian born and bred writers were quite capable of turning out work that, as Vernon Rhodenizer put it, made "no obvious specific reference to Canadian nature or Canadian life."95 Rhodenizer, consistent
with the widespread belief in geographical determinism, argues that the works of such a writer must be Canadian, because "everybody knows that the mental store of images out of which he creates literature is derived from Canadian sources." Others were not so sure. Even when considering poets of high ability, a critic usually asked first whether or not they gave Canada a "national voice." (Here begins the search for the Great Canadian Novel, or Poem.) If a writer failed this test, he was in danger of being critically deported, wearing the label "not truly Canadian."

J. E. Wetherall, reviewing F. G. Scott's My Lattice and Other Poems, writes in 1895 that "although Canadian born, Mr. Scott is too cosmopolitan to be a Canadian. . . . [H]e is a little disappointed by the absence of all native flavor from poems which probably owe very much to native environment." Archibald MacMurchy says much the same thing in his Handbook of Canadian Literature (English), in 1906: "Probably the Canadian reader will mark with regret the absence of Canadian colouring, and wish that these noble poems proclaimed the native country of their author." Even Archibald Lampman had to be protected against such charges, as the defensive tone of two early reviews reveals. Author Stringer writes in his "A Glance at Lampman," 1894, that "it would be foolish to expect anything more thoroughly Canadian," and Pelham Edgar's review of Among the Millet, 1889, takes a similar stance, commenting that a critic who expects "the accustomed hymn or sonnet to the swathed but gigantic limbs of the infant Canada" will be disappointed, but that "nearly all the
rich colouring of every poem is borrowed from the hues of our Canadian fields and forests. . . ."101 (The reference to "swathed but gigantic limbs" is an undergraduate gibe aimed at Charles G. D. Roberts's "Canada," 1886, which begins "O Child of Nations, giant-limbed"--not all critics thought that the patriotic ode was the ultimate Canadian genre.)

Whether the connection between the people and the land was "real" or not, English-Canadian critics believed in its solid existence, and this affected their criticism. There was widespread acceptance of the view that those who spent the most time in close contact with nature would be most strongly influenced by it, and therefore would be closest to the "national type." This belief affected literary attitudes to the native people, and to farmers, lumberjacks, miners, and all others engaged in outdoor work. It is this attitude that causes William Douw Lighthall to describe Charles G. D. Roberts as "poet, canoeist, and Professor of Literature" (emphasis added) in his introduction to Songs of the Great Dominion, 1889.102 (It may well have inspired Roberts to be a canoeist.) Wilfred Campbell, although elsewhere he praises the "advantages of a heredity developed in close contact with outside nature,"103 feels that Lighthall has gone too far here:

The one writer who is sufficiently accentuated to raise him from the promiscuous heap is spoken of as "poet and canoeist," while the fact that he is a professor in a college is cast altogether into the shade.104
This is, he feels, to distort the truth of Canadian life, to represent it as a "crude colony." Writers did indeed risk this when they focussed on voyageurs, lumberjacks, fishermen, and pioneers, but this seemed, to many, better than making Canada seem just like everywhere else.

Grove, in his "Apologia Pro Vita et Opera Sua," 1931, notes that "the differences in national character are most pronounced in those who are in immediate contact with the soil they sprang from; for they rest on geographic, topographic, and climatic conditions." If those who had had the most contact with the soil developed the strongest "national character" this left the English in Canada (once again betrayed by a theory based on European conditions) with the dismaying fear that they had not lived on the land long enough to make a good claim. (After all, the native people and then the French were here first.) Fortunately, Romantic theory provided a useful model for linking the people, even latecomers, with the soil. For Herder, national legitimacy is, in part, founded on the Volksgeist, or spirit of the people, and this concept is even more important to national literature than the spirit of place. K. R. Minogue outlines Herder's concept:

The Volk is not simply the people of a country, but a metaphysical entity defined relationally as that which produces a particular language, art, culture, set of great men, religion and collection of customs. All of these things are taken, not as the products of individual men, but as manifestations of the spirit of the people, or Volksgeist.
Thus, as in Wordsworth, the simple country people became an important focus. Archibald MacMechan argues that Canadians are "sprung from the peasant class of Britain. . . . They are, in the main, a forest-felling, railway-building, plowing, sowing, reaping, butter-and-cheese making people, busied with mines and fisheries and factories. . . ." Roberts comments on the "picturesque and striking material . . . in the lives of our fishing populations, for instance, and in our lumber camps and drives." To work on the land was to claim it, both literally and spiritually.

Although the emphasis on the people gives the theory a strong democratic air, in practice often the people included all classes. Carl Woodring, commenting on Coleridge's use of nation notes that his usage implied a "belief in the self-determination of nations, although not necessarily self-determination of common peoples as sovereign over themselves. . . ." This seems to approximate the Canadian usage. After all it was an élite, a leisure class that provided the higher culture so necessary for the production of poetry. The theory suffered with the rise of the urban working class. Signs of strain began to show around the turn of the century. The American anti-Romantic, Irving Babbitt, in his Masters of Modern French Criticism, 1912, surveys the new forces that, he felt, were making the old Romantic ideas untenable:

In general to look for poetry at all among gondoliers and the like is, under existing conditions, at least, to chase an Arcadian dream. For at the very time that one side of our civilization is sentimentalizing about
the primitive, the other side. . . is just as surely killing it. At the present rate the poetry of the people, poetry that is spontaneous in the Rousseauistic sense, will soon have given way all over the world to the yellow journal or the equivalent.\textsuperscript{111}

Pelham Edgar also had problems with the shift in demographic and occupational patterns in the twentieth century—he felt that "it is certainly the prevailing stress of lower class sentiment which . . . cheapens our literature. . . .\textsuperscript{112}

Despite the uneasiness that some critics felt about the differences between the "people" found in European theory and the real people around them, human activity was still considered the most important subject matter for literature. Gordon Waldron bases his controversial negative judgment of Canadian nature poetry in his "Canadian Poetry: a Criticism," 1896, on this idea:

The subjects with which poetry may deal with are human action, ideas of universal human interest and scenery. . . . Of these, human action is by far the most important, though ideas, if they be same ideas of the great problems of human life, readily lend themselves to the art of poetry. Scenery, on the other hand, is the most barren topic of poetry.\textsuperscript{113}

He concludes that since the "Confederation Poets" were mainly nature poets, their poetry was inferior. Naturally this aroused much spirited defence. None of the defenders of Canadian poetry attack Waldron's underlying argument, however. A. D. DeMille, for example, does not quarrel with the ranking system, but rather argues that there is human interest in the poems of Roberts, Carman, and Scott.\textsuperscript{114} Although Waldron was one of the few
contributors published in The Canadian Magazine (Toronto, 1893-1939) who came to negative conclusions about Canadian literature (which explains the controversy), he was in the same Romantic nationalist tradition as the defenders of Canadian poetry.

Roberts was criticized elsewhere for ignoring human interest. Archibald MacMurchy complains that Roberts's poetry lacks "any direct vivid treatment of human life--'the criticism of life'--the element in true poetry which enchains the attention...." 115 Cappon makes the same point: "With all his gifts, then, Roberts evidently lacks two things without which a poet in our day cannot take a strong hold of the public. He does not as a poet give us either a lively, vigorous presentation of life or a profound and critical interpretation of it." 116 Roberts himself agreed with their theory, if not with their evaluation, because in his "The Poetry of Nature," 1897, he notes that "nature-poetry is not mere description of landscape in metrical form, but the expression of one or another of many vital relationships between external nature and 'the deep heart of man.'" 117 Literature, for the Romantics, is clearly not something that can be discussed simply in terms of literary tradition, convention, and intrinsic characteristics. Poetry is part of a complex and comprehensive social cycle.

The most common analogy used to explain this cycle is one based on the rural cycle of planting and harvesting. William Arthur Deacon expresses this analogy most clearly in a lecture delivered to E. J. Pratt's English class at Victoria College, University of Toronto, 7 April 1936:
Literature is a perfectly natural emanation of common living, expressed for everybody by a specialist in words and phrases. . . . [Authors'] words . . . go out to clarify the minds of readers, to help them realize themselves. . . . The final process of literature is that . . . the reader's mind influences his actions . . . and so we find the original impulse, which came from the common soil of life, being plowed into it again through action. The cycle is complete; the soil is enriched, and out of it will come more fruitful emanations.

All aspects of national life are part of this literary theory. The land forms the people who provide material for, and are in turn formed by literature. Note the assumption of interdependence in James Cappon's 1905 definition of "the true Canadian poet": "He . . . manages to get the right materials of Canadian life into his song in such a way that all the world may feel what it is that gives Canada character and significance amongst nations." Deacon also expresses the importance of the relationship between poet and people. For him, the poet "is a cell of society . . . subject to every influence of his time and place. He may hate his environment, speak out against customs of his day, but he cannot be indifferent to the atmosphere in which he lives, any more than he can refuse to breathe oxygen." He continues: "The great literature only comes when there is a great audience for it. The great audience demands and gets the great literature. The process of creation is bilateral." Or, as E. J. Pratt put it, "the artist and the audience are complementary." Frye's "Silence in the Sea," 1968, discusses Pratt in just these terms:
When the poet has so central a relation to his society, there is no break between him and his audience: he speaks for, as much as to, his audience, and his values are their values. Even if a professional poet, he is popular in the sense that he is the voice of his community. Shakespeare, who is still essentially an oral poet, shows a similar identification with the assumptions of his audience.123

The artist is dependent on the people, not only for subject matter, or voice, but also for a response. In this system, without an audience—a national audience, rather than an elite audience—the artist cannot develop his art. In 1891, Lampman writes:

The time has not come for the production of any genuine national song. It is when the passion and enthusiasm of an entire people, carried away by the excitement of some great crisis, enters into the soul of one man specially gifted, that a great national poem or hymn is produced.124

By this argument, the poet receives his inspiration from the people, as well as reflecting it back to them. The people, in turn, receive theirs from some "great crisis." (Now and then a critic hints wistfully that a minor war would be just the thing for Canadian literature.) Duncan Campbell Scott, in his "A Decade of Canadian Poetry," 1901, expresses a similar opinion:

So far as I am aware, there has been no single piece of verse that has spoken with so sure an accent as to become current among the Canadian people. Amid all this multitude of poems there has not been one that has entered deeply into very many hearts and become an epitome of individual
longing or national hope. Using popular
in one of its least hackneyed meanings, we
must confess that there is no Canadian
poetry that is popular with the Canadian
people. This statement at first will wear
a condemnatory face. If our poets cannot
win the people to sing with them, of what
use is the song? 125

The English Romantics also felt that a response from the
people would validate their poetry. "Wordsworth," according to
J. W. Saunders in his The Profession of English Letters, "had
consciously thought of himself as a new Milton, attaining a national
audience with new poetry, including epic poetry..." 126
Wordsworth's desire to make contact with the people is reflected
in his "attempts at chapbook circulation among the masses with
ballad-poems like We Are Seven..." 127

These beliefs were a source of many complaints against
obscurity in poetry in Canada, since if the people could not
understand a poem it was not performing its true function.
(Browning was an early victim.) Pratt, for example, according
to Susan Beckmann in her "Pratt on Pratt," "maintained that a
poet writes for an audience and that he therefore has a responsi-
bility to that audience to communicate simply and directly." 128
With the rise of popular culture in the modern sense of mass
culture, poets were no longer regarded, and no longer regarded
themselves, as an integral part of society. Romantics agonized
over their popularity, and the Victorians felt it their duty to
write inspirational and public poetry; later poets often wrote
pour épater le bourgeois, and with Eliot and Joyce the breach
between the poet and the people was complete. Here, in a review of Theodore H. Rand's *At Mines Basin*, in 1897, the reviewer, probably John Cooper, grapples with the problem of the changing meaning of *popular*. He distinguishes between poetry that pleases the people and poetry that pleases the educated reader, and asks which of the two types is "true poetry." The answer, he feels, lies in whether poetry is a unity with one standard, or whether different kinds of poetry exist which please different groups. His attempt to define and judge poetry by examining its relation to the *audience* is typically Romantic. Although he does not explicitly decide the issue, his conclusion, because of such words as *over-fanciful, uncommon,* and *straining,* favours poetry that appeals to the people:

Perhaps it would be safe to say that some of our poets, such as Carman, Roberts, and Rand have erred by straining too much after artistic and high-sounding phrases, after an uncommon and over-fanciful method of expressing their thoughts. Hence they have removed their words from the range of "the people" and have contented themselves with being "the poet's poets."129

No longer was it quite so clear, however, that the poet should please the people when the people were changing. No longer were they rustic, orderly, and in close contact with nature. Pelham Edgar, in his "The Cult of Primitivism," 1929, argues against those who feel literature should concern itself with the peasant: "I cannot admit that our salvation rests with the peasant. Why should we pin our faith to a dying race?"130 Among Romantic nationalists, however, Edgar was in the minority. In 1913,
Thomas Guthrie Marquis praises Thomas Chandler Haliburton by pointing out that "many, very many, of Sam Slick's flashes of wit and bits of wisdom have become incorporated into our everyday speech. Such cannot be said of any other Canadian author."\textsuperscript{131} To become "part of the language" was the peak of poetic success both because it argued acceptance by "the people" and because nationality was based on language. That Robert Service's poems were read by prospectors, and William Henry Drummond's "habitant" poems were widely recited gave them a virtue that even the most refined critics scarcely dared to ignore. Even the austere Cappon noted that the success Drummond's poems "have met with shows what a ready public after all there always is for a true and lively presentation of life."\textsuperscript{132} In his On Canadian Poetry, 1943, E. K. Brown, however, comments on Drummond's "literary weakness" and calls Service a "marginal figure."\textsuperscript{133} His publisher, Lorne Pierce, defends these poets in an undated letter about revision of the 1943 edition: "Drummond sells in stacks yet. We have sold thousands of Service, and at $3.50 a copy, to the Alaska highwaymen! . . . They have had a phenomenal run, and thousands know them by heart."\textsuperscript{134} A modern publisher would know better than to defend poets in these apparently crass terms to the modern academic critic, who often seems to like best what is read least. But both Brown and Pierce were Romantic nationalist critics, and Pierce is arguing from the Romantic nationalist premise that poets who have a significant relationship with the people are important. Brown did not, in this case, however, revise his opinion.
The belief that a truly national literature would be sung by the people, or at least read on streetcars, is one factor that accounts for the constant concern with the apathetic audience in English-Canadian criticism. Dewart complains that among countries "making equal pretensions to intelligence and progress" none greet "every effort in poetry . . . with so much coldness and indifference," and that in Canada, there is an "almost universal absence of interest and faith in all indigenous literary productions, and [an] undisturbed satisfaction with a state of things, that, rightly viewed, should be regarded as a national reproach."\(^{135}\)

E. K. Brown, in his "The Immediate Present in Canadian Literature," 1933, complains that "the Canadian public is not hostile to Canadian literature but it is indifferent."\(^{136}\) A critic who worked in a tradition which saw literature as independent of society might see this situation as economically or emotionally discouraging for the artist; for a Romantic critic it was the destruction of any possibility that literature could develop at all. Since the poet could not write without a people to provide an audience, poets could not be blamed for the nation's lack of a literature. The poet, Duncan Campbell Scott argues, is "the bondman of his time" and the desired "poetry that will stir the heart" cannot be written in Canada, where "the lack of any national solidarity . . . acts and reacts upon everything thought and done."\(^{137}\)

All this emphasis on the interdependence of art and society, and writer and reader led to the firm adherence to the belief that
"genius" could only be expressed through a nation, rather than through individual writers, as Carlyle would have had it. In a section of his *The Mirror and the Lamp* aptly entitled "German Theories of Vegetable Genius," M. H. Abrams traces the development of organicism as a reaction to eighteenth-century theories of mind and art based on mechanical models. Originally, the emphasis was on the organic nature of individual genius; Herder, however, is the first to use "the plant as the prototype for the development of an art form in the soil of its own time and place, instead of for the genesis of a single work in the mind of an artist"—that is, as a prototype for the growth and development of a national literature. Naturally this application of organicism had more significance for English-Canadian critics than the theory of individual genius. E. K. Brown, in his *On Canadian Poetry*, 1944, makes the dangers of the latter theory for the future of Canadian literature very clear. He notes what an "easy answer" this concept of genius is to the question of how to help the development of Canadian literature; it justifies total neglect: "Wait till our Dickens comes along, and then we'll prove to you that we know how to honour a great writer." He continues:

The line taken here depends on the belief that literature is an autonomous thing, a succession of single great men, each arising accidentally, each sufficient to himself. . . .

Thinking of this sort ignores a fundamental fact: that literature develops in close association with society.
Not only Herder, but also the more familiar Taine, makes the argument that "le génie n'est rien qu'une puissance développée, et nulle puissance ne peut se développer tout entière, sinon dans le pays où elle se rencontre naturellement et tous, où l'éducation la nourrit . . . où le publique la provoque." 141 This, as W. J. Alexander, first Professor of English at the University of Toronto, notes in the introduction to his An Introduction to the Poetry of Robert Browning, 1889, had become a truism of the time. 142 Conclusive evidence of this is found in its presence in Paul Hiebert's satire of the nationalist critical biography, Sarah Binks, 1947, where Miss Drool, the critic, energetically refutes the idea that Sarah was "an isolated genius" by arguing that Binks not only "was the product of her soil," but also "an expression of her environment and her age." 143

The preponderance of organic imagery in English-Canadian literary criticism, therefore, is not unusual. The most widely-known application of organicism to literature was that of John Addington Symonds (and later Ferdinand Brunetière) who argued that genres passed through almost biological stages of infancy, maturity, decadence, and death. 144 These ideas applied to national literature as well; a literature followed a set pattern of development through the primitive chant, to the ballad and epic, to the lyric, the drama, and finally the novel. Once again English-Canadian critics were faced with a pattern that did not really fit Canada. Alfred Baker, in his presidential address to the Royal Society of Canada in 1916, "Canada's Intellectual Status and
Intellectual Needs," remarks rather regretfully that "a superior people, if still barbarous and uncontaminated, naturally and instinctively takes to literature. We Canadians are not wholly barbarous and we are not uncontaminated. We are scarcely ingenuous enough to write Sagas." Later in the same address he finds some comfort in the fact that "poetry with us seems to precede prose, in this respect following a recognized law of evolution, though we did not start our national life from a condition of barbarism." Daniel Wilson, in his "Canadian Poetry," 1858, had earlier concluded on similar grounds that the time was out of joint for the "correct" development of Canadian literature:

Our schooling has been too much alongside of the elder of Europe's nations, and our individual thoughts partake too largely of the experience which centuries have accumulated around the old Saxon hearth, to admit of the lyrical or epic muse inspiring for us the lay that is born of nature in the true poet's heart. We are past the first poetic birth-time. . . .

Sara Jeannette Duncan echoes these views: "We are conscious of not having been born in time to produce an epic poet or dramatist; but still in vain do we scan the west for the lyrist, the east for the novelist whose appearing we may not unreasonably expect." Once again the theory parts company with the colonial reality, since Canada had, in its usual, awkward manner, begun the "wrong" way around.

An organism is an entity, and develops on its own, and so, according to Romantic theory, do nations. "The imitation of another nation," writes Friedrich von Schlegel, "never attains
its object; for everything produced by the latter in the epoch of its highest perfection and of its greatest achievement must always remain foreign to the imitator." A. G. Bailey, in his "Evidences of Culture Considered as Colonial" comments that "the belief in mysterious creative forces working in the souls of nationalities" blinded historians (and, we might add, critics) "to the extent to which the evolution of nations was causally involved with social forces of wider provenance than local nationalities and their inhabitants." Each nation, then, must develop as if in isolation, from the days of its barbarous national infancy. Archibald MacMechan felt it necessary to point out, in his presidential address to the Royal Society of Canada, May, 1926, that "it does not follow that because the economic conditions of the country are in the pioneer stage that its cultural conditions are also necessarily in the pioneer stage." He continues, "Our first writers were not homespun rail-splitters, reading a borrowed book in a log cabin by the light of a pine-knot fire. They were college graduates." To go to college was, however, according to the theory, a disadvantage to the poet, who would only learn there how to imitate the poetry of other countries. John Marshall's complaint about Canadian poets reflects all these problems:

Indisposed or unable to compose sustained and original works they keep turning out faint copies of European models. Meanwhile there remains unsung the poetry of the new world—the rapidly fading Indian tradition, the French missions, the voyageurs, pioneering,
lumbering, the vast forests, great lakes, and mighty rivers—and they will remain unsung, and our poets will continue to turn out ballads, canzonets, madrigals, and reveries in imitation of the affections of European poetry gone to seed.153

Unable to innovate, forbidden to imitate, writers frequently tried to recapitulate, turning to "primitive" forms and "primitive" subject matter. It seems clear, for example, that Pratt consciously aimed to write national epics (epic, of course, is the national genre), filling in retroactively a stage in the prescribed literary evolution, just as did Macpherson's Ossian. The best way to learn to write was not to read or to go to university, obviously, but to go to the wildest part of Canada. W. A. Fraser, in his "Literature," 1899, writes: "If our young writers wish for a true literature, let them go there, out into the open, into the university of God, even as Moses did for forty years."154

According to this theory, isolate the poet in the most beautiful and distinctive part of the country, and he will write the most beautiful and distinctive poetry. Frye rightly ridicules this idea, labelling it the "Ferdinand the Bull theory of poetry"—since "practically all important poetry has been the fruit of endless study and reading. . ."155 The Canadian poetic obsession with the wilderness derives, then, not only from the feeling that it is the only distinctive subject matter available to the poet, but also from the feeling that Canadian poetry had to go back to the "barbaric," "wild" beginnings of literature in order to evolve in the correct, that is, in the Old World, manner.
The obsession with the "wilds" led to difficulties for several important Canadian critics, including William Douw Lighthall. Wilfred Campbell's main complaint about William Douw Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion*, 1889, is that it represents Canada "as a crude colony, whose literature, if it could be called by such a name, is merely associated with superficial canoe and carnival songs, backwoods and Indian tales told in poor rhyme, and all tied together by pseudo-patriotic hurrahs, which are about as representative of our true nationality as they are of literature."¹⁵⁶ Campbell is objecting not only to the limitation of "Canadian" poetry to that with the correctly "Canadian" subject matter, but also to a mistaken use of the concept of poetic evolution. Lighthall is forced, by the prevailing idea of poetic development, to assume that since Canada is young, her poetry will be too—naïve, unpolished, and crude. Lighthall writes that "it is obvious that if only what illustrates the country and its life in a distinctive way be chosen, the subjective and unlocal literature must be necessarily passed over, entraining the omission of most of the poems whose merit lies in perfection of finish."¹⁵⁷ Even Lighthall, the most patriotic of critics, is forced by two misconceptions—that Canadian poetry was necessarily in a primitive stage of development, and that Canadian poetry had to emphasize Canadian content—into classifying "good" (i.e., finished, cosmopolitan, technically competent) poetry written by Canadians as imitative and unlocal. Many critics, as did Lighthall, imply that Canadian poetry will necessarily begin with the crude
and unfinished in order to pass through all the stages that European poetry went through.

Again, despite a poor fit, the theory is adopted, first because of its wide currency, and second because it contains much to Canada's literary advantage—a young nation would inevitably produce a literature, and could hope to have its renaissance while older nations were passing into decadence. As John D. Logan points out in his "The Genius and Distinction of Canadian Poetry," 1911, "philosophically viewed, the literary child or youth of Canada will be the father of the literary manhood of the Dominion, when, as inevitably must happen, our country shall have grown to its greatest estate" (emphasis added). In other words, growth and maturity were guaranteed. Roberts's comparison of Canada to a child in his patriotic ode "Canada," 1886, certainly fits into this tradition; Earle Birney's later satiric point in his two "Canada: Case History" poems is simply that the hopeful theory does not always apply—in the first Canada is "dead-set in adolescence" and in the second, skipping maturity, has achieved a "premature senescence."\footnote{159}

Not only did this theory support the comforting prospect of future greatness in literature, but it also had a synthetic aspect—as in the image of many branches of one tree—which made it useful in covering over regional rifts. Organic imagery was also useful in expressing without too much clarity the fine difference between the distinctive and the derivative. For example, Thomas Guthrie Marquis, in his "English-Canadian Literature," 1913,
writes: "Leacock is an Englishman by birth, but as he came to Canada when only seven years old, Canadians can claim him, if not as a product of the soil, at least as a graft on the Canadian literary tree." (He goes through a similar conscientious struggle with every author he discusses who was not born in Canada.) A good example of a passage which brings together most of this organic imagery is from Carl F. Klinck's Wilfred Campbell, 1942:

The first romantic poetry of a nation springs from the soil. Its branches will fling themselves into the universal air, but its roots will remain in a special patch of earth made rich by the sentiments and traditions of a people, by the sacrifice of pioneers and martyrs, and by the peculiar genius of a language. The sapling begins to grow when the first inspired and talented child of a newly developed community views his surroundings with eyes that see the essential beauty in familiar scenes and fabulous magic in the lives of his countrymen. Romance is fed by love; and there is no love to displace the love of home. Leaves and fruit of the mature tree will toss in the winds that blow from afar, but the trunk will stand where it first appeared, rooted, yet erect,

Type of the wise who soar, but never roam
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

To him who gives poetry such roots in a new soil
 goes a nation's homage and lasting fame.

Clearly nationalism was a vital emotion; not only did it ensure the political health of the nation, but also its literary greatness. When Archibald Lampman concludes that patriotism for Canadians is "not an instinctive but a moral quality," it is for precisely the same reasons that he and others use elsewhere to
explain Canadian literary deficiency:

We cannot be patriotic as the Englishman is patriotic. Born and bred in an old and famous land covered with the monuments and remnants of a romantic history, a land still ringing with names that were illustrious centuries ago, surrounded by all the epoch-making stir of a great race, the Englishman, indeed, were not at the level of humanity if he had not patriotism.162

Patriotism, like literature, is ideally instinctive, spontaneous, almost involuntary, but only under ideal conditions—conditions hard to achieve in a colony. National spirit was closely related to political independence, but critics were not always in agreement on the details of the relationship. Some felt that the national spirit should precede independence, as in the European model—Dewart, collecting "Canadian poems" before Confederation is on this side, as is Benjamin Sulte, in his "Canadian Sentiment Before and After Confederation," 1903, where he argues that three centuries before,"there was already a Canadian sentiment in existence" because the French who remained in Canada "had imbibed a sentiment from the soil which the French of France could not understand."163 Yet others are more restrained, as was the anonymous writer against Goldwin Smith's annexationism, who, since Canada was not totally independent twenty-seven years after Confederation, scrupulously qualified his point: "Perhaps it is not strictly accurate to say that there is a national feeling in Canada, for a Colony is not a nation."164 Charles G. D. Roberts, in his History of Canada, 1897, dates the "real beginnings of a
literary spirit in Canada ... from the triumph of Responsible Government."\(^{165}\) John D. Logan, in *Highways of Canadian Literature*, 1924, argues that "up to Confederation there could not be, as there was not, any innate and natural sentiment of Canadian nationality in the hearts of the people."\(^{166}\) Thomas O'Hagan also maintains the connection between 1867 and the beginnings of Canadian literature: "Before this date, it is true, Canada, both French and English, had singers, but they lacked not only the native note, but that originality and independence, without which all art is a copy. ..."\(^{167}\) Deacon, in 1936, states that true independence came with the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, and concludes that with it, "the political background of our great literature is attained."\(^{168}\) Later he saw great significance in Canada's independent declaration of war on Germany in 1939. Whenever critics might believe independence had or would come, all were agreed, with Lampman, that "there is a general mental and spiritual depression which necessarily results from the maintenance of an inferior colonial position."\(^{169}\) Certainly one can imagine that the effect of this kind of discussion on a poet would almost be to force him to espouse "independence," however he might interpret that word. And so it was, according to W. E. Collin in his *The White Savannahs*, 1936:

Canada's future was one of the "burning" questions of the time. The young writers, conscious that a Canadian literature was in gestation, felt that annexation by the United States would be tantamount to absorption and utter loss. Yet a colonial status was intolerable, and only an
independent people, they believed, could produce a great literature. It came about, then, that they espoused nationalism.¹⁷⁰

Since to favour complete independence from Britain was to risk annexation, many felt, Imperialism was the form of nationalism poets often adopted, because it preserved all the advantages of a tie with Britain while allowing its adherents to hope that one day Canada would dominate the union of former British colonies, termed Vaster Britain by enthusiasts like Wilfred Campbell.¹⁷¹ Most poets felt that it was far better to be the first feeble voice of a great national literature than to be minor poets on the fringes of British, or, worse still, American poetry.

One constraint that the fear of things American produced in English-Canadian criticism was caused by the paradoxical need to encourage patriotism in Canadians without seeming excessively patriotic, since excessive patriotism was seen to be an American quality. A review of Roberts's History of Canada, 1897, complains of Roberts's extreme patriotism, which reminded the reviewer of a "prejudiced, boastful spirit, quite in the vein of some of the jingo schoolbooks of the United States."¹⁷² Archibald Lampman, writing in "At the Mermaid Inn," 22 October 1892, comments on the "exaggerated gasconading exhibition" of patriotism in the American press.¹⁷³ F. W. Watt, in his "The Theme of Canada's Century, 1896–1920," makes it clear that Canadians around the turn of the century were in their optimistic patriotism far from the "modern tradition of the Canadians as a modest, self-effacing
race accustomed to underestimating themselves and their nation. Nonetheless, expansive and self-promoting as Canadians then were, they maintained the belief that they were less "jingoistic," and less materialistic than Americans. Americans were referred to in terms of their jingoism and their materialism over and over, although few efforts were ever made to prove the point. Frederick Philip Grove writes in his It Needs to be Said, 1929, that the United States is characterized by "a narrow, mistaken, fanatical patriotism" and materialism, and Lionel Stevenson calls Americans "flag-wavers" in his Appraisals of Canadian Literature, 1926. E. K. Brown, lecturing to students on American and Canadian literature at the University of Toronto in the 1930s, after noting that Americans are more materialistic than Canadians, comments that "an American is an excited patriot: America is for almost all Americans the greatest nation the world has ever seen. . . . What seems strident to us, in our quiet temperament, seems vigorous to the American." The myth of the "quiet" Canadian and the "loud," "jingo" American is still firmly entrenched in Canadian social mythology.

The fear of Americanism may be one reason for the rather lukewarm attitude towards both patriotic poetry and democratic, egalitarian poetry on the part of the best Canadian critics, despite the traditional view that literature was the voice of the people and a manifestation of the national spirit. This lukewarm attitude is seen by John P. Matthews in his Tradition in Exile as one of the main differences between Canadian and Australian
literary culture. Indeed, Australian critics, unmenaced by the threat of annexation, constantly looked to American literature for examples and guidance. Brian Kiernan, in his "Literature, History, and Literary History," comments that the "American parallel was one that occurred naturally to critics as Australia enjoyed its own debate over a national literature in the last quarter of the nineteenth century." In Canada, although American books were read and reviewed more often if anything than British books, the parallels between Canada and the United States were left for the most part undrawn. The differences between one side and the other of the forty-ninth parallel were crucial, not the similarities. Australia, less of a political or literary threat than the United States, was frequently chosen for comparison.

Romantic nationalism put a great deal of emphasis on the importance of a glorious national past, found in accounts of battles and other heroic exploits, and recounted either by historians, or in ballads, epics, folklore, or myth. The past, or these literary recreations of it, was one of the most important sources of national literature. As Friedrich von Schlegel put it in his Lectures on the History of Literature:

The first and original function of poetry, with respect . . . to the service it is to render to a nation, is to preserve and embellish its national reminiscences and myths, and to celebrate and perpetuate in the memory its glorious past; this is the case in heroic poems, where free scope is given to the miraculous and where the poet can draw on mythology.
And, as Roberts helpfully points out to aspiring historians, "great literary skill is not necessary" for the production of a work preserving some quaint fragment of the past, and "it is a secure investment in the future to have written a book, upon which after-workers in the field shall find themselves of necessity dependent."181

The attempt to transform a theory which based a glorious future on a glorious past into a theory which could predict a glorious future from a rather barren past led to some difficulties. The honest and moderate critic concluded, with Edward Hartley Dewart, that "if Memory cannot draw rich materials for poetry from treasures consecrated to fame, Hope unfolds the loftier inspiration of a future bright with promise."182 Others, less resigned to their fate as colonials to live in a vacuum without history (or patriotism, or literature, or indeed any civilized virtues at all) resorted to a tactic that was also more commonly adopted in the Old World than anyone admitted. They simply denied the placid nature of the Canadian past (even if this necessitated borrowing from the colourful exploits of the French) and constructed a more exciting history to fit with the theory. Henry Steele Commager, in his "The Search for a Usable Past," describes this process in the United States: "The sentiment of American nationalism was, to an extraordinary degree, a literary creation, and ... the national memory was a literary, and in a sense, a contrived memory."183 Carl Berger, in his The Sense of Power, comments on the formation of one of these "contrived" passages of history--
that of the United Empire Loyalists. He notes that the "loyalist hagiography" was a "literary formulation" in large part. 184

William Douw Lighthall provides us with an example of this hagiographical style in his introduction to Songs of the Great Dominion, 1889:

Existing English Canada is the result of simply the noblest epic migration the world has ever seen:—more loftily epic than the retirement of Pius Aeneas from Ilion,—the withdrawal, namely, out of the rebel Colonies, of the thirty-five thousand United Empire Loyalists after the War of the Revolution. "Why did you come here?" was asked of one of the first settlers of St. John, New Brunswick, a man whose life was without a stain;—"Why did you come here, when you and your associates were almost certain to endure the sufferings and absolute want of shelter and food which you have narrated?" "Why did we come here?" replied he, with emotion which brought tears:—"For our loyalty." 185

This description of the origin of the nation shows remarkable similarity to early English attempts to link the founding of Britain with the classical heroes—for example the introductory passage of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Canto 1, line 13), says that Felix Brutus, a Trojan hero, came to found Britain while Aeneas went to Rome. (The colonial mentality is ubiquitous.)

Both Berger in his The Sense of Power, and Wilfred Eggleston, in his The Frontier and Canadian Letters, have pointed out that many of the supposedly highly-cultured and well-bred Loyalists were ordinary tradespeople and farmers. 186 Even for literary critics who were not of "U.E.L." descent this myth was attractive, however, since the Loyalists had (at least according to the myth) made a
significant sacrifice that proved their patriotism. That Carman, Roberts, and Lampman all had Loyalist ancestors did not hurt the myth's currency, either.

Of course a war was seen as the most inspiring source of national unity, patriotism, and literature. Archibald Lampman comments of Homer that "active participation in great national efforts and the experience of battle and victory were necessary to awaken and confirm in the poet of Agamemnon that mood and note of rugged sustained sublimity."¹⁸⁷ S. E. Dawson explained to the Royal Society in 1908 that "just as the plays of Aeschylus were both the outcome and the stimulus of Greek national life at the critical period of the Persian wars, so the plays of Shakespeare were at once the epic of English history and the support of English freedom in its struggle with Spanish despotism."¹⁸⁸ Louis Dudek, in his "Nationalism in Canadian Poetry," 1968, seems to feel, like Lampman, that patriotic poetry, in order to have the sincerity of genuine art, must be based on real and important national issues and crises. In Canada, Dudek argues, "high romantic idealism is poured into a nationalistic mould ill-prepared to contain such exalted emotion and the result is a welter of state literature. . . . Abroad it was only where oppression was real or national dismemberment a tragic fate, that romantic poetry produced lasting literature."¹⁸⁹ Although Frye has criticized the "foolish notion that imagination is a by-product of extremes,"¹⁹⁰ in his preface to The Bush Garden, 1971, later he makes a comment that can be aligned with those of Lampman and
Dudek:

Certainly a century after the American Civil War, the true north strong and free often looks more like a sham south weak and occupied—sham because there has been no war with this confederacy and no deliberate occupation. 191

Against the almost universal acceptance of this principle, stand the opinions of Wilfred Campbell and Kate Seymour MacLean. Campbell comments that poetry which results from "the various vicissitudes of national development . . . is the most certain to acquire a quick sympathy," but that the poetry written "in an unheroic age, such as ours is today in Canada," requires a "true poet" and a "born singer." 192 MacLean questions the validity of the idea "that patriotism is a plant which will flourish only on the soil of battlegrounds, whose root must be nourished by the blood and tears of the brave, and whose fair white flower unfolds only in the lurid air of cannon smoke, fanned by the breath of dying heroes." 193 After mocking the over-heated style of the critics who accept this principle, she mildly points out that other moral virtues can be inculcated by education alone, and that no one has ever proven that patriotism needs a war for its special inspiration. She concludes that more interesting history teaching in the schools might be a better solution to the problem of a low national spirit than longing for a war.

Because of this belief that a war of some sort was necessary for true nationhood, the War of 1812, small and insignificant as it was, was made much of. W. S. Wallace, in his The Growth of
Canadian National Feeling, 1927, calls this war "one of the most futile and meaningless in history" and yet praises its effects, since "there is no formula for the creation of nationalism so efficacious as a war such as this, waged against outside aggression under heavy odds."\(^{194}\) That French and English fought together at Chrysler's Farm and Châteauguay is one of the most important reasons why this small war was elevated into a national myth.\(^{195}\) Roberts, among others, uses these two battles as proof that French "loyalty is unswervingly directed upon their fatherland--our fatherland."\(^{196}\) Yet few could avoid noticing that after 1812, French-English relations went steadily downhill, especially over the issue of military service. History, at least specifically military history, almost, like language, became an unmentionable part of Romantic nationalist theory. Even a divisive history was better than none, however, at least for Bourinot, who, writing in 1893 after the Riel Rebellion, could still argue that Canada had a literary advantage over Australia because "Canadians have behind them a history which is well calculated to stimulate writers to give utterance to national sentiment."\(^{197}\) Australia's history is "but of yesterday compared with that of Canada."\(^{198}\) Even if a writer had to turn to French history to find material of the requisite age, no matter--French history was now Canadian: "Australians cannot point to such historic ground as is found from Louisbourg to Quebec, or from Montreal to Champlain, the battle ground of nations whose descendents now live under one flag, animated by feelings of a common interest and a common
aspiration for the future."^{199}

Writing about the historical Quebec was popular for several reasons. A novel which interpreted Quebec in a sympathetic way promoted national unity; for example, Gilbert Parker, whose novels about the fur trade and "Pretty Pierre" were very popular, in his introduction to *Old Quebec*, 1903, rationalizes the persistent French-Canadian nationalism by arguing that the French

share faithfully in the national development and honourably serve the whole Dominion . . .
but within their own beloved province they retain as zealously and more jealously than the most devoted Highland men their language and their customs, and faithfully conserve the civil laws which mark them off as clearly from the English provinces as Jersey and Guernsey are distinguished from the United Kingdom.^{200}

As well, French history seemed more like that of Europe. Quite often the "local" colour and the "national" history most favourably received by critics, especially before 1900, was that which was most foreign and exotic, that is, most European and "romantic"—most in accord with European theory and European models. Historical romances based on "old Quebec" like William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*, 1877, and Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty*, 1896, were popular with the English-Canadian audience because they resembled the English romances they were most familiar with. Sara Jeannette Duncan shows a typical bias in her view of the literary possibilities of the various regions of Canada in her reference to "the transplanted romance of our North-west, . . . the somewhat squat and uninteresting life of Ontario, [and] . . . our
treasure trove, Quebec...

The need for a national history, a history that would inspire writers, whose works in turn would inspire patriotism in their readers, meant that the English-Canadian Romantic nationalist's view of history was very different from the modern one. Although there was great praise for those who used original documents, authenticity was not the first requirement, at least not in the eyes of the literary critic. Carl Berger's *The Writing of Canadian History* begins at 1900, because it was only at the turn of the century that the old Romantic concept of history began to change. He comments that before 1900 history was regarded as "an especially instructive branch of literature: when the Royal Society of Canada was founded in 1881, history was grouped with English literature in Section II." 202

The need for a history, a particular kind of romantic history was strongly felt; The *Canadian Magazine* comments, plaintively, in 1899 that "we have no Canadian, apparently, who can give us a romantic history of our country." 203 The writer goes on to praise Francis Parkman, who unfortunately was an American, Roberts, whose "one-volume history comes near to the mark," and to damn John Bourinot's and William Kingsford's "little style and less imagination" (p. 91). Style and imagination are certainly not considered negligible virtues in a modern historian, but they are not normally felt to be primary. The *Canadian Magazine* finds some comfort in the conclusion that "if we have no romantic history, we have many historical romances, and for a time these
may suffice" (p. 91). Of course the reason the lack of a romantic history was so strongly felt was because history, of the right kind, was seen as subject matter for literature.

Duncan Campbell Scott's views, expressed in "At the Mermaid Inn," perhaps reflect best the critical and poetic attitude to factual as opposed to romantic history. In his column for 28 January 1893, he writes about the need for a "good Canadian history for the use of the schools."204 He complains about the dull histories--"a mass of cold facts"--he had to read as a child, and continues, "we want a book full of spirit and colour and liveliness, one that will tell us not only the date of the battle of Lundy's Lane, but of the condition of the people who lived in the province at that time..."(p 250) Like MacLean, he sees the main function of history in the schools as the inspiration of patriotism.

Francis Parkman, the American who published seven volumes of early Canadian history between 1851 and 1892 is referred to constantly as a model. Berger points out that the Canadian desire for a "dramatic, picturesque, romantic history" was satisfied by these works, "which had a colourful pictorial style, a dramatic narrative, and a mythic theme."205 That poets did turn to Parkman for inspiration is proven by two recent articles which trace the source of a Lampman poem and a Duncan Campbell Scott poem to Parkman.206

Scott, again in "At the Mermaid Inn," refers to Kingsford's debunking of Parkman's heroic version of the battle of the Long
Sault. Kingsford argues that the supposedly intrepid and heroic leader of the French troops (variously known as "Dollard" or "Daulac") undertook a foolhardy and hasty expedition against the Indians in order to refurbish a somewhat damaged reputation. But the facts of the matter, or even the correct location of the battle, are not important to Scott, who argues that "the story in its romantic form has come to live with us, and it is well. There is probably as much foundation for it as there is for the majority of the romances of history and these are amongst the dearest possessions of the race."  

This fits well with Frye's comment in the University of Toronto Quarterly's "Letters in Canada," 1951: "There is far too much accurate Canadian history now, and far too little accurate Canadian vision."

A similar attitude is found in MacMechan's discussion of the inaccuracies and distortions in the history of F.-X. Garneau, the first Quebec national historian. MacMechan argues that "to expect impartiality in a history which began with an affront, was studied during a time of civil excitement ending in rebellion, and was written during a time of national humiliation is to expect too much of human nature." He excuses the bias in Garneau on the grounds that Garneau inspired patriotism, and quotes Camille Roy: "Garneau founded a school. Under his inspiration the historians and poets of the ensuing years worked" (p. 59). While MacMechan cannot agree with Garneau that the coming of English rule meant the enslavement of the French-Canadian, he understands the bias—he remarks, a little enviously, "a tragic past is a
valuable national asset—for the rhymers of the nation."\textsuperscript{210}

For many, then, the function of true history and true literature was to infuse the nation with romance—a romance that would inspire patriotism. Even what might at first glance seem to be a revolt against this constant demand for romance is simply a call to transfer the romance from its traditional locale; thus, a writer in *The Canadian Magazine*:

\begin{quote}
And they have said in their hearts there is no romance in Canadian life outside of the districts of the habitant! And they are saying it yet. When an author gives us a tale of rural English-Canadian life, they say there is nothing in it, that it is a tale of the land of dry bones. But in good time they shall know that they were wrong. . . .\textsuperscript{211}
\end{quote}

Gradually, as the new school of critical history, led by George M. Wrong at the University of Toronto and Adam Shortt at Queen's gained strength, and as realism became acceptable in literature, the demands for romantic history and historical romance became fewer.

Just as a long and glorious national history was important to literature, so was a long and glorious national literary history. "Given, a nation unendowed with poetic stores that date from some time prior to the period of regular artistic culture," writes Friedrich von Schlegel, "and it may safely be asserted of the same, that it will never attain to any nationality of character, or vitality of genius."\textsuperscript{212} Graeme Mercer Adam emphasizes the importance of both national and literary history in his "Nationalism and the Literary Spirit," 1888:
English-speaking Canada is said to be without literary men or anything of a literature. Until we get rid of this denationalizing idea and learn to speak with sympathy of our historic and literary past, we shall have, and deserve to have, neither (emphasis added).213

Edward Hartley Dewart describes his work on Selections from Canadian Poets, 1864, as if it were a heroic exploration of unknown territory: "I entered on an untried path, without any way-marks to guide me," in order "to rescue from oblivion some of the floating pieces of Canadian authorship worthy of preservation."214 John D. Logan's description of his donation of his "very precious collection of Canadiana" to Dalhousie University has much the same tone; to collect it had cost him "immense time, much money, and sometimes the pangs of hunger that I might possess a rare, discoloured or torn little volume of verse that no one, save the dead author had loved, until I loved it, and saved it from total oblivion..."215 Few English-Canadian critics failed to produce an article entitled "English-Canadian Literature," which tried to cover the whole history of Canadian literature in fifteen pages, beginning with Haliburton and ending with breathless apologies to any contemporaries omitted.216 Douglas Bush calls this phenomenon "Making Literature Hum," 1926:

We have bulky histories of Canadian literature appraising the product of every citizen who ever held a pen; bulky anthologies preserving almost everything metrical that has sprung from a Canadian brain; little books celebrating the genius of people who in another country would not get beyond the poetry corner of the
local newspaper; reprints of Canadian "classics" which not even antiquity can render tolerable; respectful consideration of inferior Zane Greys as literature—in short, an earnest and sincere desire to establish a completely parochial scale of values. 217

Certainly much of what Bush is complaining about went on, and was indefensible. Yet it can be explained in terms of literary theory, as well as by the familiar and too popular explanation for all the defects of English-Canadian literary criticism of the early period—the hopeless and irrepressible colonialism and chauvinism of Canadians. A literary history was necessary—it was tempting to try to create it.

Allied with the lack of a history and a literary tradition was the lack of national myth or folklore. The two most important "national" genres, epic and historical romance, rely on their literary predecessors as well as history, myth, and folklore more than the other genres. The literary need for myth and folklore may well explain what Carole Henderson Carpenter describes in her "Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada," as a "persistent romanticism pertaining to the past or primitive" in English-Canadian folklore scholarship. 218 As Carl Ballstadt points out in his introduction to The Search for English-Canadian Literature, views concerning the importance of myth in Canadian literature were mixed; some thought that old world myth would soften Canada's rawness; others poured forth ridicule on the imposition of an attenuated classical mythology on the rough-hewn new world. 219 Norse myth was considered appropriate to
the new land; as Robert Grant Haliburton put it: "The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome we may well admire and reverence, but give me the ruder strains of our Northern bards." Some critics also promoted the importance of Indian myth. Australian writers, according to Herbert Piper's "The Background of Romantic Thought," believed that

the culture of the inhabitants of Australia who had been longest in contact with the natural surroundings and who had been most shaped by them, that is the Aborigines, had more relevance for Australians than their European cultural inheritance, and that the Aboriginal's understanding of nature, expressed in his myths, provided a suitable mythology... for poets and readers of wholly European descent.221

Perhaps because so many early Canadian poets had already stumbled in Longfellow's footsteps, or because the United States had native people too, rendering the topic interesting but not distinctive, critics singled out neither the native people as important subject matter, nor the Indian poems of Pauline Johnson, Wilfred Campbell, and Duncan Campbell Scott for special attention. Perhaps Canadians felt guiltier than Americans about dispossessing "savages," who rarely menaced white lives unless enlisted by white men to do so. Or perhaps the "Noble Savage" seemed too tame to inspire Romantic writers. Sir Daniel Wilson writes in 1858 that "it is not a 'Hiawatha' song we demand. The Indian Savage is not the sole native product of the wilds, nor the only poetical thing that meets the eye in the clearings."222 Roberts, in his "The Outlook for Literature," 1886, remarks that despite a constant demand for
poetry based on native legend, "the stuff seems almost unavailable for purposes of pure literature," apparently because these myths and legends are the product of "a decaying race." Roberts concludes that such material will influence Canadian writing only indirectly. That native culture was dying, however, seemed a good reason for John E. Logan to recommend it: "We have among us the relics of a fast fading race, whose history, tradition, and religion are well worthy to be preserved by the pen of the Canadian historian and poet." Lampman praised the synthesis achieved by Carman, whose poems reflect "a spirit which is that of our own northern land, developed in the atmosphere of the Norse, with tinges of Indian legend." Despite some reluctance to espouse Indian myth as the ideal background for Canadian literature, the power of the myth of the "Noble Savage" and the belief that those in close contact with nature reflected it most purely persisted.

J. D. Robins, who succeeded Edgar as Head of English at Victoria College, the University of Toronto in 1938, in his "The Backgrounds of Future Canadian Poetry," 1915, considers the role of myth and history in forming literature in some depth. Here is the familiar bias against "the great mass of more or less authentic history" which suffers from "interests . . . too local, . . . machinery too temporary, or even too artificial and technical, for us to readily recognize ourselves in its events." (Again the emphasis on self-recognition.) Robins feels that too little use has been made of the European mythic background in Canadian literature, and argues that literature should work through "the victorious and aggressive Teutonic - Skandinavian
myths" and "the beautiful melancholy of the retreating Kelts." He then continues his train of thought to modify the "idea of the myths as the spontaneous expression of the thought and soul of the individual race" since most racial mythologies, "the mythology of our Keltic ancestors, for instance," owed a great deal to the mythology of "the Neolithic men whom they displaced." He concludes that myths are "more myths of the soil than of the race." This of course suits the Canadian situation very well, since many "races" came to Canada, each with a separate set of myths, while the soil of Canada had produced one distinctive Indian mythology (or at least so the critics thought), and one which had not yet been treated by European writers. Therefore, Robins concludes:

If this be so, it only serves as an excellent precedent for embodying in this background the weird and fascinating legends of the soil that are to be found in Canada among our Indians, and whose spirit breathes so strongly and beautifully through the work of Pauline Johnson. Of these we are the sole heirs, and the necessity of preserving them is urgent.

(The clear somewhat chilling assumption that the Indians will quietly and inevitably die out found in some of these quotations, even those quite sympathetic to native culture, is an assumption which reflects the belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and the decadence of the natives.)

For writers who believed that true literature concerns the vague, the ancient, the misty, in other words, the "romantic," Canada's lack of history and mythology was of serious concern,
and a great deal of critical writing on the subject simply asserts that Canada did indeed have a sufficient store of this kind of material in her national life to support a national literature. There was always a lurking suspicion, however, that Canada did suffer from a major disadvantage in not having a mythology. Even Frye feels that the emphasis on the conceptual in Canadian literature results from "the fact that the Canadian literary mind, beginning as it did so late in the cultural history of the West, was established on a basis, not of myth, but of history." 231

Canada was felt to be just beginning in many ways. An idea put forward by the English historian, Henry Buckle, in his Introduction to the History of Civilization in English, 1857-61, influenced many subsequent thinkers to link material and literary development. Buckle argues that "of all the great social improvements the accumulation of wealth must be the first, because without it there can be neither taste nor leisure for that acquisition of knowledge on which . . . the progress of civilization depends." 232 If literature is the flowering of a great society, the best literature was logically expected to be produced at the peak of the country's success, and that, of course would include material success. Berger, in his The Writing of Canadian History points out that Victorian commentators always "mentioned that Canada as yet possessed no wealthy leisureed class that in other societies served as the custodian and creator of literary culture." 233 He continues: "Yet equally often it was
assumed that a national literature would almost automatically follow as a consequence of material maturity and the flowering of a national spirit."\textsuperscript{234} F. W. Watt, in his "The Theme of Canada's Century, 1896-1920" analyses the Canadian exuberance resulting from the material expansion of the prairie economy; during this period what he calls the "idea of inevitable Evolution towards Canadian greatness" included, of course, the belief that great literary developments were just around the corner.\textsuperscript{235} As usual there is some confusion between cause and effect—some argue as if literary success inspired the people to success in other areas—others as if wealth provided the national exuberance necessary for the production of great art. John D. Logan, writing about the issue with respect to Ireland, is as usual quite clear about the connection:

\begin{quote}
The linguistic and literary renascence begun and carried on in Ireland by the Gaelic League has a direct and vital connection with the social, artistic and industrial revival in Erin; . . . The former is related to the latter as cause to effect, means to end; and . . . the results so far clearly establish the right of the Irish Gaels to effectuate a rational continuation of their original spiritual gifts, history, social and industrial economy.\textsuperscript{236}
\end{quote}

In 1892, even before the end of the long depression that had led to gloomy talk of inevitable annexation, Duncan Campbell Scott writes hopefully that Canadian progress had been, "if slow, at least appreciable," and remarks: "To become worthy to share in the commerce of the earth we must show a commercial spirit equal to our opportunities."\textsuperscript{237} John Cooper, writing in The Canadian
Magazine in 1897 clearly believes that material and literary progress are connected:

There seems to be little activity among the greater Canadian poets. . . . And yet this has been Canada's greatest year! Have our poets nothing to say about our progress, our increased reputation, our new hopes and our new heroes. . . . Canada's praises must be sung. . . . Poets are more essential to the development of national life than the politician, the railway contractor and the immigration agent—more essential even than the marble busts and monuments which remind us of our dead heroes. 238

Robert Falconer writes in his Idealism in National Character, 1920, that "the public mind is less independent than we might expect in a people who have made such enormous strides in material progress." 239 Lionel Stevenson writes in his Appraisals of Canadian Literature, 1926, that "those who have faith in Canada, not backward in claiming for their country a place in the economic reconstruction of the world, should feel also that Canada is capable of giving to poets and artists an inspiration that will be recognized in the world of the spirit." 240 Stevenson is less enthusiastic about material development than John Ford MacDonald, who writes of the Drummond family's economic rise (they made millions in pig iron) that it "supplies all the material for a chapter of romance in the history of Canadian business." 241 Deacon, in a lecture to students at the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute argues that "if the promise of wealth and power is fulfilled, before the year 2,000 we shall have produced our quota of classics." 242 Nonsensical as this direct connection between
wealth and literary greatness seems, literary historians constantly explained the greatness of Elizabethan literature or the artistic flowering of the Renaissance in economic terms. (And of course the "flowerings" of Canadian literature and criticism, in the 1890s, the 1920s, and the 1960s are quite clearly connected with material prosperity, which seems to guarantee quantity, if not always quality.) Deacon argues that great literature has come "at periods of great expansion and hopefullness" and cites the Elizabethans and the Victorians (who profitted from the Industrial Revolution) as examples. And, of course, "without Saskatchewan at its greatest, at its golden age, Sarah would have been just another poetess."

Several critics refused to accept that material prosperity should precede literary development. As Edward Hartley Dewart rather stiffly noticed, the constant references to the need to clear the wilderness before the reading or writing of poetry could be undertaken, began to sound like feeble excuses:

_The common method of accounting for [the neglect of Canadian literature] by the fact that almost the whole community is engaged in the pursuit of the necessaries and comforts of life, and that comparatively few possess wealth and leisure, to enable them to give much time to the study of poetry and kindred subjects, is by no means satisfactory._

Sara Jeannette Duncan makes fun of the whole idea in one of her "Saunterings" in _The Week_ in 1886; she runs through the various aspects of this argument and concludes that "this is a comfortable way of relegating the responsibility for our literary inactivity
to an economic dispensation of an over-ruling Providence.

But the theory is too plausible to be tenable. We are well
fed, well clad, well read." She concludes, "Why should we not
buy our own books?"246 Graeme Mercer Adam makes a similar point
in his "Nationalism and the Literary Spirit," 1888, arguing that
if Canadians wait for material perfection, refusing to support
the ordinary writer, great literature will never be produced.247

Yet this idea, this "parroted cliché that . . . we must
spend centuries cutting forests and building roads,"248 as Frye
puts it in 1943, before we can have a literature, does recur.
Even A. J. M. Smith uses it in his introduction to The Oxford
Book of Canadian Verse, 1960--"Canadian poetry arose about a
century and a quarter ago--after the hard work of hacking a new
home out of the wilderness had been accomplished. . . ."249 It
recurs because there is some truth to it; economic and literary
prosperity are linked, although certainly not as simply as the
early critics implied. (Even Marx was never very certain about
the precise nature of the link.)250 Although Frye rejects the
idea in 1943, he rephrases his approach to it in 1965: "Culture
is born in leisure and an awareness of standards, and pioneer
conditions tend to make energetic and uncritical work an end in
itself. . . ."251 Here an economic condition and a social value
or myth combined explain the situation. But most critics are not
able to achieve this kind of resolution of extremes, and frequently
those who did not see economic and literary success as linked
saw them as antithetical.
For Lampman, the poet was marked by his "sovereign indifference to wealth," and the pursuit of gain was "purely brute instinct." The poet was supposed to be interested in spiritual, rather than material things. Writers after the turn of the century tended to blame the problems of literature on materialistic audiences without much pause; Ray Palmer Baker simply says that "by the end of the century," the poetic impulse of the "Confederation Poets" was "obliterated by an increase of wealth which destroyed all sense of values."

Some critics were sensible enough to argue that material prosperity aided the development of a great literature, while materialism hindered it. Several critics quite reasonably pointed out that poets, however spiritual, must eat; Campbell comments that "independence as to livelihood and ease from the cares of life are certainly helpful to a literary career." Robert Barr put it so bluntly that he offended the sensibilities of several readers of The Canadian Magazine: "What chance has Canada . . . of raising a Sir Walter Scott? I maintain that she has but very little chance, because she won't pay the money and money is the root of all literature." Barr argued that Canadians preferred rye whisky to books.

In many ways, the analogy between Canada's industrial situation and her literary situation was close--foreign goods, cheaper and of higher quality were flooding the home market and driving the Canadian entrepreneur out of business. Edgar, in his "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," 1912, comments that "the balance of intellectual trade is shockingly in our disfavour," and Alfred
Baker comments in 1916 that "we can hope that the balance of trade in mental products will not always be against us; that the time will come when we return to humanity something for the vast treasure we have received." 256 F. W. Watt, in his "Radicalism in English-Canadian Literature since Confederation," 1957, links the policies of the "handful of newspapers and journals catering to the cultivated reader" to John A. Macdonald's National Policy: "Each in its own way echoed the spirit of The Week's proclamation that it had 'but one policy—that of stimulating our national sentiment, guarding our national morality and strengthening our national growth.'" 257 The analogy broke down, however, when the typical strategy of the National Policy, protective tariffs, was applied to culture. J. Macdonald Oxley, in his "Periodical Literature in Canada," 1888, decides that a good Canadian literary periodical is unlikely to develop, since periodicals and other literature, unlike the sugar and the cotton industry, cannot be protected from foreign competition. 258 But in these analogies can be found the germ of the demand for government economic help designed to promote Canadian literature. (Publishers and printers consistently lobbied for such protection; but protection for publishers and printers is not necessarily stimulating to the development of Canadian literature.)

Obviously, Romantic nationalist assumptions had a major effect in determining critical ideas about what made a work "Canadian," about literary standards, and about the role of the critic. Nonetheless, as T. D. MacLulich points out, "many Canadian writers
called for a distinctively Canadian literature, but they were almost all severely handicapped from recognizing it or producing it by a theoretical, rather than empirical definition of what it meant to be 'Canadian.' When asked to define English literature, an English critic could simply point to Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. The Canadian critic had nothing, or very little, to point at. It was all very well to argue that anything written by someone born and bred in Canada was intrinsically Canadian; in practice the average book reviewer wanted Canadian content. If Hippolyte Taine argues that "it is by representing the mode of being of a whole nation . . . that a writer rallies round him the sympathies of . . . an entire nation," and this is precisely what Canada appears to need in her literature, it is hard not to ask that Canadian writers deal with Canada. Unwilling to take the trouble, as Edgar and Stringer did in their consideration of Lampman, to consider that there might be a subtler Canadian quality, the average Canadian reviewer wanted to be able to point to patriotism, local colour, or heroic national history in a Canadian poem. And considering the difficulties Canadian critics, past and present, have had in elucidating subtler "Canadian" qualities, his demands, however crude, are understandable. The rather ridiculous picture is created of critics demanding local colour and romantic national history from aspiring poets, who promptly shovel it into their poems for the astonished and delighted reviewer to shovel out again on to the pages of a review. Yet it seems safe to say that some good poems arose from this demand.
For example, the epic qualities and French historic themes of Lampman's "At the Long Sault," and of Pratt's *Brébeuf and his Brethren* seem the direct consequence of Romantic nationalist theory.

To counter the poet's hopeless feeling that Canada presented nothing to write about, a great deal of critical time was spent simply pointing out suitable topics to the obtuse poets. At the crudest level, Canada was regarded as a huge poetic mine, or fertile poetic field, which poets should dig, or plow, sow, and harvest. Again the economic parallel. The *Canadian Magazine* puts it quite consciously in 1900:

> To employ a term that smacks of the commercial side of novel-writing, there is plenty of good "material" in Canada. Our social life abounds with incident and type. Those who catch the true measure of the conditions in our newer and wilder districts find ample scope for tales of adventure and romance.

The emphasis on "newer" and "wilder" comes out of a desire not only to see the most distinctive and the most natural or "primitive" features of Canada described in literature, but from a rather naive belief, derived from the economic analogy, that literary material could be "exhausted." Lawrence J. Burpee, in an address entitled "Unexplored Fields of Canadian Fiction," which he delivered to the Canadian Authors' Association in 1928, finds the crucial problem for the novelist is to discover "what aspects of Canadian life and character have not yet been used as material for fiction." Lighthall points out to the hesitant poets that "Canadian history . . . as anyone acquainted with Parkman will know, perfectly teems with noble deeds and great events, of which
only a small share have been sung. . . ." He continues, to point to the most likely regions: "The North-West and British Columbia, that Pacific clime of charm—the gold diggings Province, [sic] land of salmon rivers, and of the Douglas firs which hide daylight at noonday,—have been scarcely sung at all, owing to their newness." Thomas Guthrie Marquis wrote of foreign exploitation of these Canadian poetic and historical resources in a very defensive way:

The Canadian literary domain, too, has been invaded by foreign writers, and much of it has been worked by mere visitors to the Dominion. Parkman has written the early history of Canada with a fulness and in a manner that make it difficult, though not impossible, for any writer to do original historical work in the same field. Much of the storehouse of romance has been exploited by American and British writers of fiction. . . . But there are still rich literary fields to be cultivated. . . .

The demand for Canadian content must have grown to excessive proportions, however, since even the author of "Canada" grew tired of the restrictions imposed by the Canadian content regulations; Roberts wrote:

The domain of English letters knows no boundaries of Canadian Dominion, of American Commonwealth, nor yet of British Empire. All the greatest subject matter is free to the world's writers. . . . To the assimilativeness and flexibility of genius it is as impossible that its works should lack the special flavour of race and clime, as that honey from Himettus should fail to smell of the thomy slopes.

To classify poets by region meant quite literally that they had claimed and mapped a particular poetic "territory." Poetry
had to cover the ground, to make a literary claim that went along with a political and economic claim. When these critics spoke of literature as "spiritual riches" they were speaking far more literally than we might think; capitalists were expected to deliver the wealth of the Klondike and the "Great North-West" to the economy of the nation; poets were expected to deliver the literary equivalent.

Naive though the demand for subject matter might seem, and even reprehensible in its effect on the less skillful poets of the "Maple Leaf" school, there are some things to be said for it. "Carping Critic," writing in the Toronto Mail, 4 December 1920, asked, rhetorically "If our writers will not take the trouble to report external facts of Canadian life as they are, how can we expect to have the deeper things of our national character in their books?"267 Bourinot argued that the choice of Canadian subjects led to deeper inspiration: "It is when French Canadian poets become thoroughly Canadian by the very force of the inspiration of some Canadian subject [he makes it clear that he means French Canadian here]... that we can see them at their best."268 National subject matter, after all, was most familiar, and therefore likely to be most inspiring to the Canadian poet. E. K. Brown, in his review of A. J. M. Smith's The Book of Canadian Poetry, 1943, tackles the disputed question head on. Smith had damned the practice of preferring Canadian subjects in 1928, in his "Wanted, A Canadian Criticism":

If you write, apparently, of the far north and the
wild west and the picturesque east, seasoning well with allusions to the Canada goose, fir trees, maple leaves, snowshoes, northern lights, etc., the public grasp the fact that you are a Canadian poet, whose works are to be bought from the same patriotic motive that prompts the purchaser of Eddy's matches or a Massey-Harris farm implement, and read along with Ralph Connor and Eaton's catalogue.269

Brown reacts to this attitude by granting that both American and Canadian critics have been too hasty to praise literature simply because it contains "some train of feeling or some range of observation not elsewhere recorded," but goes on to ask whether quality and subject matter should be so firmly linked:

Freneau and Lowell and Bryant bulk much larger in American studies than their equals in purely emotional and technical power do in English studies. Is it quite indefensible that for Americans they should, or even for those foreign students to whom the American experience is important?270

Brown's argument echoes one John D. Logan presents in his Thomas Chandler Haliburton: Logan works from an argument between Arnold and Sainte-Beuve, where the latter defends Lamartine as important to French, if not to world culture, to conclude that "many an outstanding Canadian writer . . . may not bulk large judged by world standards, but they are all important to us as Canadians."271

It seems sensible enough to maintain that national subject matter should remain a neutral quality in the judgment of literature—not positive, as it was for the Romantic nationalists, not negative, as it was for the modernists. But quality is not the only factor which determines the literary canon and tradition—Frye praises Smith for remembering, in compiling his anthology, that
"occasionally a bad poem is of all the greater cultural signif-
icance for being bad, and therefore should go in."\textsuperscript{272} George Woodcock makes much the same point in comparing the relative merits of Ethel Wilson, Sinclair Ross, and Hugh MacLennan; although Ethel Wilson and Sinclair Ross are "vastly more subtle and complete in their fictional artistry than MacLennan," he is "more important in a historical and a social sense."\textsuperscript{273} For Woodcock, MacLennan is the only Canadian writer who has, like a "Canadian Balzac" tried to capture all facets of his nation, "trusting that if the themes are honest, the forms will take care of themselves."\textsuperscript{274} After all, it is no secret that different data are selected and highlighted by different conceptual frame-
works; consider, for example, the different aspects of Margaret Laurence's work that would become important in courses on Western Canadian Literature, Canadian Literature, Feminist Literature, Commonwealth Literature, or World Literature. Her rank would vary, as well as the significance of each of her works. Again, to cling to one ideal, absolute standard, rather than examining works in a context, is to be forced into logical traps, like the conclusion that Canadian subject matter is the hallmark of good (or terrible) Canadian literature. Frye is right when he calls it a fallacy to judge literature by its subject matter, but it is not an absolute fallacy to categorize literature by subject matter (or period, or nation, for that matter).\textsuperscript{275} And to do this is to change it by changing its context. Some subject matter, returned to repeatedly by writer after writer, takes on symbolic, even mythic force.
Since poetry was the mirror, the map, and the claim to a nation, the subject matter demanded by critics was sometimes more intangible—the national soul, character, or genius—than Mounties or maple leaves. John Cooper, in his "The Strength and Weakness of Current Books," 1899, makes it clear that Canadian books must, after demonstrating an artistic quality and revealing both nature and humanity, "broaden our view of Canada and of Canadian civilization by describing to us the Canadians who are and who have been. And he will be the greatest Canadian who recognizes most thoroughly the developing genius of the Canadian people." 276

And it is this less tangible reality of the essence of Canada that is still a minimum demand on the Canadian writer. Robertson Davies writes in One Half of Robertson Davies, 1977, that "one of the tasks of the Canadian writer is to show Canada to itself. He is not obliged to do this but it is one of his options." 277

Certainly to omit this minimum demand, however unreasonable it may seem to expect a writer to encapsulate the essence of Canada—a vast and varied territory—in one work, is either to abolish the category "Canadian literature," or, in keeping it, to run into serious theoretical difficulties. The critics who made fun of the rather thickly applied Canadian content in many works had difficulty defining precisely what is Canadian in a work which does not contain a Mountie or a maple leaf. John Cooper, in an editorial in The Canadian Magazine, 1898, begins his attempt by excluding both subject matter and language:

The man who is truly Canadian will produce Canadian literature if he lives and thinks in Canada.
English grammar is the same in Canada as in Great Britain and the United States; but grammar is not the vital feature which decides whether a book is British or United Statesian, or Canadian, nor is language—in its broadest sense—for I might write a Canadian story in German. "The national flavour and impress," as the learned professor puts it, is what decides.278

Since critics had to believe, if they accepted that Canada was a nation, that its literature had a distinctive quality, they spoke of this quality, rather uneasily like Cooper, as a Canadian flavour, or colouring, or savour, or idiom, or impress, or spirit, or note. This terminology resulted in the dramatic claim that Canadian literature was Canadian because it manifested a Canadian quality; something like saying a man is a bachelor because he is not married.

John D. Logan started well in his "The Genius and Distinction of Canadian Poetry," 1911, by arguing that to expect Canada to have a literature that "differs wholly from any other literature" is like expecting Canadians to differ completely from all other peoples.279 He feels the question would be better put if it referred to distinctive "literary traditions, methods, achievements and ideals" (p. 18). Despite this sensible start, he concludes his article in the confusing manner typical of this kind of discussion:

Canadian poetry is such definitively, not because its authors or its material (subject, theme) or even its form, color and music are Canadian. It is such only by virtue of some distinctive "note" in it. That note is not Imperialism, as some allege; it is not Individual Nationhood, as others submit; it
is not even Confederate Unity as others say. It is this and this alone—an inexpugnable Faith in ourselves (p. 28).

Lister Sinclair, in his "The Canadian Idiom," 1949, runs into the same problems. He complains that in Canadian literature "for the most part the writing is done first, and the Canadianism is added afterwards in clear, unmistakeable strokes," and continues: "If a play contains a Mountie it is undeniably Canadian; if there is no Mountie, we have no idea what to make of it."\(^{280}\) The best Canadian writers, however, like Earle Birney, E. J. Pratt, and W. O. Mitchell, "have been able, almost without an effort, to allow their work to be a direct expression of their minds, already cast in one of the Canadian moulds. . . ."(p 17)(Note the implications of his diction—cast and mould imply that somehow the country has acted on these poets' minds in some inevitable and permanent way.) Sinclair looks forward to the time when all Canadian writing will be like theirs, where "local colour seems to disappear, the geographical obsession vanishes, and the wild-life gets back where it belongs": ultimately, "the idea of a Canadian idiom will never be discussed; it will simply not arise in Canadian writers' minds. Then we can look again, because then we will know we have found it" (p. 17). The best writers, according to Sinclair, "are so interested . . . in the life going on immediately around them . . . that they have no time to remember that this life is, if you want to be particular about it, Canadian life" (p. 18).

The emphasis in all these critics on the vague, the ideal, and the unconscious quality of what is "Canadian" about Canadian
literature has its source in the Romantic insistence on the spontaneity and sincerity of true poetic utterance. And here is found the famous double bind of the command "be spontaneous." Of course it is impossible. Yet to be consciously patriotic will not do. As Carlyle writes in his "Characteristics," patriotism, or "Loyalty" is as "mysterious as other forms of Life, and like these working secretly, and in a depth beyond that of consciousness. . . . The virtue of Patriotism has already sunk from its pristine all-transcendent condition before it has received a name." Lampman's comment on Robert's's patriotic poetry perhaps might lead us to sympathize with the Canadian poets who were supposed to write about Canada without really trying:

Roberts in his patriotic vein is a voice crying in the wilderness, and he seems to have set himself in a premeditated pose to cry there with all his might. He is like one who has said to himself that there ought to be a prophet, and he will be that prophet at whatever cost of effort.

The passage is filled with nineteenth-century commonplaces and Romantic critical assumptions. The depiction of either the Canadian poet or the Canadian critic as "a voice crying in the wilderness" was a popular one, and it is easy to see the outcast but inspired Romantic poet-as-prophet in these lines too, except Robert's's "premeditated pose" reveals him as an imposter. Since being a prophet takes an "effort" for Roberts, he can be neither truly inspired, nor truly sincere, since both these qualities are effortless. And sincerity was one of the primary Romantic pre-requisites for genuine poetry, as Abrams makes clear in his
The Mirror and the Lamp. 283 Again, Deacon sums up the belief neatly: "The less conscious the artist is of being a representative voice, the greater the effect of his words." 284 How English-Canadian writers, many of whom wrote quite conscious criticism about the need for history, myth, patriotism, a national voice, and a national type were supposed to become unconscious of all this before they turned to writing epics, or patriotic odes, or historical romances, is never discussed. The poet was simply regarded as a conduit passing the essence of the Canadian landscape and the Canadian people on to the nation and to posterity. If he ever became conscious, or rather wrote as if he were conscious of his role, people would wonder whether his work truly embodied the spirit of the land and the people, or simply the poet's own misguided opinions.

Just as the poets were regarded as mediums through which the spirits of place, people, and time communicated their messages, so the critic was regarded as a medium between poets and their audiences. Despite the rather bossy fashion in which critics pointed out suitable subject matter to poets, they saw their role as neither directing poets nor correcting readers. Because of their conviction, based on Romantic assumptions, of the importance of the role of the people in the formation of national literature, they felt they should simply foster the vital relationship between poet and reader. Once these were brought into proper contact, literature would "evolve naturally." The many critics who wrote as if the solution to the Canadian literature problem was a simple enthusiasm for poetry and a patriotic determination to
write it were reproved by I. Cyrus Doull, who complains that the critic "imagines that he can direct literature, not realizing that literature can not be instructed how to grow, or not knowing that it is a plant which springs from the nature of the people and draws its forces from their life." He continues:

If it has any root at all, its root is in their character, and it takes form from their will and taste. The world of critics will not believe this, for it is still the prevailing superstition that literature is something that is put into life, not something that comes out of it.

Doull may well be concerned that such critics will reveal too openly the "manufactured" nature of New World culture. Literature, to have any validity in the Romantic system, had to grow, rather than be put together, spring forth, rather than be constructed.

Or, as Deacon put it in his blunt way, "literature is a growth of the soil as much as wheat or potatoes."

To describe the relationship between critic, writer, and reader in this system, is to find that the ideal relationship, the one that determined the final quality of literature, was, for the English-Canadian critic, that between the poet and the people. The reviewer is, as Deacon put it in his "A Theory of Book-Reviewing," 1926, "a middleman, dealing with the author as producer and with the public as consumer." Frye, writing of the reviewer's role in 1959 concludes that the reviewer "has the special problem . . . of bridging the gap between poetry and its public. . . ." Frye feels that it is no part of the reviewer's task to "tell the poet how to write" nor "to
encourage or discourage poets."  

Unfortunately this vital relationship between poet and people was in fact almost non-existent, judging from the sales of both critical and creative works, while the relationship between the critic and the poet strongly resembled a man talking to himself, since critics and poets in Canada "overlapped" considerably. Nonetheless, for these critics, the final test for literature lay in public, that is, national, rather than critical acceptance. In 1892, Duncan Campbell Scott could write as if "the common decree of the people" could be relied upon to preserve "all the great lyrics." Sainte-Beuve and Matthew Arnold, although somewhat less interested in the use of the idea of national literature to organize their criticism than de Staël or Taine, had a profound influence on how English-Canadian critics viewed their role. As Frye has pointed out, "if evaluation is one's guiding principle, criticism of Canadian literature would become only a debunking project. . . ." Neither Sainte-Beuve nor Arnold saw evaluation as the primary critical function, and both wrote frequently on minor writers. Sainte-Beuve comments that "Le critique n'est qu'un homme qui sait lire, et qui apprend à lire aux autres." Wide reading, for him, is the basis of criticism; from this the "judgment will result quite naturally; it will form itself from your impression." Arnold, as René Wellek points out, "seems to have believed in a purely descriptive, interpretative criticism: 'The judgment which almost insensibly forms itself . . . is the valuable one.'" This tolerance may explain Sainte-Beuve's and Arnold's popularity with Canadian critics.
The main criticism levelled against English-Canadian criticism by English-Canadian critics concerns the unbalanced approach to the national literature. Canadian works were either greeted with contempt or hailed with so much enthusiasm that the public, rushing to read a work of genius unparalleled in the whole history of Western literature, would inevitably be disappointed. As Scott drily put it, if a poet "is not called the Shelley of Canada, he may perhaps begin to think that there is something in him after all." But again the main concern is that the public, losing faith in Canadian critical taste, would also lose faith in Canadian literature. The other common critical extreme, just as inimical to a good poet-reader relationship, is dealt with by Graeme Mercer Adam in his "Native Literature and the Scoffing Spirit," 1888:

"We are here not arguing against the action of competent, or even stringent criticism in dealing with the works of native authors. We are concerned only to defend Canadian literature from the attacks of supercilious ignorance, and to enter a protest against the cheap attitude of an essentially ignoble journalism which, whether from envy or from the levelling spirit of the time, has not a single good word to say for the native author or his works."

What was wanted was a middle ground—a critic who would not pre-judge a work on the basis of nationality. Bourinot warned critics against "sentimental gush," and Cappon said that "what we need is not a blare of trumpets and loud proclamations that 'Canada has a literature,' or a 'Burns' or a 'Tennyson,' but a candid and reverent criticism that will show the true value of imaginative
literature and the part it is playing . . . in our general life." Wilfred Campbell concludes, after criticizing the prevalent "scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" literary criticism, that the "only fair and legitimate use of a review is to show that the book in question has merits worthy of the attention of the public" (emphasis added). Archibald MacMechan opted for the middle ground in his introductory column of "At the Sign of the Book and Beaver" in the Montreal Standard, 3 March 1906, refusing to associate himself with critics who were "zealous for order, for putting people in their places, for awarding judicial praise and blame; who loved the literary tomahawk and the scalping knife." He continues, "Sainte-Beuve showed us a more excellent way. He taught us that the chief aim of the critic should be to understand the author and help others to understand him." Both Brown and Deacon call Sainte-Beuve the greatest of critics, and Bourinot praises his and Arnold's "analytical faculty" and "poetic instinct." Edgar, in his "A Great French Critic," in the Toronto Globe, 18 March 1905, also praises Sainte-Beuve highly. Arnold himself had been strongly influenced by Sainte-Beuve, and, as Wellek explains, "defined the perfect critic when he praised Sainte-Beuve: 'a critic of measure, not exuberant; of the centre, not provincial; of keen industry and curiosity . . . moreover with gay and amiable temper, his manner as good as his matter.' This is very similar to Duncan Campbell Scott's definition of the ideal critic, who, he says,
should have the most amiable disposition of his time. . . . With a breadth of sympathy and keenness of vision that will embrace the horizon and notice an irregularity in the petals of a flower, he should have a taste less individual and more catholic than any of his readers. He should be able to mingle praise and blame in such exact proportions that the true value of the work he criticises will at once become apparent. 305

This sounds like a prescription for impressionist criticism, but is not. A critic should "have a taste less individual and more catholic than any of his readers" (emphasis added); the critic should strive to be unbiased, while at the same time realizing, as Edgar put it, that "no critic can eliminate the personal equation." 306 Deacon, in his "A Theory of Book Reviewing," compares the perfect reviewer to a "flawless pane of white glass." 307 Through his transparency readers would receive a true impression of the book itself. (Notice how this analogy stresses the connection between public and author, while rendering the critic invisible.) But because the reviewer is "a human being with a distinct personality" he is more like a stained glass window; he colours the review. This "prejudice, or lop-sidedness does not, in itself, impair his usefulness. But dishonesty does." 308 Deacon goes on to explain that if the critic is honest about his biases, the reader will learn to adjust for them.

Despite Arnold's occasional implication that there should be one universal standard (in his "touchstone" method, for example, and his emphasis on "universal" ideas) many English-Canadian critics adopted a relative standard. (Both Sara Jeannette Duncan and William Arthur Deacon find Arnold's
Although to some people this apparent abandonment of standards might seem like the basest colonialism, it is of course equally colonial unfailingly to uphold the standards of the mother country, and invariably to condemn the local. As well, there were some theoretical grounds for adopting a relative standard, at least as far as the comparison of national literatures went. First, the European theorists worked from the assumption that each national literature should be judged in its own terms (the approach that Carlyle found so refreshing). This is picked up by Pelham Edgar in his "The Comedy of Shakespeare and Molière," where he concludes: "Comedy is a form of literature so national that only a dispassionate outsider could pronounce judgement on two such contrasted systems as we have been considering." Ray Palmer Baker, in comparing Haliburton and Twain, comments that each "is distinctively of Canada or of the United States. To adjudge their relative value is to attempt the impossible." Second, if one believed that the development of a future great Canadian literature was inevitable, and that this future literature was to ground itself, in part, on an older native tradition, the appreciation and documentation of early and feeble literary attempts seems perfectly justified. James Duff puts it quite clearly in his "Alexander McLachlan," 1900:

But the works of Canadian writers, although not of the highest value in themselves, are worth the student's attention as marking the stage of artistic development which we have reached, and perhaps as possessing a fore-taste and flavour of what will one day be a distinctly Canadian literature. From this latter point
of view such works as Dr. Drummond's *Habitant*, or even Miss McIlwraith's *Making of Mary*, have more significance than work which is far more ambitious in its form, the dramas, odes and descriptive poems written sometimes with great art and command of expression, but, except for some sweet local touches of Canadian scenery, [are] little more than clever imitations of the melodies of older European singers. 312

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, in his "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion," 1857, writes that "if a native book should lack the finish of a foreign one, as a novice may well be less expert than an old hand, yet if the book be honestly designed, and conscientiously worked up, the author shall be encouraged, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of better things which we look forward to. . . ." 313 He justifies this encouragement by arguing that Canadians need these books, because even English books are "not always the best fitted for us; they do not always run on the same mental gauge, nor connect with our trains of thought. . . ." 314 Sara Jeannette Duncan comments in 1886 that the "tendency to nip forth-putting buds by contemptuous comparison with the full blown production of other lands, where conditions are more favourable to literary efflorescence" is "a distinctly colonial trait." 315 Graeme Mercer Adam, in 1889, notes that although "it would be rash to vaunt the work of native writers, and rasher still to contrast Canadian with foreign literary achievement," much of the foreign literature sold in Canada is of a very low quality, and therefore to praise even slightly better Canadian literature is not a critical crime. 316 Wilfred Campbell complains that English-Canadian critics "won't go to the utter trash written by all of these men"--the Romantic
poets--"but they go to their few gems, and balance them against the weakest work of the men of today."\textsuperscript{317} Von Schlegel had made much the same point as these critics when he argued that "if an equal degree of literary excellence is demanded of all countries--irrespective of general development or any other distinctions soever--and in its absence censure is pronounced in terms of indiscriminate obloquy, such a requirement can accord neither with justice nor with the operation of natural laws."\textsuperscript{318} None of the English-Canadian critics quoted advocates the mindless praise of Canadian work simply out of chauvinism. Even if there was no one great poet who could redeem Canadian literature forever, there might be one some day. And this possibility justified writing a Canadian literary embryology, in order that the "coming man" would not have to evolve a mature literary tradition overnight on which to base his own works.

To summarize Romantic nationalism is not easy. As a literary theory, its fundamental premise was that literature is at the heart of social existence. (And in the sense that the knowledge of literature--first of the classical literatures, then of the national literature--marked a member of the European élite in the nineteenth century, it was.) For the Romantic nationalist, the most significant unit of social existence was the nation. The national geography, climate, race, language, class, economic situation, and national political, cultural, religious, and educational institutions all were assumed to have an impact on the literature. English-Canadian Romantic nationalist critics believed, with Taine, that "la race, le milieu, et le moment" had a prime role to play in the
formation of the national literature, although rarely did any critic examine more than a few aspects of these vast forces in any detail. None laid out the theory in any comprehensive way. Yet the central Romantic assumption—that society produces literature as a plant does flowers—led to important consequences for the Canadian literary institution. For English-Canadian literary critics were not content simply to wait hopefully for the inevitable, but made energetic and determined efforts to force the bloom.
Chapter Three

Establishing Canadian Literature

The task of defining Canadian literature was difficult enough for the early critics; establishing it as an integral and respectable part of Canadian society was even more difficult. At least they were not hampered by a theory that limited serious critics to writing in specialist periodicals for specialists. Critics, as well as poets, wanted to reach a wide audience. A. S. P. Woodhouse once referred to the University of Toronto Classics professor, Maurice Hutton, as a "missioner of culture to the province."¹ The missionary attitude was not limited to Classics scholars consigned to the colonies; it could be found in much Western literary criticism written before the First World War. The belief that great literature could raise the intellectual and moral values of the ordinary people led to many major literary enterprises in Great Britain; for example, the founding of the Mechanics' Institutes and the reprinting of English classics in series like Everyman's Library.² The imagery and tone of the voice crying out in the wilderness, so common in early English-Canadian criticism, arose as much from the organic metaphors of European Romantic criticism as from the forbidding physical and cultural landscape of the New World. As well, many early and several notable late Canadian men of letters were trained for the ministry,³ and adopted the missionary tone and stance quite un-
selfconsciously. Certain aspects of the Canadian political, economic and literary situation intensified this tone when English-Canadian critics wrote about Canadian literature. Here, it was not simply a question of improving the aesthetic and moral standards of the lower orders, but of creating and promoting a national literature and national audience. Indeed, it was a question of saving the national soul.

The efforts of the critics took two directions--towards converting the popular audience to an appreciation of Canadian literature and towards strengthening the national literary institution at all levels. As a result, the critics sometimes resembled patrons or publicists more than scholars or critics. Even aloof academics like W. J. Alexander were drawn in by their concern that good authors like Frederick Philip Grove should survive the economic disabilities of Canadian authorship. Arthur Phelps, an English professor first at Wesley College, Winnipeg, and then at McGill, eagerly promoted both Grove and Pratt, and Pelham Edgar became justly famous for his efforts to promote various impecunious and promising young writers.

Critics were in the thick of things, talking to Parliamentarians about copyright legislation, helping indigent poets find sinecures, and rounding up subscriptions for books that could not be profitably published in the ordinary way. Lorne Pierce writes in his diary, "I find myself a sort of small-sized Maecenas, helping poets and other lame dogs over the stile." William Arthur Deacon compared the English-Canadian critic to a carnival Barker, and later defined him as "a blend of high-pressure sales-
man and big executive."  

In attempting to generalize about literary promotion it is useful to divide it into two types—one type concerned mostly with short-term publicity, the other with long-term survival. Publicity tends to promote something already in existence, to aim at financial gain, and to see quantity as just as important as quality. The type that aims at survival attempts to set up an institution, a lasting structure that will encourage literary development, such as a course, a periodical, a society, a press, a series of literary works. These structures are more expensive and more difficult to set up, more permanent once established, allow some control over quality, and tend to be oriented towards the institution's own permanence and the future excellence of the literature it promotes. An institution devotes itself to a broad ideal like a great literature, rather than to more specific goals. The difference between these two types of promotion might be compared to the difference between giving a starving artist fifty dollars to help with the rent and setting up an indigent artists' relief fund. Of course some institutions are more powerful and permanent than others, and sometimes the promotional activities of an institution can look very much like publicity. This explains the complaints against the Canadian Authors' Association's Book Week—people felt betrayed because what appeared to be an institution set up to promote quality in Canadian literature quickly revealed itself to be far more interested in quantity of sales and production. A student at Victoria College, "D. G. C."
[Donald Grant Creighton], writes in *Acta Victoriana* in March 1922 of the Canadian Book Week that "an ideal, originally great in conception, has been partially degraded by over-patriotic papers and publishers into an ignoble racial cry. And Canadians are in danger of adding another wrong, that of corrupting the public taste, to the wrongs already committed under the name of patriotism."7

Later, the Association of Canadian Bookmen (1935-38), which revived the Book Weeks, fell into the same trap. The formation of this association was an ill-fated attempt, spear-headed by Pelham Edgar and the Canadian Authors' Association, to transform a commercial group, the Canadian Booksellers' and Stationers' Association into a union of authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians, and readers. Its purpose was to "improve the circulation of book news and speed up the distribution of books themselves; to supply readers with voluntary aid in choice of their reading; and by general education to stimulate the love for good books, while overcoming the handicap of a widely scattered population;" an introductory statement notes that "promotion of native literature will naturally be a prominent feature of the program, but by no means an exclusive object."8 The Association organized two major National Book Fairs in November 1936 in Toronto and November 1937 in Montreal, and a series of smaller fairs in 1937 in the Ontario towns of Whitby, Pickering, Saint Catharine's, Guelph, and Barrie; and, in 1938, in London, Oshawa and Peterborough.

By 1939, however, the Association had fallen into the materialist clutches of the publishers again, who wanted it to serve a purely commercial purpose. William Arthur Deacon wrote Leslie Gordon
Barnard, the President of the Canadian Authors' Association, on 24 April 1939 to explain what had happened: "In brief, ... the publishers, discovering after the book fairs that we would take dictation from them under pressure of debt, have deliberately withheld from the A.C.B. all cash support until we are driven into debt. ... They then request the charter back so the A.C.B. may be operated by them for purely commercial ends. ..." He expresses concern that the public may go on joining the Association "on the assumption that authors guarantee it as non-commercial." The public members' two dollar membership fees, he implies, were not always used for their service as had been promised. Naturally the institutional cachet that the patronage of the Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, had lent to the Association, was instantly withdrawn after the publishers took it over again.

Institutions are supposed to defend ideals, not to become the advertising arm of a financial interest like publishing. The problem was that the publishing of Canadian books often quickly transformed a publisher from a commercial interest to a charitable one. The intertwining of financial and cultural interests necessitated by the precarious economic situation of Canadian literature often makes it easy to criticize the promoters of Canadian literature for losing sight of their ideal—a great national literature—in their attempts to keep literature's economic substructure from collapsing. Yet to "boost" seemed to be essential; the great Canadian novel would never appear if there were no interested and financially secure publishers to put it out. If the promotion of
dozens of second-rate Canadian books finally allowed for the production of one excellent one, surely the risk of seeming "commercial" was worth it. As Graeme Mercer Adam points out, Canadians read a lot of second-rate foreign literature anyway: "But how much of the latter that finds ready sale in Canada is better than could be produced in the country, were the conditions favourable to its production?" If Canadians read Canadian trash instead of American or British trash, then at least the profits from these sales would stay in Canada to enrich Canadian publishers who then (possibly) would underwrite more artistic and less popular Canadian publications. Northrop Frye comments mildly on this whole heated issue:

The efforts made at intervals to boost or hard-sell Canadian literature, by asserting that it is much better than it actually is, may look silly enough in retrospect, but they were also, in part, efforts to create a cultural community, and the aim deserves more sympathy than the means.

Some, less forgiving than Frye, felt that this kind of thing discredited all Canadian writing and all critics who wrote about it, and should be stopped.

The modernist critics were the most outraged by the "boosting" tendency, especially as epitomized by the Canadian Authors' Association. As Leo Kennedy put it in one of the many telling attacks on this hapless organization, his "The Future of Canadian Literature":

Such an organization as this is legitimate and permissible up to a certain point. It is good for tradesmen and manufacturers to bind themselves together. . . . But when a number of writing persons consolidate, and advertise their ill-constructed detective stories, their
adventure thrillers and prosy encomiums on the
western farmer as literature and Canadian literature
at that, some action must be taken.
That action is ridicule.\textsuperscript{13}

Lawrence Burpee begins his Presidential speech at the Fifth Annual
Convention of the Canadian Author's Association with a defensive
summary of complaints made against the C.A.A.:

We have been told that the Canadian Author's Associa-
tion is a "sort of whoop-er-up institution for Canadian
writers" a "movement which turns its back up on all
real literary excellence and endorses the cult of medio-
crity" a "crass materialistic concern with no world be-
ond the world of copyright," a "group of men and women
possessed of good intentions whose proclamations tend
to debauch literary taste in Canada."\textsuperscript{14}

Although the C.A.A. had other goals than the promotion of Canadian
literature, their promotion efforts worried the critics of the 1920s
in the same ways that earlier critics had been worried by cries
that some poetaster was the "Canadian Wordsworth." Not only were
these more responsible critics concerned about the debasement, or
more likely, complete discouragement, of the public taste for
Canadian literature, but also about its effect on Canadian writers.
Kennedy notes of the young Canadian writer--"Moving self-consciously
among fatheads, his nationalism is severely chastened, and he in-
vvariably loses it. He is afraid of being called a Canadian Author,
and invariably becomes an American novelist. No one can blame
him."\textsuperscript{15} A. J. M. Smith, Douglas Bush, Leon Edel, Leo Kennedy, F. R.
Scott, and the other writers associated with such periodicals
as \textit{The McGill Fortnightly Review} (1925-27), \textit{The Canadian Mercury}
(1928-29), and most important, \textit{The Canadian Forum} (1920-\textendash\textemdash),
attacked the old nationalism and the organizations and periodicals
that upheld Romantic standards and tastes. Earlier, writers like
Lampman had been forced to publish abroad, partly because there
were few Canadian outlets for poetry, and partly because those
outlets that existed could not pay. Now the younger generation
also sought publication in foreign periodicals, for these old
reasons and for the added one that they mistrusted the standards
of most of the Canadian magazines (which were often reluctant to
take modernist poetry anyway). A. J. M. Smith writes of the end
of the twenties:

The Maple Leaf school of patriotic nature poetry under
the aegis of the Canadian Authors' Association and a
group of genteel traditionalists among editors and
publishers forced most of the new young poets to look
outside Canada, knowing that acceptance by the Dial or
Poetry (Chicago) or one of the Parisian experimental
magazines meant that we had attained a higher standard
of excellence than was demanded by any Canadian journal--
always excepting the Forum.16

It is wrong to see the bitterness of the modernists' attacks on
nationalist organizations like the C.A.A. or their practice of
publishing abroad as the expression of anti-nationalist feeling.
They were nationalists who saw the label "Canadian" usurped by a
crowd of old, powerful, self-serving victims of the colonial men-
tality whose poems were filled with the worst clichés of a senti-
mental Romanticism. The younger critics and poets wanted a great
national literature as much as the older ones—but the younger
critics judged by modernist standards, the older by Romantic ones.
Only a few of the writers whose theories and tastes were strongly
Romantic nationalist managed to bridge the gap—E. K. Brown and
E. J. Pratt were two who tried to forge links between the two groups.

Sandra Djwa's "The Canadian Forum: Literary Catalyst," sums up the difficulty these younger writers faced:

Ostensibly, the Forum wanted a literature and a criticism that was "Made in Canada" but, offended by the boosterism of the newly-formed Canadian Authors' Association and appalled by the weakness of so-called "Canadian literary classics," the Forum writers, like Barker Fairley, Douglas Bush and A. J. M. Smith, advocated in practice a literary internationalism. Ultimately, the argument refers back to a critical standard; a Canadian literature was desired but it had to be a Canadian literature that could be judged in relation to an international literature. 17

Clearly the whole issue of promotion was a difficult one; without it, Canadian literature might simply wither under the competition from British and American literature. With too much promotion of the wrong kind, Canadian literature would never meet high standards, and the Canadian audience might turn away from it in disgust. Young writers might leave, either because they could earn no money or because they did not wish to be associated with such an inferior literature or such undiscriminating colleagues. At least before 1920 nationalism, if expressed judiciously, was permitted. The First World War threw it into disrepute, 18 and it became linked with politics of the right.

Neither group, the older generation of Romantics, nor the younger group of modernists, completely rejected promotion, sensitive as they often were to its dangers. Because of their more socially-oriented theory, however, the older critics attempted to set up national institutions that would reach a wide popular
audience. Indeed, their broad tolerance in many cases extended as far as the acceptance of modernist poetry. The younger generation were, for several reasons, narrower in their approach. The need for acceptance by a wide public was not part of modernist poetic theory, nor was modernist poetry supposed to play a social or moral role. Although certainly there is no doubt that the modernists would have welcomed a national audience if they had achieved one, this was not their primary goal.

The need of the older critics to gain a national audience for national poetry led not only to a characteristic "missionary" tone, polemical and didactic, and content, national and patriotic, but also to a characteristic range of formats in which criticism appeared, adapted, like the tract or pamphlet, to conversion or general education. The most common of these were the public or "extension" lecture (and later the radio broadcast), the general essay in a popular magazine or newspaper, the article intended for an encyclopedia, literary history, or dictionary, the introduction to an anthology; and if the format was a book it was often a bibliography, a handbook designed for high school or undergraduate teaching, or the general historical survey. As a result, most critical writing of the period tried to cover a lot of ground rather than to dig deep. The didactic "improving" emphasis marked even the scholarly article. Millar McLure remarks that turn-of-the-century scholars worked in "the tradition of the 'extension' lecture," and continues: "There was a continuity it appears through the lecture to undergraduates, the 'missionary' address and the published essay."19
The long lists of writers and titles found in these works were part of the attempt to convince readers that Canada had a substantial literature. The works themselves were an attempt to provide Canadian literature with the same intellectual support structure of reference books—bibliographies, literary histories, biographical dictionaries—that English literature had. Margaret Atwood suggests that the Canadian critical tendency to catalogue derives from the fact that in "Canada there are many authors and many books, but few obvious classics; as a result, those compiling sources or distributing information tend to fall back on long lists of writers and book-titles..." 20 As well, a literary history that consists, as Milton Wilson puts it, "of one half-baked phoenix after another" requires constant revision of the canon. 21 Hugo MacPherson, in his "The Literary Reputation of Bliss Carman," comments that "article after article dealt not with Carman alone, but with a whole roster of poets." He continues:

The impossibility of writing any comprehensive criticism in an article which dealt with six or more poets was no deterrent to Canadian critics. The impression created by almost all these articles was that the critics, instead of attempting any penetrating criticism, were expressing their pride and delight over what they believed to be Canada's literary prominence. 22

Certainly some of the critics who wrote this criticism were as naive and parochial as Bush and MacPherson make them seem. But several of them were quite aware of what they were doing. John D. Logan, in his chapter on literary criticism in *Highways of Canadian Literature*, 1924, makes the perceptive comment that "in Canada criticism has been compelled, as it still is compelled, to
be primarily a cultural agency, and could never aim to be literature, wholly delectable in itself."\textsuperscript{23} Duncan Campbell Scott, in 1901, admitting that Canadian critics were often dealing with necessarily imitative and often mediocre verse, argues:

> At present it is wise to judge this poetry in the mass, and not by particular examples. So judged it gathers into a sphere of very considerable importance. It is inspired by wholesome ideals and filled with the genuine spirit of nature; it is an advance on pre-Confederation poetry, and it forms a standard and reference for future Canadian writers.\textsuperscript{24}

Archibald MacMechan makes a point quite similar to Scott's in his newspaper column in the Montreal \textit{Standard}, "At the Sign of the Book and Beaver," for 3 March 1906: "The formal reviewers give an account of single books, but I wish to note rather the insignificance of the single book in relation to the whole of national life and the national literature."\textsuperscript{25} He wanted to be "free to comment on whatever shapes our literary activity takes"—in other words to comment on the Canadian literary institution, as well as what he calls "our nativist literature."\textsuperscript{26}

Clearly Logan, Scott, and MacMechan are arguing that a difference in subject matter (a developing literature rather than a great literature full of classics) and function (promotion, rather than analysis) will produce a difference in critical form and critical method. Logan explains the rather embarrassing lack of discrimination revealed in most early English-Canadian criticism (including, although he does not say so, his own): "In its prag-
matic stage literary criticism in a young country attempts to praise native literature, so as to win for this literature the appreciation of the people in the land in which it was produced and, secondarily, the decent regard of foreign men of letters."

Further explanation for the differences between critics who graduated from university before the First World War, and those who graduated after can be found in the several dramatic transformations that occurred in literary society between about 1890 and 1920. A major reason why these early critics seem to a modern inquirer so lamentably uninterested in specific authors or texts, and so over-concerned with issues that seem more social, political, or moral than literary, is that both literature and the literary critic were widely accepted to be vitally integral to national life, at least until 1914. Gradually, technological and social change altered this view. In these years the increasing development of the popular book continued the rapid transformation of the reading public from a small socially-homogeneous group to a mass audience. The improvements in printing technology had an impact on both newspaper and magazine production. Also, in the university, the old classical education began to be replaced by courses that reflected the new practical outlook that went with the rise of industrialization and scientific empiricism. Chairs in English were created for the first time in British, American, and Canadian universities. The "old school" professor who taught a wide variety of subjects (English was often combined with History and Metaphysics) was replaced by men who, in that they devoted themselves to one subject, better fit the modern definition of the critic as
a man who specialized in the study of literature.

Before 1900, very few men (or women) who wrote about literature could be called critics in this modern sense. They were rather men of letters. Just as the word literature had then a much wider meaning than modern usage gives it now (a fact reflected in The Literary History of Canada, which in the rather old-fashioned tradition of its genre, surveys far more than belles lettres) so did the man of letters undertake a broader range of activities than the specialist literary critic does today. The role of the man of letters has since been divided into several—including historian, ethnologist, editor, political philosopher, academic literary critic, social commentator, literary journalist, and cultural impresario. The man of letters was as often a librarian, publisher, editor, politician, or clergyman as he was a university professor. The men of letters were not interested only in Canadian literature, or even in literature per se, but in society, of which literature was, admittedly, in their eyes, the most important and ideal manifestation. And even James Cappon, although one of the "new" professors of English (at Queen's) devoted most of his writing career, like Matthew Arnold, to the general improvement of society, rather than to literary topics. The gap between his first major critical work—Roberts and the Influence of his Time, published by William Briggs in 1905—and the second, Charles G. D. Roberts, published by Ryerson in 1925, was filled with articles on economic, social and political topics written mainly for Queen's Quarterly. 28

The First World War therefore provides a useful demarcation
line between a period when Canadian literature was certainly a matter of serious concern, and a period when it was the focus of the kind of concentrated institutional attention indicated by, for example, the establishment of courses devoted in whole or in part to Canadian literature in seven universities during the 1920s or by the sudden appearance of many books devoted entirely to the subject, by critics such as James Cappon, Lorne Pierce, Vernon Rhodenizer, and Archibald MacMechan. This is not to say that the ideas they used differed substantially from those of their predecessors—but the channels through which these ideas were being communicated had changed radically, indicating an important institutional change. M. G. Parks writes of Archibald MacMechan:

On one level he was a literary journalist, supplementing his income for many years by writing a special column for the Montreal Standard... On another he was a literary critic, producing numerous articles on American and British as well as Canadian writers.29

Yet despite the difference in form—newspaper column and scholarly article—MacMechan's content was the same in both; indeed much of what he says about Canadian literature in his newspaper column he later puts, only lightly revised, into his Head-Waters of Canadian Literature, 1924. With the increased specialization marked by the transformation of the man of letters into the literary critic, and the new security of a university professor's or journalist's salary, it became possible for critics to devote a larger percentage of their time to Canadian literature. And for the modern student of this early criticism for the first time it
becomes possible to study individual critics as English-Canadian critics, rather than being confined to the examination of trends in English-Canadian criticism, or the editorial or theoretical views of English-Canadian literary periodicals.

The decline of the man of letters is marked most strongly in economic terms; S. E. D. Shortt notes: "Except at the professional level, academic salaries remained largely static from 1890 to 1910 though general wage and price levels rose almost twenty per cent."30 The man of letters of the period was aware of what was happening to him, and deplored it, more for the loss of influence his decline implied, than for the loss of income. Stephen Leacock writes against the new specialization:

The broad field of human wisdom has been cut into a multitude of little professorial rabbit warrens. In each of these a specialist burrows deep, scratching out a shower of terminology, head down in an unlovely attitude which places an interlocutor at a grotesque conversational disadvantage.31

As Northrop Frye describes it, Pelham Edgar "saw the poet dwindle from the 'unacknowledged legislator' of the nineteenth century to the 'bourgeois intellectual' of the twentieth; he saw the professor transformed from the guardian of leisure-class wisdom into a harried employee of a culture-processing factory."32 E. K. Brown in a review of John Bartlet Brehner's Scholarship for Canada comments on its account of the eminence of the pre-war professor; Brown's conversations with W. J. Alexander backed Brebner up: "Mr. Brebner is doubtless right in saying (as I have heard Professor W. J. Alexander say) that the principle factors in the decline of the social prestige of the academic professor were 'the intensification of materialism and the dilu-
tion of religion."^{33} Of the differences between John George Bourinot's Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness 1893, and Thomas Guthrie Marquis' "English-Canadian Literature," 1913, Clara Thomas writes in her introduction to a reprint of these works:

A mere twenty years in time can be a lost world apart in scholarly decorum. The entire project, Marquis' specialized assignment, and his handling of it, separate us completely from the over-vision of the man of letters and move us to the specializing, compartmentalizing—and separating—nature of scholarship in our own time.\textsuperscript{34}

The transition from man of letters to critic in Canada took many years and although Shortt points out that by 1920 the generalist intellectuals had been replaced by the specialists, the ideals and principles of the older generation did not simply disappear overnight. The institutions they set up to preserve English-Canadian literature often preserved their literary theories and ideals as well. And not all of the younger generation was completely antagonistic to the old idealism and Romantic nationalism.

Lionel Stevenson wrote in 1926 that "without attempting to analyse the impalpable and transcendent flame, one may nevertheless try to determine what shall constitute the shrine that might be made ready for its possible habitation."\textsuperscript{35}

During the 1920s, many shrine-building activities were proposed, promoted, and occasionally instituted. Archibald MacMachan wrote Lorne Pierce, 23 October 1926: "The trouble we all feel in writing on Canadian Literature is the lack of a National Library. There is no one place in which are collected for examination and
study even a reasonable proportion of Canadian printed books. No one person commands the whole field." Critics often made their own collections, but the authors of Ryerson Press's Makers of Canadian Literature series usually expected Lorne Pierce to send them the books they needed to do their work.

The Canadian Authors' Association made many proposals to assist Canadian literature. One of their most unusual suggestions was to name railway cars after deceased authors, but they proposed a standard contract for writers, and in 1927 resolved to ask the government to endorse in perpetuity a prize of one thousand dollars for the most notable work published in any year by a Canadian. Later, Lord Tweedsmuir was prevailed upon to contribute a medal and lend the name and prestige of his vice-regal office to the award; in the early years, however, the Canadian Authors' Association had to put up the prize money itself. The first Governor-General's Awards were given in 1937.

In 1931, the Toronto branch of the C.A.A. passed a motion to seek the cooperation of the Federal and Provincial governments in preparation of a comprehensive list of Canadian books to be distributed to teachers, students, and provincial and community organizations. Interestingly, a proposal by some Montreal modernist poets to set up a national writers' organization "in opposition to the C.A.A.," described by Earle Birney in his memoirs, contained plans to which no fervent C.A.A. member could object; Birney writes of the modernist proposal:

I was taken . . . by the validity of their main program, which was to secure governmental grants for writers, C.B.
time for readings and reviews of Canadian writing, more modern literature in educational curricula, writers-in-residence in universities, a basic contract for authors, a national literary agency, and improved copyright protection. 42

Many of these proposals had been made before, not only by the C.A.A. but also by earlier writers. A national literature, whether Romantic or modernist, seems to need certain institutional structures; in Canada this need is increased by the country's great size and small population, as well as by its publishing industry's inability to compete without support against British and American books. In fact, sometimes involuntarily, publishers became literary patrons simply by publishing Canadian books. A case might be made that Canada Council funding did not augment the total amount available to Canadian literature, but simply replaced the money invested by the Methodist Church through Ryerson Press, by the Macmillan family, and by the creditors of such "all-Canadian" publishers as Louis Carrier and Graphic Press, both of which went bankrupt. 43 Many critics began to argue that the ultimate modern institution, the state, should support Canadian literature, which, after all, suffered under the same disabilities, a small market and intense foreign competition, as Canadian manufacturing, which was supported by the government as a matter of course. Clearly, the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, submitted to the government in May 1951, were not simply the product of the two years of research the Commission devoted to its task, but to years, decades, even, of work by those who hoped for a great
national literature.

Among the wide range of activities undertaken to establish Canadian literature securely one of the most important was the foundation of literary societies. As Edward McCourt points out in his *The Canadian West in Fiction*, 1949, the literary society was a Canadian community fixture; there were literary, scientific, and historical societies in every hamlet: "In the Canadian West the first community institution seems to have been either a church or a police barracks; the second, one is tempted to feel, a literary society." Of course these literary societies were not inevitably interested in Canadian literature. Many would say, with the members of the Brantford Literary Society (1871), "that there was no Canadian literature, and that they saw no reason why they should waste their time on the third rate when there was so much to be done studying the works of the truly great." As early as 1826 David Chisholme was calling for the establishment of a literary association in Montreal; the main advantage of such an institution for him was the benefits of mutual association for men "of taste, genius and learning." The idea cannot have prospered too well, as in 1890 *Canadiana* (Montreal, 1889-90), reports that the "suggestion made some time ago by Mr. W. D. Lighthall, that all the Literary, Scientific, and Artistic Societies and Associations in Montreal should be amalgamated, has been revived by Sir Wm. Dawson" because attendance at cultural programmes was "so meagre as to imply apathy, if not ignorance." Nonetheless, it is worth remarking that the preceding issue had reported that at a joint meeting of the Society for Historical Studies and the Society of Canadian Literature, "Mr.
John Popham read a paper on Isabella Valency [sic] Crawford. . . ."48

In 1893, John Bourinot reports that "there are over twenty Canadian scientific and literary societies associated with the Royal Society in its work."49 Certainly the Royal Society of Canada itself, founded in 1881, did notice Canadian literature fairly often, and several of its presidents were, like Archibald MacMechan and Pelham Edgar, noted critics. In "At the Mermaid Inn," 4 June 1892, Wilfred Campbell reports on the founding of the Association of American Authors:

> The main object of the society is to co-operate with publishers in putting American literature on a better footing. Could not such an association be formed in Canada? We have many writers, and we have no association to bring them together, or develop and encourage our literary spirit.50

Literary societies were seen as performing a range of activities; some provided intelligent and talented people with a milieu in which they could meet socially, others were educational in their aims, and others almost political, or commercial, like writers' unions or publishers' associations. The rather exclusive Pen and Pencil Club of Montreal, founded in 1890, brought together writers and artists; John E. Logan, S. E. Dawson, and Louis Fréchette were admitted in 1890, F. G. Scott and William Henry Drummond in 1892, Andrew Macphail in 1897, Stephen Leacock in 1901, E. W. Thomson in 1902, John McCrae in 1905, B. K. Sandwell in 1907 and J. Murray Gibbon in 1915.51 The Arts and Letters Club, founded in 1908, was the Toronto equivalent, and it too was a favorite rendezvous of artists, actors, musicians and writers. The Yearbook of the Arts in Canada issued from this group.52 Other literary societies were more inclined to a focus on lectures, readings,
and discussions. These clubs provided social contact as well, of course, but were less exclusive. For example, the annual programme for 1929 of the Canadian Literature Club, founded in Toronto in 1915 by Donald French, reveals that it attracted some of the more important lecturers in Toronto. The programmes included a lecture by R. H. Hathaway on Bliss Carman with a subsequent discussion led by Charles G. D. Roberts, a lecture by M. O. Hammond and A. E. S. Smythe on "Notable Books by Canadian Authors in 1928 and 1929," followed by a discussion led by Donald French, a lecture on "Some Characteristics of Poetry" by W. J. Alexander with the discussion led by Hugh S. Eayrs, and a lecture on Marjorie Pickthall by Pelham Edgar with the discussion led by Jean Graham. This Club also awarded prizes for short stories and poetry.

Although these types of society doubtless had an impact on Canadian literature, it is an impact difficult to document or measure. More obvious is the impact of an association with clearcut programmes with specific goals for improving the situation of the Canadian writer or of Canadian literature. Of these, the two most important, active, and representative were the Canadian Society of Authors and its descendent, the Canadian Author's Association. Both were founded in response to changes or proposed changes in the copyright law, but both also came to have wider goals than the defense of the rights of authors, and both aimed at a national membership.

The founding meeting of the Canadian Society of Authors was convened 6 February 1899 "for the purpose of facilitating united action with regard to any subject or movement which may be of interest to literary people." The moving spirit was G. W. Ross, the Ontario Minister of Education, who organized the first meeting, and
became the Society's first president. The resolutions "that a
Society be formed for the purpose of promoting literature in
Canada," and that the society should "have a thoroughly national
character" were passed. A committee, including among others
Goldwin Smith, G. W. Ross, James Mavor, George R. Parkin, and
James Bain formulated a further series of "Aims and Objects":

1. The objects of the Society shall be to promote the
production of literature in Canada, and the interests of
Canadian authors.

2. To discuss and circulate information with regard to
public questions affecting literary workers.

3. To obtain and distribute information as to channels
of publication open to Canadian authors.

4. To keep a register of Canadian-printed books by Cana-
dian authors.

5. To hold meetings in various parts of Canada, at the
call of the Executive, at which papers may be read relating
to the work and scope of the society.56

This society was the direct ancestor of the Canadian Authors'
Association. Members had to have written and published at least
one book, while associate members had to be "in the habit of con-
tributing to current literature."57

Apart from its efforts to help Canadian publishing, the Society
held receptions for various authors and visiting dignitaries--Louis
Fréchette, William Henry Drummond and Duncan Campbell Scott were
among those honoured. In March 1901, Pelham Edgar delivered a
paper, "Nationalism in Poetry and Canadian Poets," which has ap-
parently not survived;58 this is the only evidence of any critical
activity. The Annual Report for 1906 and 1907 reveals that the
Society had a hand in several other important literary developments.
On 26 January 1906 the Society held a dinner "for the purpose of
organizing "a quarterly magazine of a dignified character";
the result was the University Magazine, which first appeared in
1907 under the editorship of Andrew Macphail; Pelham Edgar then
the secretary of the Society gives this account of the foundation
of this magazine:

A quarterly magazine had for some time past existed in
McGill University. It was decided to alter the title
which connected it exclusively with McGill, and to name
it the University Magazine. It occurred to some few
individuals in Toronto,—and the idea was heartily
concurred in by those interested in Montreal,—that
an opportunity existed of associating the larger
universities of Canada in a magazine which should be
national in character, and which might afford a medium
of expression for native literary talent.

Again the purpose was to promote a native literature, but it
should be emphasized that this did not necessarily mean creative
literature or belles lettres only. Edgar and the other members
were here doubtless thinking primarily of founding a forum for
their own critical work on English, French, and German literature.

The report of the meeting for 1908 reveals that Edgar was by
this time a leader in the Society. He proposed that the seat of
the executive be transferred to Montreal in order to emphasize the
Society's "national character." He reminded the members that "any
author on the payment of a small fee may have his manuscript read
by a competent reader." If the report was favorable, the Society
undertook to recommend it to a British publisher. Edgar also

requested the meeting to discuss the desirability of
applying for an annual government grant to literature
to be administered by the Society in the interests of
Canadian authorship. Prizes such as exist in all
European countries might be established, and the society
might eventually publish an annual periodical of a lite-
rary character.
Although there is no evidence that the Society ever acted on any of these proposals, it did send Edgar to Montreal to set up the executive there. I have found no evidence that it met subsequently; perhaps it did not survive the transplant to Montreal. An embryonic Canada Council is clearly visible here—at least in the proposals of Pelham Edgar, who was to go on making this kind of proposal all his life.

Although all these activities were doubtless considered important by the members, it seems likely that concerns about copyright motivated several of the founding members most strongly. Goldwin Smith, for example, an author who received a large income from writing both books and articles, and who became the Society’s first honorary president, wrote several articles on copyright. Since the tangled issue of copyright is at the centre of the history of both the Canadian Society of Authors and the Canadian Authors’ Association, it is necessary to survey the main issues. Although a detailed account of these controversies would more closely resemble a scholarly history of the Hundred Years’ War than anything else, several themes remain dominant. 63

Both major copyright controversies, that of the turn of the century and that of the 1920s, were instigated by publishers and printers eager to reap the profits from the sale of popular foreign novels to the Canadian market by requiring that all books sold in Canada be manufactured here. Since manufacturing clauses were against the rules of the international copyright agreement, the Berne Convention, Canadians who published at home would theoretically be open to piracy. Clearly only the best writers would be affected. The writers who had a large sale at home and abroad however, almost invariably published either in Great Britain or the United States
anyway, and the laws of these countries protected their copyright. They were far more concerned about being pirated by Canadian publishers, if the manufacturing clauses passed. In effect these laws would force them to the expense of having an edition manufactured in Canada if they wanted any royalties from Canadian sales. The practice had always been to use the plates set abroad for the Canadian edition, or to import sheets; in either case the Canadian publisher would insert his own copyright and title page. Obviously this was cheaper than setting type again in Canada. It is no accident that Goldwin Smith was involved in the founding of the Canadian Society of Authors, and Stephen Leacock in that of the Canadian Authors' Association; both writers had large Canadian and foreign sales. Most Canadian writers were sympathetic to the needs of Canadian publishers, nonetheless. Without a healthy Canadian publishing industry, the average Canadian writer would never make it into print. Yet for a writer to agree to the manufacturing clauses would mean his loss of copyright abroad, an unnecessary risk. (Besides, minor writers experienced a delicious thrill when they thought about being pirated—which was, after all, a high literary accolade. To fulminate against literary piracy was to associate vicariously with the likes of Dickens and Twain.) So in general, writers' associations worked to find a compromise that would keep Canada within the limits of the Berne Convention, while improving the financial lot of the Canadian publisher.

The specific problem to which the Canadian Society of Authors addressed itself was the inability of a Canadian publisher to obtain an exclusive copyright for the Canadian market of a British
title. Even if he purchased that copyright, Ross notes in his paper presented to the Society on the subject of "The Copyright Question," "there is nothing in the law to prevent anyone in England from purchasing and sending on his own account the English edition of the work into Canada. The effect is to destroy the Canadian market as a separate market and to retard the development of publishing in this country." 65 Ross was therefore not aiming at the direct promotion of Canadian literature; instead, by making "the Canadian market a separate one" he hoped "greatly to increase an already large demand for books; and indirectly to promote, through the development of Canadian publishing, the growth of native literature." 66 The Canadian Society of Authors authorized James Mavor to present the views of the Society on the issue to the committee of the British House of Lords which was considering a new act, and Mavor and other members presented the views of the society to the Canadian parliament as well. The passage of the Fisher Act in 1900 gave the publishers some of the protection they wanted. 67

After the First World War, new lobbying efforts by some printers and publishers persuaded the Canadian government to pass what were called the "Licensing Clauses" that made it possible for a Canadian printer to apply to the government for a license to print a book that had not been published in Canada. This violated the principle that the ownership of intellectual property should reside with its creator; the original publisher would lose too. Stephen Leacock, who as a rule published his books abroad, alarmed by the implications for his own sales, held a dinner party. The guests included B. K.
Sandwell, J. Murray Gibbon, and of course, Pelham Edgar--the result was the founding of the Canadian Authors' Association in 1920. It was, as Mary Vipond points out in her "National Consciousness in English-Speaking Canada in the 1920s," "to be an association based on professional interests." This emphasis on professional interests is clear in the objects of the Association:

1. To act for the mutual benefit and protection of the interests of Canadian Authors and for the maintenance of high ideals and practice in the literary profession.

2. To procure adequate copyright protection.

3. To assist in protecting the literary property of its members, and to disseminate information as to the business rights and interests of its members as authors.

4. To promote the general professional interests of all creators of copyrightable literary material.

5. To encourage cordial relationship among the members and with authors of other nations."

Despite the initial focus on copyright, the Licensing Clauses, it quickly became clear, were to remain a dead letter, and the authors, most of whom were in little danger of piracy, apparently found the issue tedious; Julien Tremblay, the National Secretary in 1924-25 noted in his report that "if we are to judge by the general apathy manifested towards this momentous question by the members at large, the Amending Act of 1923 was not a very bad piece of legislation for the Authors, in spite of its far-reaching effects." The Association rapidly became the kind of monster which its original founders could not have foreseen. It became a notorious meeting ground for minor writers, cranks, nationalists of various stripes,
usually conservative, often Imperialist. As Vipond sums it up, the C.A.A. was "conservative, sentimental, traditional, optimistic, anti-American, and ambivalent regarding the British tie." And yet a sample of the 135 members in the Toronto branch in 1927 reveals such eminent names as Salem Bland, John A. Cooper, William Arthur Deacon, Mazo de la Roche, Merrill Denison, Hugh Eayrs, Pelham Edgar, Robert Falconer, Donald French, John Garvin, Katherine Hale (Mrs. John Garvin), M. O. Hammond, Mrs. S. F. Harrison ("Seranus"), E. J. Hathaway, R. H. Hathaway, Lorne Pierce, E. J. Pratt, Charles G. D. Roberts, Marshall Saunders, W. S. Wallace, Lady Willison, and G. M. Wrong. Clearly its impact should not be judged solely by the worst excesses of its most foolish members. That a wide cross-section of the Canadian academic and literary élite supported Canadian literature is an indication that it was becoming established as a part of Canadian society.

But English-Canadian critics did far more that simply establish or join societies—they also recommended publishers to writers and writers to publishers, set up readings and literary tours, founded and edited literary periodicals, then wrote articles and solicited subscriptions for them, and tried to make sure the right books were reviewed well in the right places. They were trying to ensure that Canadian literature would, once written, be published, bought, read, reviewed, and that the author would be able to support himself on the proceeds.

The histories of these various projects are as fascinating as they are complex and (usually) inadequately documented. Lorne Pierce's Makers of Canadian Literature series and the Ryerson Poetry chap-
books were typical projects of this kind, and their history reveals
his centrality not only as a publisher, but also as a critic.
Lorne Pierce was an important figure in the Canadian literary
institution between 1920 and 1960, the period when he was Book
Editor of Ryerson Press. Pierce came to Ryerson in 1920 as advisor
to the Book Steward, Dr. S. W. Fallis, who had succeeded William
Briggs in 1918. (Briggs's name had been used as an imprint on
the trade publications of the Methodist Book and Publishing House
between 1879 and 1918—Fallis devised the Ryerson imprint.) Pierce
was promoted to the newly-created post of Book Editor and Literary
Advisor in 1922; the Editor was "responsible for the literary
policy of the Publishing House" and he not only judged manuscripts
that were submitted to the firm, but was also expected "to ini-
tiate publications of general importance." In Briggs's declining
years original Canadian trade book publishing at the press had
dropped radically, giving place to the easier, less creative, and
more profitable agency publication of British and American best-
sellers. Both Fallis and Pierce were in essential agreement on
the need to improve the House's trade publishing record, especially
in the area of Canadian literature. Pierce took his responsibility
to initiate publication seriously from the beginning, and was
fervent in his desire to improve the situation of literature in
Canada. In his retirement speech, An Editor's Creed, 1960, he
reveals the idealistic quality of his nationalism:

A publisher should be as imaginative and daring as he
possibly can. Profits may not always show in the balance
sheets, but in the long run they will show in the maturing
culture of his country, in the creative forces that are
shaping its destiny.
Desmond Pacey calls Pierce's nationalism "idealistic, almost apocalyptic" and quotes a passage from Pierce's A Canadian People, 1945;

The cosmopolite has no history because he has no strong, undivided ego, no well-defined home, no pure native language, no lofty sense of duty, or destiny. The voices of the world's great centres may be urbane, bland, sophisticated, but there is no high purpose in them, and no nation can survive without that. No nation can achieve its true destiny that adopts without profound and courageous reasoning and selection the thought and styles of another. . . .76

Not only was Canadian national feeling strong just after the war, indeed, all through the 1920s, but also Canadian titles had sold in unheard-of quantities during the war, and publishers were eager to maintain the momentum. For Pierce, however, the Makers of Canadian Literature series, a forty-volume set of anthologies of the most important Canadian writers, was more a contribution to the national spirit than a business venture. In his diary entry for fall, 1922, Pierce writes of his conception of the series, apparently in some retrospect:

It became imperative to begin somewhere, and with energy. I had to show by some token or other that we were really into it. I had also to invent some way of ensuring the writing fraternity [would come] back to us. I concluded that this series would be the best means. The work needed to be done. The interest in Canadian literature was immense: our national corpus was fast taking shape owing to the war, our nat. soul was taking form and issuing a distinct content just as rapid. [sic] 77

Pierce, inexperienced and ambitious, bit off more than he or the Canadian reading public could chew. The quick failure of the venture, in the period between 1923 and 1930 when Canadian publishing
was on an upswing, must have taught him a great deal about the limits of the Canadian market for literary writing and the limits of the Canadian national spirit.

He was not alone in his desire to initiate this kind of project, however, and indeed the pressure of competition may well explain some of the rush that vitiated the quality of the series. John D. Logan, in response to what must have been a very early exploratory letter concerning the wisdom of such a project, writes Pierce enthusiastically, but warns that "evidently the monograph series 'idea' is in the air." He says that Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan, John Garvin, and McClelland and Stewart were all considering series. Garvin formed his own company, The Radisson Society, to publish Master-Works of Canadian Authors which was intended to be a twenty-five volume set of the works of Canadian writers in a limited edition for subscribers at $100 a volume. Only three volumes actually appeared—by Paul Kane, 1925, George M. Grant, 1926, and Charles Mair, 1926. George Parker, in his "A History of a Canadian Publishing House" says that Garvin had "managed to gather around him an impressive set of directors such as Sir Gilbert Parker, Charles G. D. Roberts, Robert Norwood, and Hector Garneau." According to Parker, this company was formed in 1926, but it, or at least the project, would seem to have been organized well before this. Peter McArthur, in a letter to Pierce on 7 August 1923 remarks that "Garvin has sent me the prospectus of his series" and concludes somewhat prophetically "I am afraid that all this rivalry about recognizing Canadian literature may make some of us look rather ridiculous." Gilbert Parker writes Pierce 29 May 1924, asking whether the Makers series will "compete
with that which is being arranged by Mr. J. W. Garvin of Toronto."
He adds that since Garvin is planning "only books with introduc-
tions," this is unlikely. According to Norman Shrive's account
of Garvin in his Charles Mair: Literary Nationalist, Pierce and
Garvin shared many of the same enthusiasms, which may explain
their frequent cooperation where competition might have been
expected. Garvin completed a manuscript on Charles Mair for
Ryerson, while his wife, Katherine Hale, produced the Isabella
Valancy Crawford volume. As well, it appears that both Edgar and
Cappon transferred projects, on Duncan Campbell Scott and Bliss
Carman respectively, from Garvin to Pierce in midstream. None-
theless, the threat of competition from this quarter may have
worried Pierce. At about the same time McClelland and Stewart
commissioned a Haliburton anthology with an introduction by Ray
Palmer Baker; this, published in 1923 under the title Sam Slick,
was put on several university courses. This definitely under-
cut the Makers version, by John D. Logan, which did not appear
until 1925. In fact, Pierce's doubt that Logan's slow work would
ever produce a complete volume in the series may explain why
Ryerson produced Selections from Sam Slick edited by Paul A. W.
Wallace in 1923.

Pierce seems to have spent the time between September 1922
and September 1923 lining up prospective authors for the series.
A small advertising prospectus fastened into Pierce's diary at
the page for 28 September 1923 reveals the ambitious scope of
the project ab initio. At this time, thirty-five volumes were
proposed, and the folder lists ten definite titles. As a lengthier and more detailed prospectus issued probably in early 1925 (to promote the series to subscribers) promises, each of the published volumes (with some modification of the adjectives) consists of "a full Biography, an Anthology of the 'Maker's' representative work, a Critical Appreciation, an exhaustive Bibliography, and a carefully prepared Index." Five volumes actually appeared in 1923, so Pierce and his writers were busy. The larger prospectus gives a great deal of information about the planned scope of the project; of the forty volumes it proposes, only twelve were ever published, and one other was written and published in 1941.

Pierce gathered around the project as many eminent names as possible, either as editors, writers, or advisors. Victor Morin, the associate editor of the French volumes in the series, was extremely well-known in Quebec as a lawyer, as an active member of various historical societies, and president of the Jean-Baptiste society between 1905 and 1920. The prospectus contained an introduction in English by Sir Robert Borden, Conservative Prime Minister of Canada between 1911 and 1920, and one in French and English, by Sir Lomer Gouin, Liberal Premier of Quebec between 1905 and 1920. Although it would now seem odd to ask politicians to write introductions to a literary series, both carried off the task with aplomb. Bordon uses the clichés of Romantic nationalism with facility and reveals a knowledge of Ray Palmer Baker's recently published A History of English Cana-
dian Literature to the Confederation, 1920. Gouin, who had worked for "Bonne Entente" during the conscription crisis, praises the publisher's "breadth of mind" for producing works in English and French in the same series. This would give, he felt, solid evidence of two distinctive and separate cultures and "prove once more, in the light of the work accomplished here by our two races, that they are too powerful, too vigorous, too deeply-rooted in their traditions, their customs, their language and their faith, for the one ever to absorb the other and cause it to lose its ethnical character. . . ." Clearly Gouin felt that English Canada might come to know the French minority better through this series, although there were no plans to translate the works on French-Canadian writers into English. Even the fact of their publication by an English-Canadian publishing house could be seen as evidence of a distinctive culture, however. National literature was once again to perform the function of cementing national unity, sadly shaken during the war. Pierce worked for entente between French and English Canada all his life, and to include works in French in his series and have a French introduction to his prospectus is entirely typical; of course the connection of politics and literature was typical of Romantic nationalists generally.

Dating the twelve volumes which were published in the 1920s is difficult because in most cases there is no copyright date on the books. Pierce's correspondence and diary give some useful clues, and review dates and the particular titles found in each
review are also revealing. Five titles appeared in 1923—Albert Durrant Watson's Robert Norwood appeared first, then William Renwick Riddell's William Kirby and John Richardson, Peter McArthur's Stephen Leacock, and William Arthur Deacon's Peter McArthur. Katherine Hale's Isabella Valancy Crawford does not appear to have been published in 1923 as R. E. Watters has it in his A Check List of Canadian Literature (rev. ed.), but in 1924. Watters has 1923 for the Roberts, Drummond (he queries this date), and Haliburton volumes; these seem to have appeared in 1925. Louis Honoré Fréchette, by Henri d'Arles, appeared in 1925 and the two other French volumes, François Xavier Garneau by Gustave Lanctôt and Antoine Gérin Lajoie by Louvigny de Montigny either in late 1925, or, more likely, early 1926. W. S. Wallace in his The Ryerson Imprint, 1954, lists 1923 as the publication date for the Crawford, Haliburton, Leacock, Drummond, Richardson, Kirby, and Norwood titles, 1924 for Fréchette and McArthur, 1925 for Roberts and Gérin Lajoie, and lists Richardson again in 1926. He does not list Garneau at all.

The quality of the series was jeopardized by several obvious factors—the extreme haste with which it was undertaken, the lack of background in English-Canadian criticism of some of the writers, and Pierce's own lack of critical experience and judgment. His desire to get well-known authors was sensible and understandable, but this meant his authors were all old, imposing, and difficult to correct. As well, some writers had no sympathy with their commissioned subject; most had too much.
It was unfortunate that the first title to appear was Albert
Durrant Watson’s Robert Norwood. Watson is as difficult to take
seriously as a literary critic as Norwood is as a maker of Cana-
dian literature. Watson, a Toronto doctor, was one of Pierce’s
failings; in a pamphlet, Albert Durrant Watson, 1923, Pierce defends
Watson’s mysticism:

Now what is there queer about Watson? Simply this; he
believes that he inhabits a spiritual world, that at
the centre and core of all life and all matter there
is spirit, that you cannot evade it, and that the only
alternative is to accept it, and then get into immediate
contact with it. . . . The Scriptures call it [the
progress of the soul] religious maturity, Wesley called
it Christian perfection, Watson is an astronomer and
calls it ten, twenty, ten thousand spiritual planes,
for he sees the soul climbing the infinite stairway
of the stars. . . . 93

Watson had a Jewish medium; his book The Twentieth Plane, 1918,
appeared on the Canadian non-fiction best-seller list; two other
books of his were published in England; Ryerson published Mediums
and Mystics which Watson wrote with Margaret Lawrence in 1923.
Here shines the theosophical influence—Watson, although not a
member, frequently attended and addressed meetings of the Toronto
Theosophical Society. Several others connected with the Makers
series were theosophically inclined, including Robert Norwood,
William Arthur Deacon, and Katherine Hale. 94 Pierce, in his fore-
word to Cap and Bells: An Anthology of Light Verse edited by John
Garvin in 1936 says that he met Garvin first "at the home of Dr.
Albert Durrant Watson, when Dr. Robert Norwood was also present."
He continues: "Watson, Garvin and Norwood were inseparable, and
friends playfully referred to them as The Trinity." The bulk of the Canadian reading public was probably not ready for a critic like Watson, who is capable of writing that the "poet has subtle antennae which, trembling outward to the sea and upward to the mountains and the stars, catch new inspirations and discover new wonders, startling the soul and kindling it to the life undying." The Canadian Forum's reviewer (possibly Barker Fairley) wrote that "the series was well-nigh drowned in the dreadful molasses of its first volume." B. K. Sandwell, writing in The Canadian Historical Review, comments that "the secret of Dr. Norwood's hold upon his followers is probably to be found less in the music or passion of particular lines than in the fervour with which he expounds a new and extremely broad theology. . . ." Deacon, as a Theosophist, of course liked the volume. (Norwood was a popular preacher at the fashionable Episcopalian church, St Bartholomew's, in New York, when the Makers volume appeared.) Although reviewers in the Montreal Gazette, and the Montreal Star were positive, the Toronto Mail and Empire warns that the series, if the editor is not vigilant, could "degenerate into an orgy of log-rolling." "Even Robert Norwood," the reviewer hopes, "cannot think himself as good as this admirer says he is."

The next four volumes, two by Riddell, one by McArthur and one by Deacon, are usually reviewed together and seem to have been published at the same time. William Renwick Riddell was a well-known historian and Judge of the King's Bench division of the High Court of Justice of Ontario between 1906 and 1925. Pierce apparently offered him his choice of Gilbert Parker, William Kirby, or John
Richardson. In Riddell's reply, 23 January 1923, he pleads ignorance of all three, but nonetheless offers to do either Kirby or Richardson or both:

If you care to send me, without delay, all the works of William Kirby, or all the works of Major John Richardson, I shall, during my cruise in the south, make an exhaustive study of either or both of these writers and shall give you the very best that is in me concerning the writings of either or both.

I cannot undertake to find out anything about the lives of these authorities, I have neither the means nor the time, and as I have said, my knowledge of the life of either is somewhat sketchy. . . .101

Nonetheless, he produces two books in six months, biographies and all. (He, a historian, is the only writer in the series to use extensive footnotes; most literary critics at the time simply lifted without credit.) His are the shortest biographies and appreciations of the series, although admittedly he had a great deal of prose material to summarize. For the Kirby biography he seems to have relied heavily on the help of Miss Janet Carnochan, who had been a member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Library Board and the Niagara Historical Society with Kirby; for Richardson's biography he relies heavily (as do most Richardson critics) on Alexander Clark Casselman's detailed biographical introduction to Richardson's War of 1812, a 1902 reprint of the original edition of 1842.102 His special abilities as a historian, which explain why Pierce offered him these writers, were not used. B. K. Sandwell notes quite correctly that although the anthology method works well for poets and humorists,
John Richardson, the Bulwer Lytton of British North America, gets no chance at all to exercise his strange, romantic, and very long-winded fascination when such a novel as Wacousta is reduced to an eight-page summary, in which the textual excerpts are selected chiefly to exhibit the appallingly stilted style of the conversations.103

Sandwell also regrets that Riddell could only devote fourteen pages to the biography. He complains that the Kirby volume devotes space to summarizing The Golden Dog, well-known to everyone and widely available, while omitting some less well-known material, mostly verse. W. T. Allison, in a review in the Calgary Herald, 22 February 1924, and the anonymous reviewer of The Canadian Forum, August 1924, both feel, however, that Kirby's verse is best neglected.104 Although the reviewers were, in general, kind to Riddell, he produced nothing particularly new or interesting about either writer. The idea, which must have been Pierce's, of summarizing long novels, understandably did not suit most critics. Pierce, judging from his introduction to his own William Kirby: Portrait of a Tory Loyalist, published by Macmillan in 1929, had attempted to discover new biographical material on Kirby, and did, but too late for the Riddell volume; he refers to the Makers series and comments: "As Editor of this series I was rather surprised to discover that, in view of Kirby's residence in Canada from 1839 to 1906, so little new data could be gathered together, which might lend colour to his life and provide a more adequate context for his work."105 Pierce managed to discover a huge trove of papers in the possession of Kirby's grandson, containing letters from princes, governors-general, assorted statesmen, poets and writers, including
Francis Parkman, Goldwin Smith, Catharine Parr Traill, and Lord Tennyson.

Peter McArthur, a humorist himself and a friend of Leacock's, was an obvious choice to write the Leacock volume. McArthur, writing Pierce 20 January 1923, offers to have it ready in two weeks, commenting, "you must remember that I have been familiar with Leacock's work since he began writing, so my method of going at the work is not so hasty as it seems." In a more considered letter written three days later, he extends his planned writing time to a month, and explains that what he wrote most hurriedly was better than what he laboured over. He was a journalist, and did manage to complete the book in six months. The biographical section was a problem for McArthur; according to Alec Lucas, in his *Peter McArthur*, 1975, Leacock offered all kinds of assistance but somehow did not manage to provide it in time. McArthur wrote him, drily, "As I did not hear from you any further about biographical material I went into the Morgue of the *Globe* and dug up the material that will be used to write your obituary." As a result of this excursion, McArthur was able to compile an interesting, and, since it relies also on Leacock's own autobiographical writing, amusing biography; but one that contains little original information. The thirty-six page "Appreciation," although also studded with quotations, is witty, amusing, and makes several discerning points. McArthur regrets that Leacock seemed content to please his publishers by sticking to a successful format. He also comments on Leacock's inability to move a plot. And later critics would agree with his point that Leacock, although he achieved eminence
and respectability, never was "wholly at ease with the solid citizens and solid institutions of the world."109 Although Allison feels McArthur should have been confined to the limits of a magazine article, I lean towards Sandwell's opinion that "it is a matter for rejoicing that Mr. McArthur lived to write the appreciation of Mr. Leacock. ..."110 Lucas calls the work "a superior study" and "one of the best critical studies of McArthur's fellow humorist;" David Legate, in his Stephen Leacock, 1970, argues that McArthur "got closer to the bone than any of the academic commentators."111

William Arthur Deacon's Peter McArthur has all the advantages and disadvantages of a book written by a friend—an interesting biography (although not completely authoritative—Deacon complains to Pierce that "McArthur seems incapable of telling a plain tale of what he has done with his life")112 and an extremely appreciative "Appreciation." Lucas quibbles with a few of Deacon's points, but seems in general to approve.

The reviews which considered the merits of the series as a whole were usually based on the first five or six volumes to appear. The most damning general review was W. T. Allison's in the Calgary Herald, 22 February 1924, entitled "'You Scratch My Back and I Will Scratch Yours' Seems to be Motto of Mutual Admiration Society" and subtitled "Herald Reviewer, in Writing on New Series of Books Issued by Ryerson Press, 'Makers of Canadian Literature' Thinks Editor is Far Too Generous in Trying to Lift into Hall of Fame the Nearly-Great and the Think-They-are-Great--Believes that Many Who are Written about Will Smile when They Read About Themselves." Al-
though the efforts of the headline writer also raise a smile, Allison's argument, based not only on the first five volumes to appear, but also on the prospectus, is sound. He points out in some detail that many of the critics were close friends or colleagues of their subjects, and argues that the books "will not be good criticism because friends are in the nature of things inclined to be too indulgent to friends; the living are apt to be too kindly to the living." 113 Allison's critique was especially daring because he was dependent in part on Pierce, among other publishers, for advertising support. While he was an English professor at the University of Manitoba, where he taught some Canadian literature, he also figured extensively on the book pages of several Western newspapers. In a letter to Pierce, 15 October 1925, he writes "I am hoping that you will give my [annual Christmas book] Supplement this year your usual generous advertising support." 114 This kind of interdependence is inevitable in the tiny Canadian literary world; there is no doubt that in many cases it affects the rigour of Canadian literary criticism. Pierce, fortunately for Allison, and indeed for everybody, was not petty. Of the other reviewers, The Canadian Forum's argues that the series "implies too large a claim, and the necessity of filling out a book compels the inclusion of inferior pieces among the selections, or of padding in the comment." 115 B. K. Sandwell seems to like the idea of the series but questions the choice of some of the modern figures, and wonders why Charles Sangster and Frederick George Scott are not included. 116 No reviewer condemns the series absolutely, but there is an air of "wait and see" even
in the positive reviews.

Katherine Hale, although, as The Canadian Forum reviewer notes, stylistically "inclined to sob somewhat" in her Isabella Valancy Crawford, at least interviewed those who had known Crawford, and unearthed manuscript material (now at Queen's). She makes much of Crawford's struggle against poverty and ill-health--real enough--and of the insensitivity of the public and editors to her true merit. This volume, since it does not appear in any review I have been able to find before 17 May 1924, and since Hale writes Pierce 24 April 1924 concerning the distribution of review copies, seems to have appeared in 1924, not 1923 as Wallace and Watters have it. The decision to put the series on a subscription basis was made in early December 1923, and in her letter Hale regrets the concomitant decision that no review copies will be distributed. She writes:

When one works slowly, trying honestly to avoid "easy" work, it is rather a tragedy to have a book appear unknown to any but the persons who happen to subscribe for the series . . . Could not at least half a dozen copies be sent to the larger papers? It is at least a refutation of the "You scratch my back" legend!

(That she admits she has been slow, and appears to have heard of the Allison review, are two additional points in favour of the later publication date.) From the evidence, it seems Norwood was out for the spring market, 1923, the next four titles for the Christmas market 1923, and the Crawford volume for the spring of 1924. (Pierce must have relented about the review copies because the book was reviewed in the Toronto Globe, 17 May 1924, The Canadian Forum,
August 1924, *The Canadian Historical Review*, 1925, and doubtless elsewhere.)

The remaining three volumes in English would appear to have been published in 1925 since I have found no reviews for any of them published before May 1925. Watters has 1923 for Logan's *Haliburton*, 1923[?], for MacDonald's *Drummond*, and 1925 for Cappon's *Roberts*. Wallace has 1923 for the first two and 1925 for the last. Pierce, in a diary entry for 20 December 1924 makes a somewhat cryptic remark: "The first 10 vols. of the Makers are being rushed through and are going to look splendid." In a letter to Deacon he says ten will be off the press by 23 January 1925. Presumably he is referring to a set which would include the six previously published volumes, the three remaining English volumes—*Haliburton, Drummond, and Roberts*—and possibly Henri d'Arles' *Louis Honore Fréchette*, or, since the French series was to be marketed separately, Scott's volume on Lampman, which made it into print but was not published. That Pierce turned very early to John D. Logan for advice about the series was only logical, since Logan was quite as well known as an academic critic and promotor of Canadian literature as Edgar, MacMechan, or Cappon. Letters exchanged in September 1922 reveal Logan's familiarity with the plans of McClelland and Stewart, a familiarity that argues he may well have already started work with them on his *Highways of Canadian Literature*, which appeared in 1924. A comparison of the Makers volume and the chapter in *Highways* leaves little doubt that the *Highways* chapter was written first; Logan may even have been working on the *Highways* volume when Pierce
expected him to be working on the Makers volume, which would account for Logan's slowness in finishing the work for Ryerson. Pierce might well have complained of the strong resemblances, often exact, word-for-word repetitions, by Logan of his Highways chapter. The Makers work does show either the improvement of revision by Logan, or, more likely, of Pierce's editorial hand, since Pierce refuses to let Logan write the Howe volume as once agreed, claiming that he "practically rewrote" Haliburton "from beginning to end." Logan seems to have been under almost constant financial pressure during these years; Pierce, probably alarmed that he was seeing no manuscript for his advances, finally put Logan on a kind of piece work system. Logan complains of Pierce's concern with "mere form" and notes that he himself is more concerned with original ideas, which "accounts for my repetitions and use of adjectives...." Logan's normally redundant and italic-studded style, although singularly chastened, is still in evidence in the Makers volume, but his argument is more detailed, and better defended with quotations, and he has toned down his most dramatic asseverations—that Dickens's Pickwick Papers were definitely influenced by Haliburton's The Clockmaker, and that Longfellow got his idea for Evangeline from Haliburton's An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia, 1829. He acknowledges Baker's History in Highways, and he relies on it in the Makers volume, where he includes information on the Loyalist migrations which strongly resembles Baker's text. Reviews in The Toronto Globe and in Saturday
Night, both of the same date, 4 July 1925, say that this is the best book in the series, and Saturday Night's reviewer, probably Deacon, comments that limitation of space "compelled a simplicity and a concision that enhance Dr. Logan's critical method, which does not always exhibit these virtues to anything like the same degree."127 Pierce doubtless deserves a great deal of credit for that simplicity and concision.

John Ford MacDonald, who wrote William Henry Drummond, was an English professor at Queen's, and later at Toronto. His "Appreciation" is devoted to proving the superiority of the dialect "habitant" poems over Drummond's poems in Irish dialect or in standard English. MacDonald uses his personal experiences teaching English in lumber camps as part of the Reading Camp Movement (later Frontier College), to argue that the dialect used in the "habitant" poems is accurately transcribed from real speech. He makes the helpful point that Drummond, "like Browning, . . . needed the spiritual medium of another character to voice what lay in his deeper consciousness"128 and shows that several experiences in these "habitant" poems are closely related to things that happened to Drummond. For example "The Last Portage" recounts a dream he had of his son Billy who died at 3 years old in 1904: Drummond "could pour out his soul in the voice of the voyageur, though it wasn't physically possible for him to utter more than a few broken words in his own person and his own speech."129 The connection of dialect as a "mask" with this kind of specific evidence of the transformation of painful experience is very discerning. MacDonald and McArthur both use the biography not only as a chance to reveal the author's
fortunate possession of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic blood, or of a literary ancestor, but also to point out how an author's "voice" can both conceal and reveal at the same time.

James Cappon was partly responsible, in a negative way, for Pierce's devotion to Canadian literature. C. H. Dickinson's *Lorne Pierce: A Profile*, 1965, begins with an anecdote. Pierce, in Cappon's senior English class in 1912, had asked Cappon whether he thought there was any great Canadian literature: Cappon answered by reciting part of Robert Service's "The Ballad of Blasphemous Bill" with its refrain of "It didn't matter a damn."^{130} Although Pierce clearly forgave him, there are frequent references in Pierce's correspondence to the failure of foreign professors to appreciate Canadian literature and to what he calls "the patronizing elegance of the Oxonian heads of English Depts."^{131} Cappon, who was known as a Roberts scholar since the 1905 publication of his monograph *Charles G. D. Roberts and the Influence of his Times*, had apparently committed himself to Garvin's project before Pierce approached him. With the help of the literary diplomacy of Pelham Edgar (who apparently undertook a similar shift of loyalties himself) he was able to arrange matters.^{132} Cappon knew very little about Roberts's life, and indeed thought Roberts had already died, which, as he, corrected, remarks, "gives an idea of how far he [Roberts] had dropped out of the Canadian eye."^{133} Pierce notes in his diary 9 November 1923 that he has agreed to do the biographical section for Cappon, and in an entry for 21 August 1924 he comments that it took weeks to gather the biographical material.
Some time in February 1925, Roberts lectured in Canada for the first time in seventeen years, and Pierce and his wife were there; naturally he made Roberts's acquaintance. Roberts was a disappointment to Pierce; in his diary for 19 September 1925, he comments:

I am sorry I have known him personally. As the "father" of Can. Lit. he has been raised to a pedestal. But he is so fleshy, so weak, profligate, sensuous that it is difficult to associate the man with the loveliness of his work.135

His diary also reveals that by early September 1925 he had already begun to bail Roberts and his family out of various financial difficulties. Pierce, perhaps to reflect his disillusion without alienating Roberts as a future Ryerson author quotes in the biographical section from an account of Roberts's life solicited from Robert Norwood, who had been a student of Roberts's at King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia:

Roberts, like Peter Pan, refused to grow up, and never would take the ethical world seriously. He had the dignity of a Puritan, but he lacked the Puritan's sense of personal responsibility to his world.136

The biographical section was sent to Roberts's son Lloyd for comment; his reply, 29 December 1923 says "I wonder however if you have not criticized much more that praised. Folks might wonder that you have given so much time to an author who shows so little true greatness. . . . The eulogy imposed upon our minor writers might cause restrained criticism to be misunderstood."137 There is something to this point, for Pierce is quite restrained, although usually when he says something especially critical he cites Cappon's 1905
work on Roberts. Whether Pierce's critical rigour here is caused by his awe of Cappon's stern example, or by his disapproval of Roberts's profligacy, is not clear—certainly he was able to write much more positively, even effusively, about Marjorie Pickthall, a lesser poet—perhaps because she was pure, feminine, and dead. Lloyd Roberts is right in wondering whether such rigour is consistent—in the context of Watson's sticky praise of Norwood, and Hale's of Crawford, Roberts is done a relative injustice.

Cappon's "Appreciation" bears a great deal of resemblance to his earlier Charles G. D. Roberts and the Influence of his Times which William Briggs had published in 1905; he frequently closely paraphrases himself, quotes many of the same excerpts from Roberts in both, and despite the twenty year interval between the publication of the two books, devotes almost no attention to the works Roberts wrote after 1903, when The Book of the Rose was published. Although Roberts published no more poetry until 1919, he did produce thirty-six books of fiction, mostly his famous animal stories, to which Cappon devotes only a little over two disparaging pages. The four pages that Pierce devotes to them in the biographical introduction are far more helpful and specific. William Arthur Deacon in Saturday Night, June 1925, waxes slightly sarcastic:

As Professor Cappon does not mention "New Poems" (1919) I am tempted to wonder whether he is acquainted with the volume, and, if not, what he would think of it if he were... That the anthology section contains no short story by Roberts is a serious blemish, the three
pages devoted to a descriptive passage from one of them being almost worse than none in its implications. 142

The perceptive Deacon also points to various discrepancies between the Biography and the Appreciation; Pierce had refused to sign the former, although Cappon had asked him to several times. 143 It could be argued that this volume served to bring Cappon's earlier, quite interesting volume again before the public.

Of the French series, only three volumes appeared, Henri d'Arles' (Henri Beaudé's) Louis Honoré Fréchette, which probably appeared in 1925, Gustave Lanctôt's François Xavier Garneau, and Louvigny de Montigny's Antoine Gérin Lajoie. Pierce's diary for 6 October 1925 reveals that the Garneau volume was then being set in type and that Gérin Lajoie "will probably be next."

The fourteenth title of the series, Victor Lauriston's Arthur Stringer, was brought out in 1941 as a co-publishing venture with Stringer's American publishers, Bobbs-Merrill. Grace Blackburn, according to the Allison review, "a newspaper friend" of Stringer's from London, Ontario, had completed a manuscript for the series earlier; it is still at Queen's. 144 It was forwarded to Stringer for comment. In a letter of 14 February 1924 to Lorne Pierce Stringer says that Bobbs-Merrill was "anxious to see if arrangements can't be made for an American edition of the 'Arthur Stringer' volume, primarily for promotion purposes." 145 Stringer found Blackburn's comment on the "Irish Poems" a "wee bit harsh." 146 The project fell through at that time, to be revived almost twenty years later.
Of the forty volumes described in the body of the prospectus, the first five are regional or "racial" surveys. Marius Barbeau was to write "Literary Backgrounds Indian" (completed 9 August 1924 according to Pierce's diary but not in the Queen's collection), Ray Palmer Baker "Literary Backgrounds The Maritime Provinces," (completed December 1928), W. S. Wallace, "Literary Backgrounds The West," and Victor Morin "Literary Backgrounds French-Canadian." The final title listed in the prospectus was a "Dictionary of Canadian Literature," to be compiled by Lorne Pierce, Victor Morin, and Thomas Guthrie Marquis. It was to give an "account of every writer of importance from the first settlement of Canada to the year 1924." The remaining thirty-four titles concerned individual writers. Many of these titles were completed and paid for, but never published. Typescripts of these are usually in the Edith and Lorne Pierce Canadiana Collection in the Douglas Library at Queen's. Others, although evidence in letters and diaries confirms that they were written, are not in this collection. Of the remainder there is no record to indicate that they were anything but proposals. Finished, and at Queen's, are Robert Stead's "Ralph Connor," Sir Andrew Macphail's "Norman Duncan," E. K. Broadus's "Charles Heavysege," John W. Garvin's "Charles Mair," Pierce's "Gilbert Parker," and Duncan Campbell Scott's "Archibald Lampman." Edgar's "Duncan Campbell Scott" is in his papers at the E. J. Pratt Library at Victoria College, University of Toronto. Barbeau's "Literary Backgrounds Indian" and Thomas O'Hagan's "Dean Harris" were completed, but neither is at Queen's.
Many of the others may have been finished, and might be found in their authors' papers. C. G. Sedgwick had agreed to write about Joseph Howe, R. H. Hathaway about Bliss Carman, Thomas Guthrie Marquis about William Wilfred Campbell, R. A. Wilson about George Frederick Cameron, Arthur L. Phelps about Robert W. Service, Margaret Lawrence about Albert Durrant Watson, Pierce about the Strickland sisters, Edgar about Marjorie Pickthall, Ethel T. Raymond about Pauline Johnson, Aegidius Fauteux about Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, Camille Roy about Étienne Parent, Pierre Dupuy about Octave Crémazie, and Seraphin Marion about Henri Raymond Casgrain.150 These ghostly titles are interesting as a proposed canon of Canadian literature. Several of the authors were professors at various universities across Canada, Wilson at Saskatchewan, Sedgwick at the University of British Columbia, Phelps at Wesley College, Winnipeg, and Edgar at the University of Toronto. Neither Sedgwick nor Wilson had ever written much about Canadian literature; the series may have had the merit of turning their thoughts in its direction.

To sum up; out of forty originally proposed titles, twenty-two were definitely written before the end of 1926; only twelve were published.

The project, started by Pierce with so much hope, foundered quickly. The decision to put the series on a subscription basis in early December 1923 was not necessarily taken as the result of poor sales; only Norwood had been published for any length of time. But some titles in any series like this are bound to sell
better than others, and subscription selling was the common way to market this kind of publication. Garvin planned to use this method to market "Master-Works of Canadian Literature," the prestigious "Makers of Canada" series produced by Morang between 1903 and 1916 had been sold this way as had Glasgow, Brook's "Canada and Its Provinces" (23 volumes) and "The Chronicles of Canada" (32 volumes). In a letter to William Arthur Deacon, December, 1923, Pierce announces a "radical change in our plans regarding the Makers of Canadian Literature series."\textsuperscript{151} Authors were to receive, presumably instead of royalties, a flat fee of $500. This fee seems extraordinarily high; at the normal royalty of 10% each title which sold at $1.50 would have to sell 3,333 copies before the publisher began to get a return. In 1926 Pierce planned to cut five titles, and in his diary 19 October, 1925 estimated the saving at $5,500. This indicates that each title, after the fee was paid, cost the publisher $600 to produce. A further 400 books would have to sell to cover this cost. Few Canadian titles of this type sold even 1,000 copies.\textsuperscript{152} Two contemporary McClelland and Stewart contracts show a great deal more conservatism. John D. Logan's and Donald French's contract with McClelland and Stewart for \textit{Highways of Canadian Literature} stated that 'the authors were to pay $1,000 towards the cost of production and were to receive a royalty of 10% and 50c a copy until the $1,000 was re-paid. 1,000 copies were printed in December 1924 and another 500 were printed in May 1925.'\textsuperscript{153} Ray Palmer Baker was offered for his \textit{Sam Slick} a $200 advance and 5c a copy.\textsuperscript{154} Five hundred dollars was a large incentive to write such a short work--authors were asked to write
biographies of 2500 words, and appreciations of 10,000 words; they were being paid 25¢ a word. Pierce himself was only earning $3,000 a year; Deacon was still paying reviewers for the Toronto Globe 1¢ a word in 1946. Perhaps Pierce felt that the more important writers would not work for less, but since many wrote for far less or nothing quite regularly, this seems to have been a mistake in judgment, but if it was, he did not make it alone. It seems safe to say that Ryerson was clearly doomed to lose money on the series from the start even if it had sold quite well; just as clearly some authors did not give value for money. Pierce certainly did not find the financial end of the production easy; on the last day of 1924 he writes in his diary that he hopes "time will obliterate memories of financial dealings with D. C. Scott, Pelham Edgar, R. J. C. Stead, Judge Riddell, J. D. Logan etc."

After the series was put on a subscription basis, Pierce lost no time in appointing Thomas Guthrie Marquis to the task of promoting and selling the series to his many contacts in the field of Canadian literature. Aggressive sales work is the key to subscription sales, as Pierce very well knew. In his diary entry for 20 June 1924, Pierce is enthusiastic about Marquis: "He knows more about Can. Lit. than any man in Canada and when I go to him for advice, as I frequently do, he is sane and solid. He is a splendid acquisition to my department." By 22 March 1925 the series was still not selling; Pierce has finished his work on Parker and comments in his diary "I have to file it away as I can see no immediate
prospect of any others going to press until the sales start up."

In May the final blow fell; Pierce records on the third that

Marquis was in Ottawa during the copyright discussions and either passed a Pierce letter to the Committee or wrote one himself which got into the report. Dr. Fallis wrote a "stinging letter" to the committee and another to Marquis saying that he had placed himself in an impossible position with the House. Of course M. resigned and that was that. . . . Naturally I was furious. It meant that the Makers was in the air, and if word got out that our promotion facilities were demoralised we could scarcely retrieve. . . .

Marquis refused to return, despite Pierce's several attempts at conciliation. By May 24, Pierce has apparently given up hope that any more of the series will be published, as he writes in his diary that he is hoping that his book on Parker will be "taken up by his publishers and produced abroad." In October there is one last flurry of activity. Pierce meets with Morin to arrange promotion for the French series—François Xavier Garneau and Antoine Gérin Lajoie are published shortly thereafter. On 19 November, 1925 Pierce records in his diary the "theft" by Cappon of one of his own manuscripts about Bliss Carman from John Garvin. (This presumably became Bliss Carman and the Literary Currents and Influences of his Time which Ryerson published in 1930.) In March 1926, Pierce apparently asks Marquis to return, again without success; the letterhead Marquis uses in his correspondence reveals he is working for another subscription series, "The Makers of Canada"; Oxford University Press had bought the plates from Morang and began reissuing and revising the series in 1926. Pierce concludes his entry for 22 March 1926: "We are letting the Makers rot
and not a move is being made."

That the Makers series failed because of poor sales should not be taken as evidence that it was especially badly done. Books like this sold slowly, and Ryerson appears to have over-extended itself on the series from the beginning. None of the books—except the Norwood volume—is obviously bad—several, the Leacock, Drummond, and Roberts volumes, are quite interesting and make good critical sense. Logan's Haliburton has been reprinted by Richard Davies in a collection On Thomas Haliburton, 1979, although some of the adjectives Davies uses to describe Logan's approach—racy, slashing, lively, readable, outrageous—show some qualification in his admiration. Davies does note that "Logan read widely to prepare his account."157 For a series that aimed at a popular audience and had few pretensions to the scholarly, the quality was quite high. Yet with the living authors, despite the stern handling Roberts received, there was bound to be a problem if the series had continued. Authors, their friends, and relatives were closely consulted during the writing of these books, and Pierce's general desire to promote Canadian literature, his desire to attract authors to the House, and his desire for co-publishing arrangements with the American and English publishers of the series' most popular subjects all meant that negative comments would not pass easily.

Sir Andrew Macphail's "Norman Duncan" was never published. His correspondence with Lorne Pierce concerning his work reveals a good deal about the kinds of pressure Pierce put on his writers. Macphail writes Pierce, 9 November 1923:

Norman Duncan has falsified the situation in Labrador;
he has grave defects of style. Do you, for example, want these things referred to—do you want a judgment of his work—or mere eulogy, as Watson has done for Norwood? 158

Macphail may well have talked to Dr. Grenfell (the supposed model for Dr. Luke of Labrador) as he proposed, and did talk to Duncan's brother. When the manuscript arrived, Lorne Pierce wrote Macphail somewhat unhappily:

Here we have an author, granted a MAKER, and yet upon laying down your book, the unanimous verdict would be that the man ought to be consigned to oblivion. That may be true regarding the majority of his books; but some of his books deserve at least a temporary immortality. [sic] Could you not re-cast part of your manuscript,—not to mention the criticism—which criticism is due—but to gather, if you can, the salient features of his strength. You may do so in such a way as to still confirm your seasoned opinion that on the whole, his virtues are overshadowed by his faults; but as it stands now, whatever mention you make of his virtues is so embedded in the fiercest kind of criticism that the whole work defeats our purpose. 159

Macphail agreed and rewrote: "The book is now exactly as you want it to be. I have rewritten an introduction of praise of the stories you reprint. I have mitigated all criticism without sophisticating the truth." 160 In a postscript he offers to modify the text further, if Pierce wishes. An examination of the two versions (both filed under Duncan, not Macphail in the Canadiana Collection) gives an idea of the kind of changes Macphail made. In the original version, for example, he wrote that Duncan lived outside Canada and normally did not write on Canadian themes; the original version continues: "He is not therefore entitled to the rights and privileges of Canadian authors: he may be estimated according to the
merit he displays in his works." The revised version comments "Choosing other than Canadian themes, he can not be judged merely by national standards." This seems to have been revised because the first version practically denies that Duncan was a Canadian at all, let alone a "Maker of Canadian Literature." It is a revelation that Macphail, editor of the respected University Magazine quite clearly believed that writers who chose Canadian themes should be judged on Canadian, rather than world standards. One also wonders about his lamb-like acquiescence to Pierce's demand to modify his criticism when most critics of his stature were constantly complaining about the uncritically eulogistic approach of lesser critics to Canadian literature. Pierce in 1943 attempted to exert a similar pressure on Brown over Brown's On Canadian Poetry, with far less success. The Brown Papers at the Public Archives of Canada are a good source of information about the professional relationship between the two men. In the letters from Duncan Campbell Scott which form the bulk of the collection are Scott's opinions of Pierce. Scott is quite often critical of Pierce's nationalist style: "The advance notice of the Sir Charles book [Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, by Elsie Pomeroy] sounds like our national criticism at its worst; L. P. has been one of the chief offenders..." But Scott softens another harsh patch with the comment that "I must not be hard on him or his firm; he is a charitable soul, without him Pelham and his schemes would be lost in Toronto." In the letters from Pierce concerning the first edition of On Canadian Poetry, it becomes clear that Pierce
tried to temper Brown's strict judgment. Pierce writes on 2 July 1943:

I took a slight editorial liberty with your addendum on Roberts, cutting out the "figurehead" allusion and a few words following. . . . To issue a book like this from our House and obviously with our editorial approval is bound to strain a number of my own personal friendships. I understand your attitude toward Roberts and Carman but I think they have achieved far more of what they set out to do than you admit.165

In a letter a week later, 9 July 1943, clearly in response to some argument from Brown, Pierce argues that these poets should first be acknowledged as having "succeeded in one major thing they attempted to do, that is to be Canadian above all and before all else. From that we can go on and cover the fair-ground fence with their hides."166 In an undated letter which concerned the revision of the 1943 edition, Pierce raises many issues that reflect the strong differences in the men's taste; Brown, although more reticent about his nationalism, shared Pierce's literary theory. Pierce begins the six foolscap pages of single-spaced typing by alluding to past differences:

You already know what my major inhibitions are so we need not repeat. . . . It strikes me that if you had read some authors you dismiss too casually with as much care and devotion as you do others you tend to idolize, you would correct to me what are real faults. . . . while a few saints no doubt were verminous and unwashed, in spite of that they did wear a nimbus. I think people are entitled to a glimpse of the halo!167

Here again Pierce's desire to make the best of a bad literature comes out. Pierce agrees with Brown's added point that "it is probable that, as Lampman supposed, a national crisis of supreme
intensity would call forth emotions of such a strength and purity as to issue in a significant expression in the arts, commenting: "Somehow we have yet to suffer as a whole people, suffer terribly, before we . . . have a common foundation for everything else" (p. 216). Pierce, typically, asks Brown to refer to French-Canadian poetry in the preface. Brown added the point, 169 Pierce disagrees with Brown's point that English-Canadian literature is fatally weakened by colonialism or puritanism—"there is scarcely a blob of either big enough to weigh in any work that rises above the level as art" (p. 216). This had no effect on Brown. Pierce also wanted Brown to add the point that "we have exiled our most fecund brains" and say that "to go home in art or letters you have to get rooted" (p. 217). Brown does make this point, as he notes in the margin of the letter. Pierce also tries to get Brown to consider Service, Drummond, Tom MacInnes, Wilson MacDonald, Francis Sherman and Canadian nonsense writers in a less dismissive way, and to mention Annie C. Dalton, Lyon Sherman, A. M. Stephen, and Audrey Alexandra Brown, remarking only half-facetiously, "These are names you should at least mention if for no other reason than to show you can spell them" (p. 217 and 219). Pierce was apparently not satisfied with the paragraph in the first edition which dealt quite kindly with several of these poets, but under the rubric "more conservative strains have been abundantly represented in the poetry of the past twenty years. . . ." Pierce also puts in a good word, again without success, for the best-sellers abroad, including E. W. Thompson, Peter McArthur, Pauline Johnson, and Marshall Saunders, and defends the older poets, wishing Brown had mentioned
Frederick George Scott instead of his son, F. R. Scott, "whose influence has been very slight" and later questioning Brown's use of a quotation from Lampman which says that Roberts had nothing to teach—"very little to teach if you will, but nothing?" (p. 219) The quotation stood. Pierce also argues against Brown's point that "regionalist art will fail because it stresses the superficial and the peculiar at the expense, at least, if not to the exclusion, of the fundamental and universal." Brown has difficulty in making it clear what a national art would be like. Pierce's point seems more plausible:

In the end regional art will not fail; it will be the only art. It will always be a discipline and a purgation, for it will always require an intensive knowledge and understanding, and that is always salutary and humbling. There was nothing wrong with Hardy or the rest, from Tom Jones down. It is not less regionalism but more life that we want. (p. 221)

Again Brown stood firm.

These are just two of the best examples of Pierce's moderating influence on critics—others survive in the correspondence. Yet, oddly, his taste as a critic seems much stricter than his taste as an editor. He was quite firm with Roberts in his Makers biography, and Frye praises Pierce's edition of Carman, The Selected Poems of Bliss Carman which McClelland and Stewart published in 1954: "We are grateful to Dr. Pierce for confining himself to the memorable work, ignoring the pseudo-Carman, with his stentorian hymns to the Great Beyond like 'Lord of My hearts elation,' which are usually
what get into anthologies." And it seems fair to say that his theory is as well-put and well-defended as any, but that his taste in its rather late leaning to the Romantic and Celtic twilight strain in Canadian literature went a little too far in its defence of poets and novelists who are now justly forgotten. There is absolutely no doubt that if it had not been for his nationalism many worthy works of literature and criticism never would have seen the light of day. And there is no doubt that Methodist and United Church Sunday School papers and hymnbook sales often subsidized Canadian literature. At the same time it also seems possible to argue that his Romantic tastes denied some modernist poets an early book, or chapbook publication with Ryerson. If the poets represented in the Ryerson chapbook series (1925-1962) are compared with those represented in the Canadian Poetry Magazine (1936-1968) it becomes clear that although the "sweet singers" were more than fairly represented in both, Canadian Poetry Magazine makes a genuine and earnest effort to include social and modernist poets, while the Ryerson series does not publish any of these poets until long after they have become well-known elsewhere.

Pierce writes in his diary 20 August 1925: "In launching my Poetry Chapbook Idea I have been looking about for someone to commence with, who would give the whole scheme standing and distinction." He found, naturally enough, the Father of Canadian poetry himself; Charles G. D. Roberts's The Sweet O' the Year and Other Poems was published in 1925. The chapbooks were very slight, eight pages, with a cover designed by J. E. H. MacDonald and re-
designed for number 99 by his son Thoreau. They were printed in editions of 250. Two hundred chapbooks in all were published. Of the ten poets represented in the next year, all were resolutely Romantic—T. G. Roberts, Lionel Stevenson, and Annie C. Dalton were the notable names. A representative title of the 1920s is W. V. Newson's *Waifs of the Mind*, 1927. Words and phrases favoured by the mystical school—like spring, sheeps fold, shepherds, vales, vagrants, wanderers, gypsy, swift feet, cockle shell and sandal shoon, fragments, tide, destiny, fantasy, fountains, magic, and cosmic recur in the titles, reflecting the influence of Carman and Hovey's "Vagabondia" poems and Marjorie Pickthall's biblical and classical pastoral idylls. Anne Marriott's *The Wind our Enemy*, published in 1939, seems to be one of the few "discoveries" of the series, although her work had appeared in the first issue of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* in 1936. Since one of the functions of a chapbook series is to give young and promising poets a chance to reach the public this is not an impressive record. Birney appears first not in a chapbook, but with *David and Other Poems* in 1942; A. J. M. Smith in 1943 with *News of the Phoenix*, and Dorothy Livesay in 1944 with her leftish *Day and Night*. (This last might seem daring if the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* had not published the title poem in 1936.) None of these books were chapbooks—all came out after the poets were accepted. And the record is made worse by the recognition that the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* was not the product of a wild-eyed cell of the avant-garde. It was supported in part by the members of the Canadian Authors' Association, al-
though the Authors resisted, kicking and screaming, E. J. Pratt's editorial attempts to drag them into the twentieth century. Despite the definite, not to say aggressive Romantic bias of the majority of "Canadian Authors" and the Romantic critical theory of Pratt, the magazine published Livesay, F. R. Scott, Leo Kennedy, and Robert Finch in the first issue to make it clear that not only modernist, but also social poetry would be accepted. Pratt writes in the second number to critical readers (attacking from all angles) that the "accepted policy of the magazine is towards the tolerant consideration of genuine poetic effort and against identity with any form of aesthetic whether old or new." 174 Although the number of modernist and social poems published after the first few issues dwindles somewhat (and then rises dramatically under Birney's controversial editorship between 1946 and 1948), the sweet singers do not ever win out completely. Yet no well-known modernist or social poet ever appeared in the Ryerson chapbooks before 1950 and it seems that Pierce's taste in poetry is to blame. E. K. Brown hints rather strongly at this in his "Letters in Canada" review for 1945; Brown discusses a poetry series begun by Northern Review, which produced works by Irving Layton, Miriam Waddington, and Patrick Anderson and goes on to comment that "Mr. A. M. Klein, Mr. F. R. Scott and Mr. A. J. M. Smith have joined with a number of younger writers to make of Montreal once more what it was in the late twenties and early thirties, the most adventurous experimental centre of Canadian poetry." 176 He applauds their group efforts to "make publication easier and more effective for them-
selves" and continues:

I have deplored more than once the late date at which so many Canadian poets publish their first collection of verse, Mr. Smith, for instance, at forty-one, and Mr. F. R. Scott at forty-six. Perhaps through the new series poets may begin to have that impact which verses in a magazine, or even in a chap-book, cannot provide before they pass thirty. Another reason for satisfaction in the existence of the new series is rather a reason for dissatisfaction concerning the general relation between poets and publishers in Canada at present. The five collections so far noticed have all come from one house, the Ryerson Press. . . . Wise as the decisions of the Ryerson Press have proved, it is exceedingly unhealthy that all poetry should come through the channel of one publisher.177

Pacey also makes an observation that supports the picture of Lorne Pierce's literary taste presented here:

We may observe in passing that criticism leads a life somewhat divorced from that of the creative literature of its time. Pierce, at a time when the trend in poetry was toward wit, scepticism, and social satire, and in fiction towards social realism of the Grove and Callaghan varieties, was still upholding the romantic nature poetry of Carman and Roberts, and the historical romance of William Kirby. . . .178

Yet Pierce did Canadian literature far more good than harm in the last analysis. When he arrived at Ryerson, Pierce already seems to have had a very clear personal programme designed to establish Canadian literature--in his own words--"as a national institution."

On 9 August 1924 he writes in his diary of the Lorne Pierce Medal, which he donated to the Royal Society of Canada and which was "to be awarded annually if possible to citizens of Canada who shall have accomplished in imaginative or critical literature some achievement of special significance and conspicuous merit":179
This award now completes the third part of my dream. A library of Can. Lit. set apart for research, an encyclopedia of Can. Lit. [the Makers series] for research as a national institution & a suitable award conducted by the highest academic society of Can. to foster the highest Lit. achievement. I have succeeded in having these dreams realized quite early in life. I hope that I shall live to see great fruits.

The "library" was the books and papers concerning Canadian literature he collected, partly for his own interest, and partly as a result of his work on the Makers series; he began donating this material to Queen's in 1924. This H. Pearson Gundy describes as "his great collection of Canadana in the university's Douglas Library" noting that "a catalogue of the manuscripts alone, published in 1946, ran to 164 pages." This collection is probably his greatest contribution apart from simply publishing Canadian literature. It is a scholarly resource that has scarcely been tapped. Pierce was right when he exulted in his diary 21 August 1924, "I am fortunate to be living when I am. In a few years most of our historic litteratti [sic] will have gone and the personalia will be increasingly harder to secure." A year later, 18 August 1925, he writes of the Kirby papers that he unearthed "I am having first chance at them and nothing of value will I pass up. ... Before the "Life and Letters" is finished I have to be able in some way to acquire all the literary papers for Queen's." On 20 August 1925 he wrote "I want the strongest list in Canada for while the other Depts. are building up for today, I feel that I am building for the future." And he was.

Pierce seemed quite aware of what was most needed to establish
Canadian literature—academic respectability—which explains why he gave the Lorne Pierce Medal to the Royal Society of Canada to administer, donated his papers to Queen's, and commissioned every academic critic who had ever manifested the faintest interest in the subject for the Makers of Canadian literature series. But academic respectability was difficult to get. An account of the gradual introduction of Canadian literature into the university curriculum is a good way of tracing the gradual rise of this respectability.

Long before even English literature had fully established itself over Classics at the core of the Arts curriculum, English-Canadian critics were calling for university support for the national literature. Roberts comments in 1883, "If Canadian universities suffer our literature to develop apart from their sympathy and guidance, will they not appear to despise their birthright? Should not the nation's intellectual life centre in her universities?" 182 John A. Cooper comments in 1894 that "our intellectual weakness lies undoubtedly in the fact that our schools and colleges pay so little attention to Canadian literature." 183 Thomas O'Hagan, probably thinking of Arnold's accession to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, complains in 1896 that "there are twelve or fifteen universities in Canada. How many of our most gifted poets hold chairs in them?" 184 In 1907, a columnist in The Canadian Magazine, commenting on Isabella Valancy Crawford's poor sales, writes:

Evidently what is needed is more attention to be given
to our Canadian writers in the schools and colleges. Why should the work of the classes in literature be confined to the English and American poets, and our own be neglected? It is time our educationists woke up to the fact that we have a literature well worthy of study. Perhaps that will come when more of the native-born begin to fill our professorial chairs.185

This raises another hot issue; whether professors of English in Canadian universities should be Canadian. Wilfred Campbell, who never shied away from such issues, confronts this one in "At the Mermaid Inn," 12 March 1892, as well as introducing the parallel problem of the "brain drain" to the United States:

It is a disgrace to Canada to say that our young men have to go over to the "much-abused neighbouring republic" to win recognition in the higher pursuits, while our universities are utterly callous in the matter. . . . And those who desire to build up Canada's future as an independent nation may see too late the folly of ignoring her rising men, while our universities are being stocked with old country professors and tutors who can have no real interest in or knowledge of our nationality and literature.186

Lampman produces, in the same column almost exactly a year later, a far more sensible proposal, and one which indeed seems to have been taken up later by professors like Edgar, Arthur Phelps, and Pratt, although not on the large scale proposed. Lampman begins his comments by noting that "it has been a common complaint in regard to courses in literature, not only in the universities of our own country, but in those of other lands as well, that they do not produce the effect upon the literary output of the people nor accomplish the great general advancement in culture that is expected of them".187 Universities were expected to stimulate the growth of culture and national literature, not necessarily by
teaching it, but by improving the tastes of the students. Lampman points out that the teaching is often dry and dull, and suggests that "courses of lectures in English literature might be arranged apart from the regular system—lectures which would be delivered by literary men, not connected professionally with the universities, but known to be specially gifted as critics and essayists." He suggests a kind of circuit for these lecturers and sufficient payment so they could "devote the best part of their time to this work." This system, Lampman feels, "would give an immense impetus to literature and the higher culture." There is some similarity between this scheme and two programmes of the Canada Council—one promoting poetry readings in Canadian universities by Canadian poets, and the other promoting writers in residence. Of course all these critics (many of whom were also writers) were well aware that to establish Canadian literature firmly in the university was to ensure respectability for Canadian literature and sales for Canadian writers. When a literature is studied regularly in high schools and universities, when it becomes the subject of a significant number of graduate courses and dissertations, when arts graduates feel obliged to pretend to have read at least some of it, then it has been thoroughly "institutionalized." The struggle to have Canadian Literature accepted into universities is only a recent stage of older and more general struggles (that went on in Great Britain and the United States as well) to have English Literature accepted as a separate academic discipline, to focus on literature as literature, rather than as language, and to place American and contemporary British literature
on the curriculum. In Great Britain, as in Canada, this switch was connected with nationalism and a desire to promote national unity. To promote the study of English and Anglo-Saxon, British critics made use of the argument that "the earlier appearances of the deepest and most serious characteristics of our race" were to be found "not in any Mediterranean books [i.e. the Classics] ... but in things written in this island...."\textsuperscript{191} Arguments used in British universities to promote the study of English literature over classical literature as a central humanist discipline were quickly transferred to the Canadian (and the American) situations. These arguments were successful, as the present firm entrenchment of English literature in the curricula of both American and Canadian universities shows. Canadian literature, however, although many of the arguments used to promote the study of English and American literature applied and apply equally well to it, is still in a weak position in the universities, even when compared to American literature. The struggle goes on still, as the discouraged inventory of the Commission on Canadian Studies, headed by T. H. B. Symons, \textit{To Know Ourselves}, shows.\textsuperscript{192} Although the debate on English might not at first glance seem directly connected to the debate on Canadian literature it was. A brief examination of the debate on the switch to the "new" English at the University of Toronto discovers three major figures in English in Canada--W. J. Alexander, appointed the first Professor of English Language and Literature there in 1889, Pelham Edgar, and Archibald MacMechan--all taking part. (Edgar and MacMechan were still undergraduates at the time.) The supporters of the liberal approach to
English generally supported Canadian literature, not necessarily as a subject to be taught at the university, but as something that should be inspired by an imaginative approach to other literature. Several professors who were not active in promoting a course in Canadian literature did encourage it by making it a subject of discussion at various clubs, or by writing about it in college publications. Undergraduates did not need to study Canadian literature—which was felt barely to exist then—their duty was to write it!

The "new" professors of English were very different from their predecessors, who were usually clergymen, and who often taught moral philosophy, history, or logic along with English. The new English professors could specialize in English in their teaching, although since the subject had been so recently given its independence, they themselves had usually received their doctorates in other subjects—usually Classics or Modern Languages. Their higher degrees were inevitably obtained abroad, since no graduate degrees (at least in the modern sense) were offered in Canada until 1890. The major difference between their outlook and that of the earlier professors was in their philosophy of English—they shared a viewpoint that turned it from the handmaiden of philology and the poor relation of the Classics to the core subject of the Arts curriculum. Before 1880, few Arts students took English for more than two years—within two decades in most universities it was compulsory in all years for Arts students, and students in the professional faculties and the sciences who might have preferred to do without had to take
it too. During the years between 1880 and 1919 English literature—with frequent references to Arnold—became the true key to culture and the centre of a liberal education.

The University of Toronto Varsity, launched as a literary magazine (it became a newspaper in 1907), leapt into the fray as soon as it first rolled off the press in 1880.\textsuperscript{194} The student editors began the attack against the German scholarship of their teachers, with its emphasis on philology and grammar; against the use of literary histories, instead of original texts; and against examinations that required only names, dates, and critical opinions gleaned from those literary histories, rather than any display of individual critical acumen. (They were aided by two men whose main concern was the reform of the high school curriculum, which at that time was quite strictly controlled by university requirements, John Seath, the Inspector of High Schools, and William Houston, the Legislative Librarian.\textsuperscript{195} After Alexander was hired, he became involved in the reform of the high school curriculum as well.) The Varsity editors also began to promote the inclusion of American and modern British literature on the course. The tone of the whole debate is set by this tart editorial comment: "We can scarcely speak here of the 'depression' of English, . . . for a subject cannot be depressed until it has first been elevated, and English never occupied any better position in Toronto University than it does just now."\textsuperscript{196} C. E. Phillip's "The Teaching of English in Ontario, 1880–1900" reveals the nature of the enemy quite well. Two favorite texts of the 1880s were W. Spaulding's The History of English Literature 1876 and G. L. Craik's English Language
and Literature, 1870.\textsuperscript{197} Both appeared in many subsequent editions. Spaulding was the text at McGill, Queen's and Acadia too.\textsuperscript{198} The stress in these works was on literature before 1750, especially on Old and Middle English. They rarely quoted from the authors they discussed. Students memorized names and dates, and on examinations produced critical opinions concerning works that they had never read. Pass students in Modern Languages at the University of Toronto were "virtually without any direct contact with an author's works until 1885, when they began to read a play of Shakespeare in their first year."\textsuperscript{199} Courses emphasized grammar, syntactical analysis (finding mistakes in Milton), and the history of the language. English was part of the Modern Languages department. This department's second-class status in the university was marked by the fact that, had Daniel Wilson not been the President of the University (he came to the University of Toronto in 1852 as Professor of English Literature and History), it would have had no representation on the College Council. There were no other professors in the Department, only lecturers. Another bone of contention was that when Wilson finally hired an assistant, Mr. D. R. Keys, in 1883, he had to teach not only English, but also Italian, and then Gothic.\textsuperscript{200} Pelham Edgar was a student before and after Alexander's appointment—here is his comment on what the English course was like before:

There was not much organization in the modern language courses of the first year [1887-88]. We got elementary instruction in French from Squair and Cameron, German from Van der Smissen, infrequent lectures on Shakespeare from Sir Daniel [Wilson], and a not too stimulating
course in English literature from D. R. Keys whom we were to encounter later in his proper field of Old and Middle English.

Archibald Lampman, writing in "At the Mermaid Inn" 18 March 1893, generalizing from memories of his days at Trinity College, University of Toronto (he graduated in 1882) produces a similar account:

The study of literature is carried on in many universities and higher institutions of learning in a very stilted and academic manner. The courses of instruction, including as they do grammar, philology, the study of the growth of modern languages, the history and analysis of literary masterpieces, conducted mostly in a spirit of barren ingenuity, produce scholars simply—too often pedants—rarely men of original energy or even of true literary taste. This is particularly so in universities like our own, whose endowment is not sufficient. . . . In the English courses one professor has usually to cover the whole ground, and in order that a man may be found properly equipped for the position from an academic point of view a sacrifice has generally to be made on the side of critical and artistic attainment.

By the 1880s, however, the Gradgrinders were beginning to be put on the defensive. "T. A. H." (probably Thomas Arnold Haultain), in his "Modern Editors of English Classics," parodies the methods of these scholars who, forced to edit Milton's lines "All heav'n / And happy constellations, on that hour / Shed their selectest in- fluence," would "probably tell you that 'heav'n' was a contraction for 'heaven' and that it would be found in any hymn book passim and that "'constellation' was spelt 'constellacioun' in Piers Plowman and the Confessio Amantis. . . ." Clearly this kind of critic, transferring the linguistic bias and methodology of the Classics
and Comparative Philology to English, was not going to satisfy students who, like Edgar, had been inspired by the Romantic poets in high school. Haultain comments: "This, you know, is like oxidising the diamond to prove it carbon, dissecting the body to discover the soul."204

In response to an editorial that complained about the bad lecturing in the Department, its low status, and its emphasis on literary history (and then came out in favour of more emphasis on Anglo-Saxon and philology), Archibald MacMechan struck one of the first blows for a liberalized English programme. In *Varsity* for 15 March 1884, his detailed critique of the Modern Language Department (where students took English along with German, French, Italian, Spanish, Ethnology, and History, as well as assorted smatterings of Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, and Old French) places the blame on the demands of examinations: "Lectures in literature are quite unnecessary for this reason: examinations require something very different. All the knowledge of literature they demand is to be gained in reading about books, not in reading the books themselves."206 In a second letter, he makes his ideas even clearer, doubting that philology, Old French, Provencal, and Anglo-Saxon were essential to the appreciation of literature, and suggesting the omission of history and ethnology from the course, the suppression of Craik, more attention to good writing in English, and examinations which "give more scope for a student's originality by requiring his views on particular periods, authors, or celebrated works."207 He winds up his argument by saying: "It is a
widely received opinion that there is in the study of literature as literature an education second to none.\textsuperscript{208} This "widely received opinion" was indeed behind many of the changes going on in English as a university subject. If it was to become relevant to life, rather than a purely scholarly discipline, changes had to be made. As a later \textit{Varsity} editorial bitterly remarked, "those who have graduated from Toronto University with any special enthusiasm for the study of English, cannot be said to have gained it from the education received in that department here."\textsuperscript{209} English professors of the old school "might perceive," another editorial pointed out "that there can be no hopeful education without an awakening of interest in the mind of the learner, and that this can only be done by placing him in close contact first with the living throbbing literature of his own day."\textsuperscript{210} MacMechan's comments inspired a long series of articles and editorials in the \textit{Varsity} about the Modern Languages Department, which lasted well after he had left for Johns Hopkins—indeed they lasted until Alexander was appointed. (Perhaps it was fitting that MacMechan should fill the post Alexander left at Dalhousie, the George Munro Chair of English Language and Literature. MacMechan's influence on the \textit{Varsity} was strong, and he made regular contributions even after his departure, under the \textit{nom-de-plume} 'Bohemian'.) These arguments for a more liberal approach to the teaching of literature were often linked with the idea that Canada's need for a literature required imaginative and inspiring instruction for those most likely to prove creative—the university students. An editorial of 7 March
1885 promotes the study of American literature in the university using a variant of this argument:

Longfellow and Whittier and Hawthorne and Holmes are household names among us, and yet, strange anomaly, they are entirely ignored in a curriculum which yet can find a place for "Gammer Gurton's Needle" and "Ralph Roister Doister." The inability or neglect which does not recognize literary merit unless it has been sanctioned by age and by English opinion is a foolish weakness in provincial intellectual character. . . . Let us . . . encourage the development of Canadian literary character by a proper appreciation of the literature most akin to it. 211

Clearly the argument that Canadian literature should be taught is only a small step from this one. In an editorial bemoaning the demise of The Canadian Monthly and National Review, (1872-82) a comment is made which perhaps explains the editor's reticence. Canada, they felt, did not yet have a literature. The Week, because it printed more criticism than literature, was a poor replacement for The Canadian Monthly and National Review. Since "it is creation and not criticism that is necessary if we are ever to have a national literature," an appeal was made to some person with "aims far . . . above the common level" to found a magazine which would encourage creative work. 212 The Varsity itself frequently published Charles G. D. Roberts, Archibald Lampman, Wilfred Campbell and Ethelwyn Wetherald, as well as student writers like the ubiquitous "Bohemian," and often printed critical articles on Canadian literature or literary questions as well. In November 1888, just below the comment that "If there is any one object for which a university should exist,
it is the cultivation of literature and literary tastes" comes the good news that the City of Toronto had granted $3,000 to found a chair of English Language and Littérature. 213 Varsity did not rest on its laurels, but quickly moved to the next issue, "The Claims of Nationality," arguing that, all other things being equal, the new professor of English should be Canadian. The editors' notions of what he should be like were laid out quite precisely:

The business of a Professor of English and English Literature in a Canadian University must be not mainly the mechanical dissection of word and sentence and paragraph in the works of our great authors; not mainly the dull drilling of wearied students in the facts of literary history, but the cultivation in the minds of the undergraduates of that taste for literature which we so sadly lack, and of an intelligent appreciation of the best work of the best English men of letters, and, finally and chiefly, the fostering of true and high literary aspirations which will display themselves in the after-work of the students themselves. 214

Significantly, they did not put these ideas forward as part of the argument for better teaching, or for more relevant literature, but because they felt that the new professor had a vital role to play in the promotion of Canadian literature, by teaching the best models of English literature. After briefly conceding that a British or American professor of sufficient neutrality could possibly do this, they argued that a Canadian would have the advantage "from the very circumstances of his life, from long intercourse with Canadians of all classes . . . because he has learned to appreciate more fully that Canadian feeling which is, moreover, his own by right of birth." 215

(Note the familiar Romantic nationalist clichés.) The whole foundation of their argument was their desire for the creation of a Canad-
ian literature. A clipping in Alexander's file in the University of Toronto Archives reveals that some felt that the new professor should not only be a Canadian, but also a graduate of the University of Toronto. (Alexander received his degrees at the University of London, and Johns Hopkins, and did some post-doctoral work at the University of Berlin.) Since the graduate programme at the university only began in earnest around the turn of the century, this demand seems excessively parochial. The tone of the comment perhaps reveals the nature of the controversy over the appointment, which was debated publicly and hotly: "The disagreeable dilemma that ... must force itself upon the attention of Toronto University men, is that either the university has failed to produce a man qualified to fill this Chair, or that the qualifications of its graduates are, owing to some sinister influence, ignored." In the issue of 17 November 1888 a letter from A. Stevenson argues that Canadian literature is ready for a creative breakthrough, and that there is a "new impulse and desire among many young Canadians to mould this material [nature, romantic historical material, etc.] into adequate literary forms, strong and beautiful. This aspiration it is plainly the highest duty of our provincial university to foster and direct." Even after Alexander had been chosen, a Canadian as Varsity had wished, the editors were still proffering advice. Just beneath the announcement of his appointment in the Varsity of 2 February 1889 came the first item of advice from his students. They wanted modern writers. They wanted them again on 16 March 1889. In a letter "Modern Authors in the English Course," on 23 March 1889, Pelham Edgar hammers the
point home:

Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley are not considered too modern for a denial of admittance to the Fourth Year literature. These great names unjustly, though brilliantly, end the chronological list of poets. The names of immortal contemporaries are not as yet, by virtue of their bearers' respective and obliging demises, rendered sufficiently holy for consideration.218

On 6 April 1889, Alexander came to deliver his first lecture to the expectant throngs. He lectured on Browning, who was still, although just barely, a living poet. Browning's "obscurity" was still a stumbling block for many, including the student reporter of the event, whose tone indicates that judgment on the new professor was reserved.219 Later Alexander delivered his formal inaugural address at the University of Toronto on 12 October 1889.220 The Varsity editors, who doubtless attended in a body, must have been pleased. In his general statement on how literature should be taught, Alexander managed to come up to their standards without entirely capitulating to their demands. History remained an important part of the honours English programme, for example, not only through Alexander's reign, but until 1937. Under him, however, students got more English, and they read more: "Even pass students read six plays by Shakespeare and six essays by different authors in their first year."221 They also were taught it differently.

In Alexander's inaugural address at Dalhousie, where he held the George Munro Chair of English Language and Literature from 1884 to 1889, he makes his liberal humanist position plain. The student of literature, unlike the science student, deals with emotions,
rather than with facts, with men, rather than with objects.

Emotion and sympathy are necessary for understanding. The student who learns to use this sympathy while retaining his "coolness and impartiality" is better fitted to understand "the burning questions of the day."\(^{222}\) Because, finally, the study of literature is meant to produce cultivated men who can deal with the present issues, and because the love of books and literary taste develop first from reading one's own literature, he closes this address with a remark of Thomas Huxley's: "If an Englishman cannot get literary culture out of his Bible, his Shakespeare, his Milton, neither will the profoundest study of Homer and Sophocles, Vergil and Horace, give it to him."\(^ {223}\) (This statement, of course, did not mean that Canadians could acquire literary culture by reading Canadian literature.) No longer would English be inferior to the Classics, and no longer would the moderns be ignored.

In his Toronto address, Alexander emphasizes the need for the student to begin with the literature rather than the historians or the critics.\(^{224}\) He is against "excessive explanation of phrases and allusions." (p.26). (One wonders how close to the mark Haultain's parody was.) After conceding the merits of the Classics (which he was well qualified to do, having taken his doctorate in Classics at Johns Hopkins), he argues that modern literatures are "much more quickly and easily accessible, and come nearer to us in thought and feeling." (p.33). Again he emphasizes the importance of emotion: "The highest manifestations of human nature are emotional. Emotion raises morality to religion." (p. 17).
For Alexander, the final purpose of literary training was
to broaden the student's mind and to increase his intellectual
sympathy. Both Arnold and the editors of *Varsity* are in agree-
ment with every word. As A. S. P. Woodhouse puts it, Alexander
"is true to the best tradition of English Romanticism."²²⁵

Alexander had a strong influence on his students—and they,
like Pelham Edgar and E. K. Brown—often proved influential in
their turn. Their willingness to take the contemporary seriously,
despite the critical difficulties this often caused, was one
major result of his example. He frequently drew crowds of over
1,000 to Convocation Hall to hear him give one of what the
President's *Report* describes as "the popular course of Saturday
afternoon lectures." A mistrust of over-explanation made Alexander's
lectures a poetry reading as much as a discourse. Indeed, the new
breed of liberal English professor as a whole generally allowed
English to speak for itself—Stephen Potter's description of Walter
Releigh's technique is quite similar to Woodhouse's of Alexander's,
Frye's of Edgar's and G. G. Sedgwick's of MacMechan's. Woodhouse
writes:

One will not soon forget the hushed attention of the
mixed audience that crowded the lecture theatre to
hear him expound Browning or read Rossetti's "Sister
Helen." It is not easy to explain the secret of that
amazing success. He was not a spectacular lecturer:
he disdained the tricks of the trade, and emotionalism
withered in his presence. But the combination of
critical ability of a very high order, a unique capa-
city for cogent exposition, and skill in interpretative
reading, free from every hint of the elocutionist's
art, proved irresistible.²²⁷
Much of what these men wrote was written to be read aloud, and if it seems a little thin now, it is not only because the ideas, fresh, even radical then, are now stale, but also because they required that impressive delivery. It is not surprising that Alexander and his peers read poetry well since one of their main objects was to arouse an emotional and imaginative response to poetry.

Alexander, however much he was in favour of teaching the familiar and the modern, was not in favour of teaching Canadian literature in the university. He preferred to encourage it in the classroom mainly by inspiring his students with "the best that was thought and said" in English literature. Outside the classroom, he did promote it, although not as actively as some. Varsity reports that he chaired a meeting of the Modern Languages Club as early as 9 February 1892, where he also gave a brief address on the requirements of a national literature, commenting on Roberts, Mair, MacMechan, and Lampman. Not unexpectedly, John D. Logan the self-appointed champion of "the Cause of Canadian literature" asked why he did not include Canadian literature on courses, although he included American literature, and, according to Logan Alexander's reply was the "Canadian literature lacks too much in substance to admit it into the general survey of English literature. Some of it is pretty, but most of it lacks substance, the great body of it is not genuine literature."

When a Toronto Star reporter tackled him on the same issue in 1920 Alexander pointed to the Canadian poems by Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, Pickthall and John McCrae in his new edition of the university English text, Representative Poetry Selected and Annotated for
Class Work in the University of Toronto (3rd ed. rev. and enl. intro. W. J. A. 1916. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1920).\(^{230}\) (It contained 19 poems by Canadians in all, ten by Lampman, five by Scott, three by Pickthall, and one, "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae.) This was enough, apparently, to get the reporter out of his office. As late as 1943, he was still expressing his opinion that "Canada had not produced any lasting literature."\(^{231}\)

Alexander's high standards, which prevented his inclusion of much Canadian literature in the curriculum, did not prevent him from encouraging Canadian writers, however. Frederick Philip Grove said that he coveted the applause of only two people in Canada—Alexander was one of them. Alexander constantly praised and supported Grove.\(^{232}\) Grove's letters to Alexander reveal the importance he attached to Alexander's criticism, and that it often caused him to revise his work.\(^{233}\) Alexander was not above providing even more practical help—he and E. K. Brown solicited subscriptions for Two Generations, 1939, which the depression made impossible to publish commercially, and Brown put A Search for America on the book list for "a small special literature class."\(^{234}\) It is not surprising that Grove dedicated The Master of the Mill to Alexander.

Despite these "unofficial" promotional activities, Alexander's statements that Canadian literature did not exist, coming from a man of such central importance in the Canadian literary institution, must have had a discouraging effect on those who felt that a secure
institutional framework would give it the status and prestige necessary for its development, and confirmed those who agreed with him in their prejudices.

Canadian literature was not put officially on the curriculum at the University of Toronto until 1934-35, when it appeared as six lectures at the end of the American literature course, but it gained ground much faster elsewhere. Seven universities added Canadian literature to their curricula in the 1920s, a period of intense nationalism. Desmond Pacey notes Canadian Literature's early debut at Macdonald Institute, an affiliate of the Ontario Agriculture College, in 1906-07. It was taught by J. B. Reynolds, who later became President of the College.

At McGill University, the Molson Chair of English was founded in 1856; the first incumbent was the Reverend Canon Leach, LL.D. His course was quite traditional, very similar to the University of Toronto course in the 1870s. But by 1907-08, Susan E. Cameron, M.A. (later Susan Vaughan), had begun teaching an honours course, "American and Canadian literature, a historical and critical outline of English literature in the New World." Although Cameron, who advanced to Assistant Professor in English and Warden of Royal Victoria College, did not teach the course after 1919, it survived, taught by Cyrus Macmillan (Ph.D. Harvard) and G. W. Latham (B.A. Harvard). It was reduced to a half class in 1923-24, and taught three hours a week instead of two. Like many of McGill's English classes, it was not taught every year. A. M. Klein was a visiting lecturer for two years between 1946 and 1948. (The course was not
offered in 1948.) Arthur Phelps arrived in 1948-49 and apparently instituted a complete half-class on Canadian literature in 1948-49. This became a full course in 1951-52. It appears to have taken a historical approach, examining American and British influences, as well as that of "the Canadian environment."

In December 1915, John Daniel Logan (B.A., M.A. Dalhousie, Ph.D. Harvard) gave what he thought to be the first intra-mural lecture series in Canadian literature at a Canadian university while in training to go overseas with the 85th Highland Regiment. He, in his typically modest way, states: "I was the obscure individual selected by Dr. Cutten, then president of Acadia (1915) to deliver the first series of lectures on the Literary History and the Literature of Canada."237 (One has to take the claim of being "first" in anything with a grain of salt, obviously.) On his return from overseas, he was listed in the calendar for 1919-20 as Instructor in Oratory and Special Lecturer in Canadian Literature. Vernon Rhodenizer, (B.A. Manitoba, M.A., Ph.D. Harvard) became professor of English Language and Literature at the same time; Logan lectured and Rhodenizer "conducted the class work and the collateral reading. . . ."238 This was a half course, offered, in alternate years, to second and third year students. Logan mentions a parallel half-course in French Canadian literature, but this does not show up in the calendars. The first course description reads: "The History of Canadian Literature: A general study of the literature of Canada and its relation to English and American literature."239 Hot off the press just in time for the 1924 course
was Logan's own *Highways of Canadian Literature* co-authored by Douglas French and subtitled *A Synoptic Introduction to the Literary History of Canada (English) from 1760-1924*. Listed as outside reading for the course that year was Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush*, 1852, John Richardson's *Wacousta*, 1832, Rosanna Leprohon's *Antoinette de Mirecourt*, 1864, William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*, 1877, Gilbert Parker's *The Right of Way*, 1901, any volume of animal stories by Charles G. D. Roberts, and one novel each by Ralph Connor, Basil King, L. M. Montgomery, Grace McLeod Rogers, Marshall Saunders, and Arthur Stringer. Students were also to read either Wilfred Campbell's *Mordred*, 1895, or his *D'Aulac*, 1908, Charles Mair's *Tecumseh*, 1886, and one poetic drama by Robert Norwood. Logan left in 1926 for the University of Marquette, Milwaukee. (He became Head of English there in 1927 and died in 1929.) In 1926-27, the *Complete Poems* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1926) of William Henry Drummond were added, and John W. Garvin's *Canadian Poets* (1916; new rev. ed. Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1926), in 1927-28. In 1928-29 Lorne Pierce's *An Outline of Canadian Literature: French and English* (Montreal, Louis Carrier, 1927) was substituted for Logan's *Highways*. The course outline in 1928-29 is different in a few more respects—Marjorie Pickthall's *The Woodcarver's Wife and Later Poems* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1922), and E. K. Broadus's *A Book of Canadian Prose and Verse* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1923) were added. The description in the calendar for 1930-31 is revamped—this is Rhodenizer's course. The texts remain the same—Pierce, Drummond, Garvin, and Broadus—but the outside reading has changed somewhat:
William Roy Mackenzie's Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P. 1928), has been added, as well as Ray Palmer Baker's edition of Thomas Chandler Hamilton, Sam Slick (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923). Parker's The Seats of the Mighty, 1896, is substituted for his The Right of Way, and novels by "Marian Keith," (Mary Esther MacGregor), Robert Stead and Harwood Steele are added to the outside reading, as well as Merrill Denison's play, The Unheroic North (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923), One-Act Plays by Canadian Authors, and Raymond Knister's Canadian Short Stories, (Toronto: Macmillan 1928). In 1931-32, Rhodenizer's own text, A Handbook of Canadian Literature (Ottawa: Graphic, 1930) supplanted Pierce. The course did not change much between 1932 and 1954, when Rhodenizer retired. In 1931 Rhodenizer pointed out at a meeting of the Canadian Authors' Association that the regular course in Canadian Literature at Acadia had at times over sixty students registered.  

Logan, MacMehan, Pierce, and Rhodenizer all wrote books with the direct intention that they should be used on courses. Obviously Logan and Rhodenizer wrote for this course at Acadia; MacMehan wrote Head-Waters for his course at Dalhousie; Pierce begins his foreword to An Outline of Canadian Literature, 1927, in a way that leaves his intentions in no doubt: "Until recently, Canada enjoyed the unenviable distinction of being the only civilized country in the world where the study of its own literature was not made compulsory in the schools and colleges." Ray Palmer Baker writes Lorne Pierce in 1924 that "though my History of English-Canadian
Literature was not intended as a text, and is not suitable for one, it has been used as such in Acadia University, Queen's University, the University of Western Ontario, the University of Manitoba, etc.\textsuperscript{243} The plodding historical approach of these textbook reveals not only what was taught in these courses, but how it was taught.

John D. Logan is certainly far more interesting for his propaganda activities on behalf of Canadian literature in the university than for the ideas expressed in any of his critical works. He firmly believed that "the literature of a country is the people's literature, and the people have a right to say to their Universities and Professors of Literature that the history and appreciation of their native literature shall be taught them and their children, and future generations."\textsuperscript{244} He was a central figure in the history of Canadian Literature at both Dalhousie and Acadia, if a man as eccentric as Logan can be so designated. He may well have hounded Archibald MacMechan, (B.A., Toronto, M.A., Ph.D. Johns Hopkins), who held the Chair in English at Dalhousie, into instituting a course in Canadian literature sooner than he otherwise might have, although according to a letter written to the indignant Logan from the Secretary of the Dalhousie Senate in 1921, "Dr. MacMechan has had such a course in contemplation for some time, and its initiation at an early date . . . is confidently expected."\textsuperscript{245} MacMechan was Logan's main enemy, but along with him in what Logan labels the "Academic or Dilettante School of Criticism" are lumped James Cappon, W. J. Alexander, Pelham Edgar, Andrew Macphail, and Thomas
Arnold Haultain; he has a few kind things to say about Edgar and Cappon. The whole controversy is laid out, and, I suspect, created in Logan's Dalhousie University and Canadian Literature, 1922, which contains his letters on the subject of the need for a Canadian literature course at Dalhousie to the President of the Alumni Association, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors, and various official replies to him. He mailed copies to all concerned, and some not—to other universities, and to the Press. The main thrust of his attack was for Canadian literature and against MacMehan. Although before launching the attack on MacMehan, he engaged in "sincere prayer in the sanctuary that I should be single-minded for the Cause" he may have fancied himself as a special lecturer at Dalhousie. He lists, in curriculum vitae fashion the qualifications which give him the "indubitable right to be a champion . . . of the Cause of Canadian Literature." The appended letter to G. S. Campbell, the Chairman of the Board of Governors, gives, helpfully, several sample course outlines.

The tone of this unusual document is conveyed in his ironic question (reminiscent of Joxer Daley): "How can Dr. MacMehan conclude that he knows widely and intimately the history of Canadian literature, and is thus competent to teach it with authority, if he does not know that his own darling "works" are literature, and that thus Canada has, pro tanto, a literature." (Italics and punctuation are Logan's. Private printing gave him the chance to use capitals, italics, and varied type styles for greater, and funnier, rhetorical effect.) He invites his audience to conclude with him that
"Dr. MacMechan, so far as the history of Canadian literature is concerned, does not know what he is talking about, and . . . if Dalhousie ever offers a course in Canadian literature, Dr. MacMechan has neither the real and intimate knowledge nor the critical acumen, nor even the fine good sense, which is the basis of critical taste, to conduct such a Course. . . ." 250 M. G. Parks, in his introduction to a reprint of Archibald MacMechan's Head-Waters of Canadian Literature comments on MacMechan's receipt of this document: "Though MacMechan notes in his journal for November 20, 1922, that he will not bother to read 'Logan's long diatribe' which he has just received in the mail, one wonders if it prodded him to institute his course in the following academic year." 251 He also reveals that Logan was able to convince McClelland and Stewart to delay publication of MacMechan's book until Logan's had been out six months.

Despite, or because of, Logan's strictures, MacMechan did teach Canadian Literature at Dalhousie, a full course beginning in 1923-24, "Literary Movements in Canada." It included French-Canadian novels in French, and MacMechan's own Head-Waters of Canadian Literature, as soon as it came out in 1924, was put on the course. Parks comments:

MacMechan's was no mere token course with a handful of students. The enrolment was sixteen in 1923-24 and thirty-eight in 1924-25--respectable figures for the times in a new and elective course which required a reading knowledge of French. 252 / .

Between the appearance of Acadia's course in 1919-20 and Dalhousie's in 1923-24, courses also were introduced at the
University of Manitoba in 1919-20 and at Queen's in 1921-22.

At the University of Manitoba, the first Professor of English, Alexander W. Crawford, (M.A. Toronto, Ph.D. Cornell) who had been appointed in 1910, introduced "Contemporary and Canadian Poets" to fourth-year English majors in 1919-20. This initiative may have been inspired by the attendance of Crawford and Douglas Leader Durkin, the other member of the English Department, at a meeting of the Canadian Literature Club, apparently in late 1917. At that time they told the president of the club, Donald French, that they were interested in setting up a branch of the club in Winnipeg and in placing some Canadian literature on one of the English courses. 253 About half the course appears to have been devoted to Canadian writing, emphasizing, out of Wilfred Campbell's Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, 1913, the poets Charles Sangster, Charles Mair, Isabella Valancy Crawford, William Henry Drummond, Charles G. D. Roberts, Wilfred Campbell, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, and Pauline Johnson. In 1921-22, Baker's A History of English Canadian Literature to the Confederation was added. That year the course was taught by William T. Allison, who had just moved from Wesley College, Winnipeg. 254

James Cappon (B.A., M.A. Glasgow), was the first Professor of English Language and Literature at Queen's, appointed in 1858 and retired in 1919. Cappon won the post over two notable Canadian competitors, Archibald MacMahan, and Charles G. D. Roberts. 255 One wonders if Cappon's early Roberts and the Influence of his Times, 1905, was an attempt to soothe the bruised nationalist feelings. Certainly if the students and populace at Kingston were as vigilant
as those at Toronto on the matter of "native" appointments, he could well have felt the necessity to demonstrate an interest in things Canadian. But this interest did not extend to putting much Canadian literature on courses, as the complaints of Lorne Pierce reveal. With Cappon, as with Alexander, the influence of Arnold was strong—since most of Canadian literature was not the best that had been thought and said, perhaps it is not surprising that he did not teach much of it. In 1915-16, however, some Canadian poetry—Lampman, Roberts, and Drummond—was added to a course in nineteenth-century literature. Cappon's book was required reading. In the hiatus between the retirement of Cappon and the coming of George Herbert Clarke (M.A., D.Litt. McMaster) in 1926, a half class in Canadian and American literature was introduced, presumably by John Ford MacDonald (M.A. Queen's) who was acting head from 1920 to 1921. Taught three hours a week, it was "a rapid survey of the colonial period and a somewhat more careful study of the important writers in the United States since the revolution." The works of about twenty Canadian writers were surveyed. The course does not appear in the next year's calendar, 1922-23, at all, when Thomas Seccombe (M.A. Oxon) was head, but in 1924, with the advent of B. K. Sandwell (B.A. Toronto), who stayed only two years, the course revives, with three Canadian authors—Howe, Haliburton and Carman—and two texts, Baker's History and Broadus' anthology. In 1926, when Clarke replaced Sandwell, the Canadian content was reduced—the course description lists many American poets and then refers somewhat abruptly to "the chief
Canadian poets." In the 1928-29 calendar, although the course was not given until 1929-30, a new half-class completely on Canadian literature is described with Baker's History, MacMechan's Head-Waters, Knister's Canadian Short Stories, Broadus's A Book of Canadian Prose and Verse, and Nathaniel Benson's Modern Canadian Poets (Ottawa: Graphic, 1930) as prescribed texts. In 1936 an honours course is offered in American and Canadian literature.

At the University of British Columbia, where G. G. Sedgewick (B.A., Dalhousie, Ph.D. Harvard), appointed 1920, was the first Professor of English literature, a course was introduced in 1925-26 called "American literature: a survey of the principal writers of the continent during the nineteenth century." Broadus was the text. The course was taught by Frank H. Wilcox, (A.B., Ph.D., Calif.). Significantly, Sedgewick had been taught at Dalhousie by MacMechan, although obviously before the Canadian literature course was started there.

Bishop's University appointed F. O. Call (M.A. Bishop's) as its first professor of English literature in 1908. In 1924-25, "Studies in Canadian Literature" was listed as part of the general second year course. John Garvin's Canadian Poets, 1926, was the text. In 1931-32 this work became part of the honours option, and in 1933-34, a course called "American and Canadian literature" was begun. Call was a "present-day" Canadian writer himself, and in the preface to his book of poems Acanthus and Wild Grape, 1920, he "took up the cudgels in the cause of free verse. . . ." It seems a long way from philology.

Mount Allison, where the first professor of English was W.
Morley Tweedie, (M.A., London), appointed in 1923-24, began a purely Canadian half-class in 1928-29: "A general study of the literature of Canada, both English and French." The course was taught by W. Clifford Martin. The texts were Garvin's Canadian Poets, 1926, Campbell's Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, 1913, and, as outside reading, Thomas Chandler Haliburton's Sam Slick edited by Ray Palmer Baker, 1923; John Richardson's Wacousta, 1832; Marjorie Pickthall's Angels' Shoes, 1923; Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty, 1896; Louis Hémon's Maria Chapdelaine, 1916; and poetry by Crawford, Lampman, Roberts, Scott and Pickthall. In 1931-32 the French section of the course was dropped.

The University of Western Ontario, whose first professor of English Language and Literature was William Ferguson Tamblyn (B.A., Ph.D. Columbia), introduced a full course, also first announced in 1928-29: "Canadian Literature: a study of Canadian prose and poetry before and since Confederation." The course was optional for students in their third or fourth years and used the anthologies of Broadus, Campbell, and Garvin, as well as Lionel Stevenson's Appraisals of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926) and Baker's A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation, 1920.

Canadian literature was first taught at the University of Toronto in 1934-35 (announced in the 1933-34 calendar) as what Northrop Frye describes as "a very miscellaneous conclusion to a course on American literature which was introduced by E. K. Brown
into the fourth year and subsequently transferred to the first year."²⁶⁴ According to James R. MacGillivray, who took over the course from Brown when Brown went to the University of Manitoba in 1935, a major revision of degree requirements and the splitting of the English and History degree made space for the addition of three new courses, including American and Canadian Literature.²⁶⁵ During the 1920s the university had stood firm against the modest agitation against what was seen as its elitist and insufficiently national outlook. The Toronto Star comments 9 November 1920:

"The controversy as to whether the University of Toronto is sufficiently democratic and sufficiently Canadian is now narrowing to a question as to whether Canadian literature should or should not be included as a separate subject in the curriculum."²⁶⁶ The relatively large size of the University of Toronto compared to the other Canadian universities, as well as its greater prestige and influence, made it a natural target for those nationalists who wanted Canadian literature to become widely accepted as a serious subject in the schools. In fact, there is some evidence that it was taught on an unofficial basis in some faculties, as well as in snatches by professors like Edgar and Pratt who had a personal interest in it.²⁶⁷ For several years the Canadian Authors' Association had been pointing out that "the University has been notorious for its neglect of the production of Canadian authors and poets."²⁶⁸ A. T. DeLury, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Toronto, spoke to the Association in 1931, and commented that "conscious efforts in a university to create poets were foredoomed to failure."²⁶⁹ (Note the concern is still with producing Canadian writers, rather than
Canadian critics.) Vernon Rhodenizer disagreed with DeLury, pointed out the popularity of Canadian Literature at Acadia, and noted that there were many similar courses elsewhere. Rhodenizer adds that "the Canadian Authors' Association might do good work by seeing whether the subject as thus announced in university calendars was getting fair treatment," This statement might seem excessively paranoid, but several writers have commented on the frequent failure of courses that taught both American and Canadian literature to do justice to the latter. Dave Godfrey, in his Dark Must Yield, 1978, writes that "the advantage of Trinity [College, University of Toronto] was that [Gordon] Roper always managed to get to [the Canadian literature] while at many of the other colleges they somehow didn't manage to." Rudy Wiebe describes a similar course taught at the University of Alberta in the late 1950s, where the "course 'Literature of the North American Continent' had a final two weeks devoted to Canadian writing, if the professor got through the United States stuff before the end of term, which was unlikely." Wiebe did not take the course, but he did read Frederick Philip Grove's Over Prairie Trails because it was on the book list and he was curious—an example of how the mere existence of a course, long or short, good or bad, can have a good impact. Obviously, it cannot be concluded that simply because a course that included from two to six weeks of Canadian literature was listed in the calendar that much or any Canadian literature was taught. (A half class in Canadian literature did ensure it.) Nonetheless, the institutional structure was there, which was a beginning.
At the University of Toronto, it is difficult to be sure who, apart from E. K. Brown, taught the first courses. Kenneth MacLean taught it at Victoria College, and James MacGillivray replaced Brown at University College when Brown went to Manitoba. Pacey says that Norman Endicott was one of the first at University College as well.

Some of Brown's lectures for this course survive. In an introductory lecture dated 1938, he comments that the value of the course is that it presents a "significant literary phenomenon"—"How a national literature comes into being, how it changes with the changes in the national life, and how it reaches full maturity." Of the Canadian literature segment of the course, which filled six lectures at the end he comments:

We shall deal with some general problems, with the poetry of nature as practiced by Carman, Lampman, Scott and Roberts, with the rise of the new poetry through Pratt and the young men from Montreal, and with the rise of a fiction through Grove to Callaghan.

This course covers many of the authors still considered central, and, in dealing with "the young men from Montreal" in 1938 was far in advance of most of the other courses of its kind in its consideration of modernism. Brown concluded this comment by pointing out that students of Canadian literature "are handicapped by the absence of a good literary history, a good anthology, and good critical studies." A lecture that may be one of the six compares American and Canadian literature, attempting, among other things, to account for "Canadian literary sterility." Much of the material for these lectures doubtless appears in revised form.
in Brown's *On Canadian Poetry*, 1943, rev. ed. 1944. Indeed, the first section of this book is clearly concerned with the problem of Canadian literary sterility.

The University of Toronto was not the last university in Canada to place Canadian literature on its curriculum. After 18 years at Wesley College, Winnipeg, Watson Kirkconnell became head of the English Department at McMaster University in 1941-42 and added Canadian literature to a half course called "Contemporary Literature" which discussed British drama and American literature as well as Canadian literature. In 1948-49, a half class in American and Canadian literature was introduced, taught by a sessional lecturer, Edith Martin (B.A., Alberta, M.A. London).

At the University of Saskatchewan, Carlyle King, (B.A. Saskatchewan, Ph.D., Toronto), who had been teaching American literature, introduced a full course in Canadian literature in 1945-46: "Canadian Literature: The growth of a distinctively Canadian Literature in the English language, with emphasis upon the articulation of Canadian nationhood in books published since 1918." Texts were A. J. M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, 1943 and Ralph Gustafson's *Canadian Accent* (Harmondsworth, Middx.: Penguin, 1944). Reading the Smith anthology had convinced King that there was sufficient good Canadian literature to warrant a course.

Desmond Facey initiated the first course in Canadian literature at the University of New Brunswick in 1945-46.

Alberta, where Edmund Kemper Broadus (M.A. Chicago, Ph.D. Harvard), had been collecting royalties from his anthology's sales to students of Canadian literature across Canada for years, did
not have a Canadian literature course until Wilfred Watson (B.A. British Columbia, M.A., Ph.D. Toronto), began to teach "English literature of the North American Continent" in 1952-53. It included only a "brief survey of the beginning of Canadian literature which will conclude the course." 283

While to some the establishment of Canadian literature in the Canadian university has seemed irresponsibly slow and hesitant, it is wise to remember that English literature degrees were not granted at Cambridge until 1917, that very little graduate-level work in American literature was done in American universities before 1920, and that American literature and Modern British Literature appeared on the curriculum at the University of Toronto at the same time as Canadian literature—in 1934. 284 The university is a conservative institution and the oldest universities tend to be the most conservative of all.

To teach a subject at any level requires library resources, anthologies, and textbooks. Good teaching anthologies appeared in Canada only in the 1920s 285—E. K. Broadus's *A Book of Canadian Prose and Verse*, published by Macmillan in 1923 was one of the first and most popular of these. Malcolm Ross recalls that when he was considering the establishment of a Canadian literature course at Queen's in the 1950s, "at that time, only anthologies were available. ... I wanted to bring in a representative group of novels." 286 In order to do so he was forced to initiate and edit McClelland and Stewart's paperback reprint series, the New Canadian Library. The sharp decline in original literary and critical publishing of any kind in Canada during the Depression
certainly must have hurt the courses founded in the 1920s.

Perhaps the best way to establish a particular area of academic specialization or interest is to teach it at the graduate level, especially at the doctoral level, since this ensures continuity in the university. Yet this level of specialization requires the best library resources of all. Between 1921 and 1946, according to Canadian Graduate Degrees in the Humanities and Social Sciences only about five per cent of the total number of graduate degrees in English (601) were presented to students who had written a thesis on Canadian literature (32). Most of these theses were written on general topics, but Frederick Philip Grove, William Henry Drummond, Marjorie Pickthall, Bliss Carman, and Wilson Macdonald were all made the subject of one or two master's theses during the period. Only three of the degrees in Canadian literature granted between 1921 and 1946 were doctoral degrees, which is not surprising, since before 1950 only the Universities of Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal granted doctoral degrees in English. Presumably the Universities of Ottawa and Montreal were primarily producing language teachers and therefore the University of Toronto was the only university in Canada or anywhere for that matter, likely to produce scholars before 1950 with a keen research and teaching interest in Canadian literature. The University of Toronto did institute a graduate class in Canadian literature, "Studies in Canadian History and Letters," very early. It was first taught in 1946-47 by A. J. M. Smith and Ernest Surluck. The next year it was taught by Claude T. Bissell and Donald Creighton. Robert L. McDougall, who took the course, taught it with Bissell after 1953.
The University of Toronto granted its first Ph.D. in English in 1920, the next in 1925, and the next in 1931. Some Canadians did write doctoral dissertations in Canadian literature at American universities; for example, Ray Palmer Baker's *A History of English Canadian Literature to the Confederation*, 1920, is a rewritten Harvard dissertation. Clearly the reliance on foreign professors that this small output of Ph.D. degrees in Canada demanded hurt the development of Canadian literature, since these professors from Britain or the United States could hardly be expected to adopt Canadian literature as their primary academic interest. The best Canadian students left Canada for their graduate education, and (Third World countries now suffer the same problem) often did not come back. George Parker comments of this problem:

Professor Gordon Roper has pointed out to me that H. J. Morgan's *Canadian Men and Women of the Time* (Toronto: Briggs, 1898; and 1912) contains a large number of Canadians who held chairs of senior posts in American universities, after going to the United States for graduate work at Harvard, Chicago, Johns Hopkins, Yale, Princeton. Almost none are listed as going to Oxford or Cambridge or London and then teaching in Great Britain. Canadian English Departments were often staffed by Englishmen of people educated in England, and they had little interest in Canadian letters.288

All these tendencies almost guaranteed that a strong tradition of teaching and research in Canadian literature would either never develop at all, or would be constantly disrupted if it did. The absence of good and influential teachers and critics in the field, like A. J. M. Smith and E. K. Brown, from the Canadian university meant that Canadian students did not work or graduate under them.
That they continued to write on Canadian literature and to involve themselves in Canadian literary life shows laudable tenacity and even loyalty; it was not their fault that they could not also provide the kind of tradition in the Canadian university that Pelham Edgar or Northrop Frye could.

The slow development of an English-Canadian critical tradition in the university can be blamed as much on the familiar economic and historical disadvantages of English-Canadian culture—a small population with a weak cultural tradition faced with the competition from two large English-speaking cultures—as on the more familiar scapegoats, imported faculty or anti-national feeling in English departments.

Both Ryerson's Makers of Canadian Literature series and the establishment of Canadian literature in the university were severely qualified successes, if they can be called successes at all. Publication of the Makers series was quickly halted, and the titles which were published sold slowly. Some of the courses in Canadian literature survived; others disappeared; others were incorporated into courses which also included American literature. Series like the Makers did not appear again until the late 1960s. New courses in Canadian literature also appeared in the 1960s, in a surge of university expansion and general national prosperity.
Chapter Four

Pelham Edgar 1871-1948

Pelham Edgar's memoir Across My Path, 1952, reveals that despite his large body of critical writing, his fame should rest equally in the more lively bodies of those he affected—his students, his friends, his protégés, and the vast numbers who heard him speak or who read his periodical criticism. He began teaching at the University of Toronto in an era when both ladies' hair and the pages of books came uncut: "Dr. Edgar, in fourth year Honour French, wishing to cut the pages of a book: 'Has any one a hairpin? Mr. Shipman, have you a hairpin?'"2

Much of his criticism is as dated as this pleasantry, but it is important because of Edgar's influence, and because it represents the tastes of a certain important part of the Canadian intellectual élite at the turn of the century. Northrop Frye's obituary not only gives Edgar the title "Dean of Critics" but also calls him "the greatest public figure in Canadian literature."3 E. K. Brown, in his On Canadian Poetry, writes that "Pelham Edgar ... has done more to foster Canadian literature than any other academic figure," and B. K. Sandwell comments that Edgar was one of the "triumvirate" ruling Canadian literature between 1925 and 1938, along with Charles G. D. Roberts and Andrew Macphail.4 Edgar managed to rule and foster Canadian literature without
abandoning his critical standards. Hugo McPherson praises him for his insight into Bliss Carman, as does Carl F. Klinck for his equal insight into Wilfred Campbell.  

Clement Moisan, in his "L'Age de la littérature canadienne," comments: "Ils s'inspirent en critique des principes classiques et savait également allier à des règles normatives un goût très sûr et une fine sensibilité."

In his introduction to Across my path, Edgar's former student, Northrop Frye, describes how Edgar's sensibilities were developed: "He was reared in the colonial aristocracy of Upper Canada and trained in all the exacting rituals of its self-conscious grand style; yet it was the callow revolutionary ardors of Shelley that woke him up to imaginative life." Unlike Shelley, Edgar followed the social route that was expected of him, going to Upper Canada College; Victoria College, University of Toronto; and finally to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. His mother, Lady Matilda Ridout Edgar, wrote on Canadian history and his father, Sir James Edgar, a prominent Liberal politician and businessman, wrote patriotic verse and gave literary lectures. Edgar himself wrote and lectured on literature, both inside and outside the University of Toronto (he taught at Victoria College between 1897 and 1938, becoming Head of the English department in 1912). He also appears to have founded or been president of almost every literary club and organization in Canada, and to have been on the editorial committee of almost every Canadian literary journal or magazine.

Edgar, like many Canadian intellectuals of the time, was a moral idealist. He worked with Romantic nationalist assumptions,
but often applied them more logically than his contemporaries, even when the logic led to the conclusion that a Canadian literature was unlikely to develop. And his standards were strict. It is both difficult, and not particularly useful to trace Edgar's ideas to a particular source. Many of them were "in the air" when he was a student. He never made any serious attempt to set out his critical principles, although his writings on Canadian literature show a logical consistency. Nonetheless, it is possible to show when he was conforming to contemporary critical fashions and when he was resisting or modifying them. He wrote articles on various critics such as Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, and Ferdinand Brunetièrre, and from these articles comes a sense of his indebtedness to these figures. One Canadian influence that can easily be traced is that of W. J. Alexander, who taught Edgar between 1890 and 1892. As Edgar's letter to the Varsity in March 1889 shows, he was interested in modern literature even before Alexander's advent. Of the duties of the new English professor he comments: "Let him seek his own way to do the greatest good, which cannot be attained by completely ignoring the poetry of our own particular generation."9 Two years later Edgar is writing in the Varsity on Alexander's favourite poet—in his "Browning's The Ring and the Book."10 Edgar, like Alexander, was to pick a difficult contemporary author—Henry James—for his main critical interest. It is likely that he found Johns Hopkins as uncongenial as Alexander had;11 his thesis was a selection and classification of 1,720 of the similes in Shelley's poetry, a kind of "criticism" he fortunately never returned to.12
As an idealist, he placed great emphasis on the social role of poetry and the power of the imagination. In 1892 he wrote: "Perhaps only our poets will save us in the end, by this very quality of imagination, from the slough of materialism, that with hideous maw threatens to engulf us." In 1931 he wrote: "Romanticism is out of fashion, but is it too late to hope for the recovery of a sane idealism, a romanticism purged of its posturing egotism and sentimentality?" The Romantics provided him with his poetic standard as well as his ideal of poetic form:

Is it a reasonable hope that we may view the work of each [here he refers to Yeats and Kipling] in relation to some standard that will not shift like a fickle vane when the wind changes from north to south? . . . Rimes wit and eloquence of the Popean kind appeal immeasurably less to our aesthetic sense than an ode of Keats. In the Ode to Autumn for example, qualities of harmony and imagination are united to a severe poetical logic with so triumphant a result as to convince us that harmony and imagination intellectually controlled lie beneath all great poetry.

He had a truly liberal and catholic critical outlook, with the exception of his feelings about Pope and later, about Pound. Rarely did he make dogmatically one-sided judgments and despite his idealism he read and praised a wide variety of writers who were not always accepted whole-heartedly by his contemporaries. Edgar believed that great poetry arose out of a passionate conviction of the truth—truth was beauty:

Again, reflect for a moment upon the concerted activities of thought which, during the past hundred years, have kept the mind of England at tension, stimulating her greatest thinkers to express, with all the force of which they were capable, ideas.
which they passionately held, and energizing even lesser minds to produce work of no ephemeral merit.

[All with their fads and crochets, all with their execrations and adorations, hating here and loving there, making themselves at times consciously or unconsciously ridiculous, cauterizing, blistering, or salving the wounded body of the times, but contributing, all of them, something to the ferment of intellectual excitement, and giving to the age the badge of thought or symbol of belief by which future generations will recognize it and weigh its worth.]

Given this belief, it is not surprising that Edgar saw literary history as an evolution arising out of conflict, as can be seen in his criticism of Edward Dowden's *A History of French Literature*, 1897, for not conveying "a proper idea of the reactionary shocks by which French literature has invariably advanced." 17

These beliefs inclined him to admire literary rebels and iconoclasts at times when Canadian (and often British and American) critics were roundly condemning them. His early and public praise of Whitman—in an article in the Toronto *Mail*, 9 April 1892, for example, runs counter even to the trend in *The Week*, usually so receptive. Claude T. Bissell comments that there, "Walt Whitman, America's most notable literary eccentric, was usually linked with Zola as beneath serious critical consideration." 18 Edgar argues, however, that "if the purpose of poetry is to exalt the noble emotions, then Whitman's high place in literature is assured." 19

A writer who seriously tried to communicate a sincere emotion always received serious consideration, if not always praise, from Edgar. He wrote several articles before 1906 in defence of authors such as Hardy, Fielding, Ibsen, and Thoreau, who, like
Whitman, were often dealt with harshly by more parochial English-Canadian critics as immoral or lacking in Christian optimism. He saw Whitman's protest as a corrective to the cloying sweetness of late nineteenth-century poetry, and the later revolt of such novelists as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Aldous Huxley, since they "launched their innovations with almost passionate conviction," as salutary. He consistently stood by the idea that "all great literature comes at some point into conflict with those things which the opinions of men hold sacred." On the rare occasions when he damns a writer it is because he feels that the writer is ignoring his social role and has no interest in communicating with his audience. His comment on Joyce's "Work in Progress" was negative, although he had praised Ulysses: "If Joyce ever had a serious intention of giving the novel a new direction, he can no longer expect readers or disciples on a scale that matters." In "The Changing Aspects of Poetry," 1937, he becomes almost angry with Pound, Spender, Auden, Day-Lewis, and Eliot for the same reason, and concludes that "the poet who has not utterly forgotten his public is a most satisfactory person for a community to possess. . . ." Here of course is the influence of the Romantic nationalist belief in the importance of the audience.

Edgar, as an idealist, also fought a long battle with science and materialism. He cheered naturalism's dying gasps only to see it resurrected, he felt, as Freudianism. In an article on the almost forgotten literary biographer, John Morley, he writes:

He is a positivist and a materialist of the fashion of
fourty years ago. An influential portion of the intellectual world is moving away from him. We have heard voices in authority proclaim the bankruptcy of science, and indeed the imaginative literature of France and England is, at the present time, less subject to its sway than in the middle and closing years of the last century. A reaction by way of mysticism from the positive methods of the past is now in progress, and poetry has certainly not suffered in the change.24

He became somewhat reluctantly reconciled to the use of psychology as a device in fiction (for example in "stream of consciousness" writing like Dorothy Richardson's), but in general he felt it made writers too self-conscious, and as a result, egotistical and neglectful of their public.25

Despite his distrust of Freudianism, he was always able to approach a book without over-hastily judging it in terms of its sexual morality, something unusual in the puritan Canada of his day. On Fielding's Joseph Andrews, he remarks, in 1905, "in spite of its coarseness an honest book at bottom, and irresistably interesting."26 In his The Art of the Novel he states: "If we are not too preoccupied with the non-essentials of morality, we shall not rashly conclude that an author who reproduces the manners of an age that is not so successful as our own in the arts of concealment is thereby incapable of appreciating the virtues that lift men above the level of the brute."27 He felt the "intelligent application of this strong emotion [sexual passion] to fiction" was acceptable, as long as the author did not get carried away, and praised Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover to show he meant it.28

Edgar reacted against, or espoused explicitly several ideas
and approaches used by Sainte-Beuve and Arnold (and to a lesser
degree, those of Carlyle and Brunettièrè). Edgar found Carlyle's
style appealing, but felt he was "antiquated."²⁹ Edgar, unlike
Carlyle, was more interested in society than in the individual
hero: "Many absurd ideas are held as to the independence of
genius. . . . It is preeminently social, and is exquisitely
responsive to environment."³⁰ This was far closer to Taine.
He nonetheless praises Carlyle because "few have had such a pro-
foundly moral view of the meaning of literature with so little
of the pedantry of the professional moralist."³¹

Arnold, although constantly present in Edgar's writing, was
accepted with some reservations. Like Arnold, Edgar felt that
culture was a nation's highest good, for "without culture the
outlook for the world is black indeed."³² Culture is, as Edgar
quotes the famous passage from Arnold's preface to Culture and
Anarchy, "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to
know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has
been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge
turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions
and habits. . . ."³³ (Unfortunately, very little of the best that
was thought and said in the world was thought or said in Canada.)
Edgar criticises Arnold's use of the touchstone (although he used
something suspiciously like it in lectures). Unlike the earlier
Canadian disciples of Arnold, who, according to Claude T. Bissell,
"emphasized strongly the hebraic side of his teaching, and largely
ignored the hellenic,"³⁴ Edgar rejected a criticism founded on the
morality of the author, and faults Arnold for "the primness of his moral judgments." Although Byron was seen by many as a bad influence—for example, Archibald MacMechan in his introduction to Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* sees Carlyle as an "escape from Byronism," Edgar refuses to judge literature in moral terms:

> Byron's poetry was steeped in actuality and constitutes in consequence the most effective instrument of criticism which nineteenth century Europe has bequeathed to us. . . . We see then how Byron slips through the meshes of Arnold's theory, for in him we have a poet of all but the highest rank who as to morals is loose. . . .

Edgar proves more liberal morally than Arnold, and less socially, for he did not agree with Arnold that social equality predisposes to higher culture, stating that "the irruption of the masses into our higher civilization is literally a modern invasion of the barbarians." In 1908 he could admit that Kipling's "sweaty grimy stokers" had "the value in art of all things that are completely realized and characteristically presented," but he also felt that with their presence vanished "reserve, dignity, the decencies of art and the ideals of the spirit," and in 1929 he was saying much the same things in his "The Cult of Primitivism." Despite his somewhat negative feelings about the masses, Edgar did not think that their vulgarity excused the writer from his responsibility to them: "There is a vast semi-unlettered community in our country that is eager for the light, but does not see it because it is not there." *Noblesse oblige.*

Edgar's opinion of writing focussed on the lower orders was consistent with his low opinion of naturalism, which he, like many
critics of the time, called realism: "The Realists do well to combat the egotistic extravagances of Romanticism, but their aims and methods apart from this are wholly ignoble."\textsuperscript{41} Clearly, Romanticism survived in Canada long after it did in most countries because of the opinions of critics like Edgar. In 1921, he praised Louis Hémon's \textit{Maria Chapdelaine} for giving an "impression of the great sad land and the true character of the people who inhabit it, without the author once descending to the vulgarly commonplace or self-complacent vulgarity so rife among present-day writers of fiction."\textsuperscript{42}

Arnold (and through him, Edgar), was greatly indebted to Sainte-Beuve, who was so well-known at one time that it is difficult to believe how thoroughly he has disappeared from modern criticism. Traces of his ideas, and of his style, survived in Canadian criticism until the late 1920s and beyond, although his international popularity dropped sharply after World War I. Sainte-Beuve had no coherent method or theory; as René Wellek notes, he "always eludes generalization."\textsuperscript{43} Despite this, he was regarded as a "scientific" critic by Edgar: "Literary criticism when Sainte-Beuve began to write was scarcely an art; when he ceased to write, it was almost a science."\textsuperscript{44} Sainte-Beuve's writing contains large tracts of what would today be classified as "psychology of the author" or "personal fallacy." He examines the life of the author in minute detail. Edgar described his writings as "human documents in the fullest sense, illuminated by history, biography, by the anecdote that strikes out a salient phase of character, and by the poem or prose fragment that paints a soul."\textsuperscript{45} It can easily
be guessed how the misuse of this approach could lead to the confusion of an author and his work, and it is the frequency of this confusion which led to this method’s falling into almost total disfavour. Edgar was always wary of the approach, common as it was at the time among Canadian critics, and indeed among foreign critics too. 46 That this wariness on Edgar’s part was a matter of principle rather than inclination can be seen in his memoir, where he, in this more relaxed genre, combines the critical and biographical approach. In several places we see him justifying his reasons for avoiding biographical interpretation; for example in his introduction to his Henry James, Man and Author, 1927. 47 That an explanation was needed shows how common the biographical approach was. In an early article on Shelley, he seems quite aware of the dangers of too much biography: "I have dwelt thus particularly upon certain events which stand out boldly in Shelley's life, because in his case it is impossible to dissociate opinion and conduct." 48 There is a remarkable parallel between two passages on the importance of biography to criticism, one by Sainte-Beuve and one by Edgar—a parallel which also shows the differences between them. Sainte-Beuve felt it necessary to discover the most intimate or mundane details of an author's biography:

Que pensait-il en religion?—Comment était-il affecté du spectacle de la nature?—Comment se comportait-il sur l'article des femmes? Sur l'article de l'argent?—Etait-il riche, était-il pauvre?—Quel était son régime, quelle sa manière journalière de vivre? etc.—Enfin, quel était son vice ou son faible? Tout homme en a un. 49

Edgar writes in an article on Matthew Arnold in 1921:
We can readily imagine how Arnold would have proceeded to a critical examination of himself, had he had the good fortune to discover upon some intellectual excursion the counterpart of so interesting a personage. He would not have concerned himself with investigating biographical details in order to estimate the interplay of circumstances and temperament; his interest in humanity was too abstract for that,—a class and racial rather than an individual interest. Neglecting this and other accredited methods of approach, he would have struck sharp home to the heart of the matter: What does this man stand for in the world of ideas? How has he adjusted himself and sought to adjust his fellows to the time-forces operating on his age? What is his central controlling passion, and what, if any, his cardinal defect or impediment? That is the Arnoldian way, and—-incomplete though it is—-it gives us probably the most important element in the whole truth about a man.50

Here again Edgar's interest in society takes precedence over an interest in the individual. Here he deviates from many critics of the time, for Sainte-Beuve's was, as he put it, the "accredited" approach. He does not go to the opposite extreme, however, as we can see in his response to a comment by E. M. Forster that "all great literature tends towards anonymity"; he writes that "this leans too far in the other direction, for every work of power carries the spiritual signature of its creator. But it would not enhance our appreciation or understanding of the Iliad to know that Homer had sprained his ankle in the year 800 B.C. or had been jilted by the village beauty."51

Edgar's response to Sainte-Beuve's biographical approach was more positive, however, than his response to Sainte-Beuve's ideas about making criticism truly scientific. Edgar seemed satisfied to leave it, as he felt Sainte-Beuve had, "almost scientific." Sainte-Beuve, however, felt that if enough preliminary descriptive work was done, a taxonomy could be evolved which would result in
a "natural history of the intellect." Men could be divided into
groups by their "master faculty" or leading impulse. Their
natural sympathies and antipathies would also be a guide to their
types. Edgar, in "The Judgments of Carlyle," 1913, seems to be
using this last idea:

In the present essay the attempt is made to study
Carlyle through his antipathies. This method of
approaching a great author might conceivably be a
fruitful one, for if we could discover why John Keats
hurled his copy of "Don Juan" across the cabin, we
should learn a great deal of Keats and incidently
contemplate Byron from a new angle of vision.52

He turns Sainte-Beuve's own idea against him and his more systematic
successors (notably Brunetière), however, because if critics have
natural sympathies and antipathies, how can they judge objectively?:

The truth is that no critic can eliminate the personal
equation. We may render our appreciation more catholic
by multiplying our intellectual experience, by breaking
ourselves, as Sainte-Beuve did, on the wheel of spiritual
metamorphosis. But appreciation and judgment advance
pari passu; they cannot in honesty be divorced. And
this it is which makes me suspicious of all attempts to
erect a scientific system of criticism.53

The wholly personal approach was not desirable either--Edgar dis-
liked impressionistic criticism: "So if Anatole France is criti-
cizing Molière, the important thing is not what Anatole France says
about Molière, but what Molière prompts Anatole France to say about
himself."54 His belief in maintaining a balance between impression-
ist and scientific criticism is quite similar to that of his con-
temporaries.55 Like them, he felt an over-emphasis on evaluation
dangerous. He also as he put it himself, "by prudent intention
refrained from absolute judgments and . . . from estimating too precisely the relative merits of . . . authors. . . ."56 He felt posterity would judge. A sentence he wrote about Andrew Macphail could be applied to Edgar himself: "As he needed no external guidance in the matter of his likings or dislikings he was not fatuous enough to suppose that his personal preferences or the reverse could be imposed on other people."57 This idea may explain his tendency simply to quote poetry to prove his points (although one might also trace this to the influence of Arnold's "touchstone" method). Indeed most contemporary "liberal" English professors quoted poetry a great deal in their criticism, and read it at length to their students. Frye notes the frequency with which Edgar "is willing merely to quote his author or say the obvious thing about him."58 Here is a very late example (1939) of the technique: "Were this a lecture I might have read passages from The Prelude, an ode of Keats, or a lyric of Shelley, and have followed it by a carefully modulated rendering of the most acclaimed of modern poems The Waste Land, and there would have been no further need of argument on the matter of communication between author and reader."59

Edgar never seems to have felt the need to be a cultural missionary—he treated his audience as equals, and left it up to them to form their own conclusions, although he certainly helped them along the way. His style alone convinced. Frye, in his introduction to Across my Path writes: "Criticism for him was the causerie of his critical idol Sainte-Beuve, the man of taste demonstrating how literature is to be absorbed into society."60 Part
of his charm as a teacher must have been the attitude which is expressed in this sentence in his *The Art of the Novel*: "There are many tedious ways of expounding a doctrine, but since we are not bound by any compulsion of thoroughness, let us choose the amusing approach to the subject. . . ."61

Sainte-Beuve "adhered throughout his life to the belief that a critic 'must dip his pen into the inkwell of the author he wished to describe. . . .'"62 This method also appealed to Edgar, according to E. J. Pratt's account:

He had a method of interpretation peculiar to himself. He assumed, without affectation, the idiosyncrasies of the writer he was expounding, passing from Wordsworth, through Shelley and Keats, to Tennyson, Browning and Arnold. . . . Next to Shelley I should say it was Arnold who taught him his basic cadences. In fact it was very easy for Pelham Edgar to don the Victorian apparel and speak in the grand manner with its higher seriousness and subdued melancholy.63

Despite Edgar's comment about Brunetière that "Darwin and Haeckel are strange arbiters to invoke in the cause of literature," he frequently used the idea of the evolution of genres in his criticism,64 although in Edgar, the idea appears rarely outside his work on fiction. He describes his last major work, *The Art of the Novel*, 1933, as a "systematic study of the structural evolution of the English novel."65 Since he felt that poetry and drama would undergo little development in future—"technical modifications chiefly on the mechanical side"—his interest in fiction is understandable: "Fiction, I have said, is more vividly contemporaneous than any other form of literary art, more flexibly
adapts itself to the modern point of view, and is also more sensitive to technical modification." 66

Neither of Edgar's two major critical works was particularly well-received, although both were reprinted. Both were early works in their area, and Edgar, without any critical consensus to react against or work from found it difficult to unify his work. The first book, Henry James, Man and Author, 1927, was praised by J. W. Beach, with some reservations, as "the best book that has yet been written on Henry James" in a place that counted—The Times Literary Supplement, 6 January 1927. 67 Although the critics praised its readability, many complained that it lacked an overall coherence and an adequate conclusion, and justly, that it consisted mainly of plot summaries. 68 E. K. Brown, then still a student, comments that "the result is dull à dormir debout," although he does commend the book for its many insights, unfortunately em-bedded in a mass of unnecessary recapitulation. 69

The Art of the Novel, 1933, which included many articles written first for periodicals, was also criticized for a lack of underlying theory, although Leon Edel excused this by saying "there are as many arts of the novel as there are novelists." 70 Since Edgar was trying to generalize concerning the form of the novel, perhaps this was a kind way of saying that he had attempted the impossible.

The interest in the contemporary that led Edgar to write these two books was also the stimulus to work on Canadian literature, and he was always in touch with the latest Canadian work,
reading much of it before it was published. This interest in Canadian literature began early and lasted all his life. If this concern had not arisen naturally from the influence of his parents or his friends, it would have arisen from his interest, derived from Arnold, in the "fresh current of ideas"; his conviction that culture kept society civilized; and his belief that Canada's very existence depended on her ability to produce a "coherent body of literature, stamped with our national spirit." 71

As was true for most critics writing on Canadian literature at the time, many of his articles and lectures were presented to "popular" audiences—in newspapers and magazines rather than in the learned quarterlies, and to lecture halls filled with ordinary readers, librarians, authors and bookpeople rather than with his academic colleagues or students. It should be remembered that the newspapers he wrote for then, mainly the Toronto Globe, and the audiences he spoke to probably had greater intellectual pretensions than the same media or audiences would today, and took professors more seriously. Accounts of his lectures are usually found in several Toronto papers, at least until the 1920s. Although, of course, his work varied in quality, there is no evidence that he wrote less seriously for the Globe than for the National Review.

Edgar seems to have made no explicit statement of his opinion about the value of Canadian literature courses in the university. He did read contemporary Canadian poetry to his classes, and invited Canadian poets to read to his students. 72 In a special Canadian literature issue of the Victoria College literary magazine, Acta Victoriana, produced in 1922, where the editorial
called for a broader study of the subject in the university, he wrote: "Canada is still producing poets only of high minor rank. . . ."\(^73\) This indicates that he, like Alexander, felt that its formal inclusion in the curriculum would be premature, at least in 1922. Perhaps he felt the recent appearance in the University of Toronto English poetry textbook, Representative Poetry, of nineteen poems by Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, Marjorie Pickthall, and John McCrae, to be enough.\(^74\) Certainly if he had felt strongly about the creation of a Canadian literature course, he would have said so. Nonetheless, course or no course, William Arthur Deacon, who was capable of bluntness even in an obituary, and whose opinion of Edgar was not always whole-heartedly positive, wrote that Edgar's influence was a prime factor in changing the attitude of university men towards native work. Certainly it is a fact that, as Wrong inaugurated and nourished the teaching of Canadian history, where formerly it was despised, Edgar established a literary tradition at Victoria which makes it pre-eminent among Canadian colleges.\(^75\)

He gives Edgar due credit for the presence on the Victoria faculty of E. J. Pratt, J. D. Robins, and Northrop Frye.

Edgar's actions probably had a greater influence on Canadian letters than his words. His ideas were not so unusual that their appearance in even a student's writing can be ascribed to direct influence. The occasional harshness he showed towards Canadian literature is to a large extent belied by his continual efforts on its behalf. With respect to literature, he had the instincts of a one-man Canada Council. Through the various organizations
of which he was president, founder, member, or all three, he was often able to give direct or indirect financial support to many critics and writers. His praise (and he wrote dozens of reviews a year, and lectured frequently on contemporary writing) was certainly worth something to a writer in terms of finding publishers, selling books, and gaining recognition. He was not unaware of the importance of these practical problems in the establishment of a national literature: "Although one is anxious to avoid as far as possible the mercenary aspect of literary production, it is impossible to neglect it completely." In another place he writes: "The safest popularity for an artist is posthumous, but for heaven's sake, grant him his bread and butter while he lives."

Edgar, as Earle Birney recalls, "was quietly devoted to the encouragement of any young writers who came within his ken." Both potential poets and potential critics benefitted from this interest. Edgar may have been austere and strict in his criticism of existing English-Canadian literature and criticism but he certainly helped create that "future bright with promise" that Dewart had so hopefully pointed to. Edgar interested Hugh Eyre of Macmillan's in publishing Raymond Knister's White Narcissus, 1929, he encouraged the young Douglas Bush to submit his criticism to the newspapers, and he sent Marjorie Pickthall's first work to Andrew Macphail of the University Magazine. Northrop Frye dedicated Fearful Symmetry, 1947, to him, and Kathleen Coburn, in her In Pursuit of Coleridge, 1977, gives Edgar credit for interesting her in Coleridge. In fact, by encouraging her first with a
donship and then to do graduate work both in Canada and in England, he gave her the opportunity to begin her academic life's work—editing the Coleridge notebooks. Typically Edgar helped raise money to have the precious manuscripts photographed. Edgar, she recalls, was a good teacher who "read poetry with gusto and respect," and "set up currents in the mind that were not specifically but only suggestively in his words..."80 Edgar also provided either financial or moral support (and often both) to many others, including Audrey Alexandra Brown, Wilson Macdonald, Charles G. D. Roberts, Frederick Philip Grove, Thomas Arnold Haultain, Barker Fairley, and Charles Cochrane. It could be argued that in the cases of E. J. Pratt and Earle Birney, Edgar's intervention may have "saved them for poetry," although of course it is impossible to know. E. K. Brown makes it clear that in hiring Pratt, who was then teaching in the Psychology department, Edgar was taking a gamble: "[Pratt] was appointed because of his creative powers, or rather because of his creative potentialities—for he had as yet published no verse of distinction... [Edgar] set Pratt to lecture in the courses where he thought the material would be most valuable to Pratt's poetry."81 Another example of Edgar's support for Pratt (they became fast friends) is his canvassing of friends to raise money to finance Pratt's trip to New York to do research for 'The Roosevelt and the Antinoe,' 1930. Edgar even collaborated with Pratt and Healey Willan on a dramatic production of Pratt's Brébeuf and His Brethren.82 As for Birney, Edgar applied for a Royal Society of Canada scholarship on his behalf without telling him; Birney received the news that he had won it in Utah,
a day before he was to leave for New York to work for a left-wing
newspaper. Instead, he went to the University of London. Edgar's
conviction that Canadian literature needed a supporting milieu was
frequently backed up by this kind of abrupt, even aristocratically
high-handed action.

Then there is the influence he had on those who were, through
the medium of friendship or professional association, influenced
by him. He was a close friend of Stephen Leacock's, Duncan Campbell
Scott's, Louis Fréchette's—the list, to be complete and include
all who were more than acquaintances would include almost everybody
active in the world of Canadian letters during his lifetime.

As far as literary clubs and organizations are concerned, he
was certainly a member of more than are listed below. The informa-
tion surviving on these organizations is fragmentary, but there
was an astonishing number of such clubs in Canada, and important
men belonged to them. Lectures on literary subjects were delivered
frequently to organizations which were not principally literary as
well, since every cultivated person was expected to take an interest
in letters. Within a period of four months, for example, Edgar
lectured on "Some Aspects of Canadian Literature" to the Women's
Art Association (10 November 1921), to the English Association on
Duncan Campbell Scott (22 November 1921), and to the Canadian Litera-
ture Club on Isabella Valancy Crawford (24 February 1922). Edgar
was Secretary of the Canadian Society of Authors, "charter member"
of the Arts and Letters Club, founder and president of the Canadian
Writers' Foundation (which gave pensions to writers), president
(1935-36) and one of the founders of the Canadian Authors’ Association, the president of the Royal Society of Canada in 1927 (he became a member in 1915), and founder and president (in 1936) of the Association of Canadian Bookmen. He was also founder and president of the P.E.N. Club, an international writers’ club, succeeded Alexander as President of the English Association in 1917, and was president of the Canadian Society for Literature and the Arts, concerning which B. K. Sandwell’s comment is apposite: "The title of the Canadian Society for Literature and the Arts tells us little except that it is obviously the kind of society of which Professor Pelham Edgar is the predestined head." (This organization arranged tours within Canada for Canadian literary figures and other artists.) Although Edgar came from the class and the era of the clubman, his industry was remarkable—the thought of the number of addresses he made to these groups on the subject of Canadian literature is indeed overwhelming. His concern and energy is perhaps reflected in the fact that at seventy-five he was still actively badgering Mackenzie King for an annual grant for the Canadian Writers’ Foundation and as early as 1906 he had been requesting the meeting of the Canadian Society of Authors "to discuss the desirability of applying for an annual government grant to literature to be administered by the Society in the interests of Canadian authorship."

Edgar’s theoretical approach to Canadian literature and his critical evaluations of it are not particularly unusual, but they are exceptionally rigorous. At times, for a man who often avoided judgment, they could be quite harsh: "There are some novels that
have honestly died, and some that have never lived. Canada's fiction may, with few exceptions, be classed in one or other of these categories."96 That he chose to say this in what was probably his most widely-read work on Canadian literature, an article in the Cambridge History of English Literature, 1917, is perhaps regrettable. Yet he rarely attacked individual works or writers—perhaps because the size of Canadian literary society inevitably meant hurt feelings or unpleasantness. Commenting on the aftermath of an early lecture, "Nationalism in Poetry and Canadian Poets" (read to the Canadian Society of Authors, March 1901) he writes:

"I... have scarcely yet outlived the enmities which it engendered."97 Both his occasional harshness and his persistent interest can be explained by the two strong desires evident in all his Canadian criticism—the desire to have Canadians produce great literature, and the desire to develop a discriminating Canadian criticism to deal with it. Many Canadians shared the first desire so strongly that they blinded themselves to the necessity for the second. This left Edgar in a dilemma which he stated nicely:

The reasonable reader... would wish to be assured that the critical opinions, which in a brief essay must seem so peremptory, proceed neither from too charitable a regard for the efforts of an adolescent art, nor on the other hand from too harsh an estimate of the value of minor poetry. I would rather satisfy the demands of such a reader than tickle the vanity of a multitude of expectant poets. Consequently, at the risk of being thought ungenerous and unsympathetic, I will discuss the work of our better writers with reference to standards of absolute rather than of relative merit.98

That an established critic like Edgar felt the need to analyse
his position so carefully is evidence that it was under fire. He fell afool of two camps—the voluntarily ignorant and the patriotically undiscriminating: "Too many of our critics, and these chiefly in the academic camp, are convinced that Canadians cannot write, and there is another group that runs to the other extreme and exalts mediocrity beyond its merits."99 Edgar's belief in immersing himself in the Arnoldian fresh current of ideas, and his dislike of uncritical criticism combined to make him a fervent advocate of better criticism for Canada. Here, in a review of Archibald Lampman's *Among the Millet*, 1888, written when Edgar was a second-year student, he takes on the undiscriminating nationalists at a length that gives an idea of their strength:

A Canadian reviewer of a Canadian book naturally looks upon it with a jealous eye to see if the subject matter is well chosen, if Canadian sentiment and vanity are in turn appealed to and flattered. This method is essentially false and pernicious. ... Any a critic doubtless will expect the accustomed hymn or sonnet to the swathed but gigantic limbs of the infant Canada. He will be disappointed but will find instead that nearly all the rich colouring of every poem is borrowed from the hues of our Canadian fields and forests. ... We have endeavoured to disassociate ourselves from the idea of a Canadian parentage for the poems and to consider them with no more indulgence than if they had issued from the brain-scratchings of a Hottentot.100

Here it is implied that the ordinary Canadian reviewer accorded the title "Canadian" only to works which were overtly patriotic, or praised them simply because they were "Canadian." Yet despite Edgar's constant struggle against the banal, the parochial, the colonial, he, like all Romantic nationalists, strongly linked the idea of the nation with the idea of a great literature. Again and
again he pointed out that writers, especially in a young nation like Canada, had to draw on national sources as well as international ones if they ever hoped to produce great literature. Frye comments:

He learned from Sainte-Beuve that great culture is cosmopolitan, that the standards of the classic have no reference to time or space, to language or conditions of life. He learned from Shelley (I am thinking of the Preface to Prometheus Unbound) that great culture is also completely provincial, that it is as racy of the soil as fine wine and can only grow where there is a powerful sense of locality.101

Edgar's contemporaries would agree with him that "great poetry admits no distinction between the local and the universal."102 In 1904 he saw the existence of Canada as dependent on her literature: "Canada will exist in the eyes of the world only when she can speak in accents that are her own."103 Twenty-five years later, apparently Canada in the main was still not only inarticulate but also unconscious: "A people that has not produced great writers, great artists, great musicians, has not achieved national consciousness."104 At other times he sees the prior existence of the nation as a necessity for literature: "The problems affecting Canadian literature are peculiar to all the outlying dependencies of our Empire, and are in part shared by the United States, though our neighbours have the advantage of being a distinct nation, whereas we are neither, as yet, a nation, nor quite an empire."105 Later in the same article, he comments justly that "it is difficult to express precisely not only what patriotism is, but also what it is capable of effecting in literature" (p. 485). He felt what he called "pure nationalism
had some importance to literature, but that it was not essential: "A Canadian national literature, if by that term we imply a literature inspired by an intense and narrow patriotism, became an impossibility the moment we forsook our dream of political independence. There are certain poetic possibilities in the imperial sentiment which now prevails. . . ."¹⁰⁶ Despite his conclusion here, it was clear that he was not completely sure about it.

One problem Edgar had to face was how a Canadian was to partake of cosmopolitan culture and, at the same time, retain his Canadian character. He acknowledged that some writers did lose their national identity.¹⁰⁷ In a review of Charles G. D. Roberts' *The Vagrant of Time* in 1928, he tests the work against a series of criteria for national character, and although he does not say it openly, finds little in this work of a recently returned expatriate to be distinctively Canadian.¹⁰⁸ Yet he points out that Ibsen, who actively renounced Norway and national sentiment, retained his national character and comments that "his own dramas even, despite the cosmopolitanism of their ideas, are significantly Norwegian in their general tone and character to justify us in attaching some definite significance to the 'national note' in literature."¹⁰⁹ He was not entirely sure that the numerous writers commonly claimed for Canada simply because they were born and educated here, although they spent their writing life abroad, retained their Canadian identity. Therefore his definition of a Canadian writer depended neither on biographical facts such as birth or citizenship, nor on content, either patriotic or scenic: "The criterion in these doubtful cases must surely be an identification
with the interests of the country so complete that a Canadian character is stamped upon the work, or, in default of that, a commanding influence exercised by the author upon the development of the country's literature.\textsuperscript{110} The definition itself, unfortunately contains the very words so often in dispute—character, and identification, although the second part of the definition which makes literature dependent on tradition, is more useful. However uncertain he was about the Canadian character, how it was gained and whether it could be lost, he was convinced that it was not enough in itself to produce great literature. Canada had great poetic natural resources, but unfortunately, he pointed out, in language even the Philistine businessman would understand, the best ideas were not to be found locally—"the balance of intellectual trade is shockingly in our disfavour. . . ."\textsuperscript{111} Canadian "hunger for ideas must be sated at foreign sources."\textsuperscript{112} If looking abroad for the fresh current of ideas destroyed the Canadian character, it was a risk, that for the sake of quality, had to be taken: "Banality achieves no virtue by being colonial, and no varnish of local colour can mask a structural defect from the discerning eye. I ask that you shall be a poet first, and then be as much as you will a Canadian."\textsuperscript{113} He repeated the idea often—in 1895—"There are no tariff restrictions upon our thought, therefore let us go forth into the world's great harvest field and reap our portion. Thus assured of freedom of utterance, circumstances of time and place will prove no limitation, but will the rather add their due appropriate flavour,"\textsuperscript{114} and in 1920: "I think if
there is anything that will benefit our Canadian poets it is that they should keep in touch with contemporary movements elsewhere. It is all very well to say Canada for the Canadians—and no one more than myself desires national originality, but I have never yet discovered that originality is an absolutely self-centred thing. 115

Edgar dealt with more concrete concepts than nationalism and critical standards in his articles on Canadian literature, but the question remains the same. Does Canada have the necessary national qualities to produce a great literature, and if not, what can be done about it? In this one question rests the most thorny of critical problems—the definition of a national literature and the definition of a great literature. Edgar was fairly confident that he knew what great literature was, and that Canada had not achieved it. He had proposed two solutions to the problem—a widening of Canadian intellectual horizons and stricter Canadian critical standards. He then turned to an examination of the factors critically accepted to be necessary for a great literature and systematically applied them to the Canadian situation.

It is important to take into account the effect that Edgar’s several encounters with William Butler Yeats had on his ideas about nationalism and poetry. Edgar wrote several early articles on Yeats, and considered the Irish literary revival, its causes and its influences. He seems almost jealous of Ireland’s long history of misery and oppression in his account of an evening spent with Yeats at James Mavor’s where the assembled Canadians “were perhaps sorely conscious that in Canada we had no gods or fairies to effect
so salutary a miracle [as the Irish literary revival]. Even our political grievances had betrayed us, and Downing Street was behaving very well." He writes of the new Irish literature that "like the great romantic poetries of England, Germany and France, it is rooted in national sentiment, and is nourished upon the past." Edgar kept Irish literature, so enviably rooted in history, myth, folklore, language, patriotism, race and British oppression in mind as he considered the Canadian situation.

Like so many other critics since E. H. Dewart began the tradition in 1864 with his introduction to Selections from Canadian Poets, he begins by listing the more obvious handicaps of Canadian literature:

Literature evidently does not flourish with us in Canada, for which condition a convincing list of obvious reasons might be adduced,—our newness as a nation, the initial necessity of civilizing ourselves, the dissipation of material energy which this effort engenders, and the lazy opportunity which we as a public enjoy of satisfying all our intellectual needs by recourse to the sixpenny and shilling offerings which English publishers place at our disposal.

He listed as factors which he considered important to a national literature: "Folk-lore and custom, history and politics, and the element of form are the other items [besides landscape] we must consider if a poet is to be estimated in terms of nationalism."

What was probably his first lecture on Canadian literature, "Nationalism in Poetry and Canadian Poets," read to the Canadian Society of Authors in March, 1901, brings together what were to be Edgar's themes throughout his Canadian criticism—his belief that the European Romantic nationalist theory, although valid, did not fit Canada very well, and that Canadian poets would therefore
be well-advised to temper their interest in the local with a healthy
dose of cosmopolitanism. Although this lecture seems to have van-
ished, an undated report from the Toronto Globe's Lally Barnard
(preserved in the Edgar Papers at Victoria College) quotes some
of its content. Edgar seems concerned, as he was in his later
"Have We a National Literature?" to focus on the ways Canada did
not fit into the common definition of nation—a focus some of his
less rigorous colleagues shied away from:

Our nations, even the purest of them in the ethnic
sense, are heterogeneous agglomerations, swept in from
all the corners of a restless and uneasy world. We
have in Canada our Poles and our Swedes and Russians,
and in our blood we feel the stirrings of the Saxon and
the Celt. Where all is so helplessly confused how
shall we hope for some fixed and absolute thing that
we may call a national note? 121

This problem was first seriously faced by many critics in 1920,
when the inevitability of mass "heterogeneous" immigration was
forced upon them. Edgar, in pointing out that racial purity was
a myth even in Europe, is well ahead of his time. Edgar praises
the French-Canadian writers, especially Louis Fréchette, and argues
that too much focus on "local colour" can destroy the value of
poetry. Edgar also comments on Canada's lack of folklore. Barnard
records that "Mr. Edgar gives Taine's celebrated pronouncement that
every author is the inevitable product of 'the race, the milieu,
and the moment,' and avers that it is no less true today than at
the time it was made, only it is infinitely more difficulty [sic]
of application." 122 Clearly Edgar saw the theory as complicated,
rather than invalidated, by Canada's peculiar national circumstances.
Edgar did not feel that Canada could be considered a nation in terms of geographical unity. This attitude influenced his consideration of nature poetry: "Landscape poetry tends . . . to be continental rather than national." Edgar did not wish to see a slavish dependence on nature poetry grow up in Canada. In 1905 he wrote that "in Canadian poetry and in Carman's later verse, there is a tendency to sing the praises of nature to the exclusion of everything else"; he goes on to point out that nature, although important to the major Romantic and Victorian poets was "always . . . an accessory to the human action or interest of the poem, she is but one note in the chord of poetic harmony, never the whole chord." This is the opinion which, voiced by Gordon Waldron (a contemporary of Edgar's at the University of Toronto), caused so much controversy in the Canadian Magazine. Edgar felt much the same about form as he did about landscape; it was wider than national boundaries: "When we come to the question of form we must conclude that linguistic rather than national considerations prevail." He felt that Canada was handicapped in her literature by her lack of a "racial character": "The genuine Canadian type probably exists somewhere . . . but he is so shadowy in outline that no novelists has yet limned his features for us." Canada also suffered from a break in literary tradition, which he describes using a racial analogy: "Our severance from the parent stock has constituted a definite breach in literary tradition and continuity." His belief in the force of a historical evolution of literature meant that he like many other English-Canadian critics also thought
Canada deprived by her lack of mythology and oral tradition:

All the countries of Europe have passed through the ballad and epic stage of unselfconscious literary production, and we are only vicariously the heirs of all this antecedent activity. They have a mythical as well as an historic past to inspire them, and they possess vast tracts of legends still unexplored which yield, as in Ireland, stores of poetic material as beautiful as they are seemingly inexhaustible.129

It seems that Edgar felt that the primitive stage, once passed, could not be revived. Although he felt that Duncan Campbell Scott's contacts with the native people of Canada gave him good material for poetry, he feared that "when a highly civilized poet goes a-fishing for the elemental in the troubled waters of his atavistic memories, he does not usually bring much that is valuable to the surface."130 This opinion also fits well with his attitude to social realism and psychology.

He did not feel that Canadian history was well suited to poetry:

"We are what we are as a people by virtue of the struggle for responsible government, but what poet could read a tune into such refractory material? There is, of course, our seventeenth and eighteenth century past of whose romantic glamour we are not insensible; but that is rather the heritage of our French poets. . . ."131

Canada also lacked a sympathetic audience interested in ideas, and the professional literary class which would have been supported by such an audience.132

It is surprising that Edgar, after producing such a catalogue of disabilities, had any optimism left concerning Canada's literary future at all. Indeed, in one article, he concludes that there
is no future for Canadian literature. In other articles he finds some hope in the vitality of Canada's youth, in the English literary inheritance, and in improved intellectual conditions. Despite his reluctance to proclaim Canadian literature great, or even good, Edgar was quite clear that when it finally appeared it would embody Canada: "We have heard a great deal about literature being a self-revelation, but is it not more significant that a group of able writers should be concerned with revealing a nation to itself?" Elsewhere he notes "No one, and this is the gravest charge our literature has to bear, has yet synthesized for us the meaning of our Canadian life, nor revealed us to ourselves." This, of course, was a serious defect, for "in spite of the alleged universality of great ideas no other people and no other age can voice our aspiration and explain us to ourselves."

Despite his caution, Edgar was one of the few Canadian writers of his time who spent so much of his energy on Canadian literature. His family's literary interests and contacts both in Canada and in England, and his own intellectual and social prestige may well have had a lot to do with his success in making the study and promotion of Canadian literature a respectable activity.
Chapter Five

Consolidating and Modifying

Romantic Nationalism, 1920-1950

During the thirty years between 1920 and 1950, only one book of English-Canadian criticism that was not Romantic nationalist in outlook was published. Significantly, W. E. Collin, author of the exception, The White Savannahs, 1936, was an English immigrant, who had received part of his education in France. In the context of the almost complete control of the literary institution by the Romantic nationalists, the bitterness, even rudeness of the attacks against these critics by modernists such as F. R. Scott, A. J. M. Smith, Douglas Bush, Hugh Kenner, L. A. MacKay, and Leo Kennedy is understandable.¹ Satire, since it is usually directed at those institutions that have proven most inflexible and resistant to change, is excellent evidence of their power and pervasiveness. Paul Hiebert's Sarah Binks, the most polished and complete of these attacks, is the best evidence that Romantic nationalism had reached the saturation point in English-Canadian criticism by the time the book was published in 1947.²

During periods of transition, issues become polarized. Both S. E. D. Shortt and T. D. MacLulich label the period between 1890 and 1940 an "age of transition"—for Shortt the focal transition is the movement from idealism to empiricism, for MacLulich from traditional British Tory values to liberal American values.³ Some people reacted to the changes by adopting the new ideas gratefully; others,
in the face of what seemed to them social and moral chaos, clung to the old virtues more fervently than ever.

Although the Romantic nationalist literary institution resisted allowing new ideas in criticism or innovative styles in poetry to affect its literary tastes and aims, it was not entirely unaffected by changes in the Canadian social and political environment. The First World War had not only inspired Canadian nationalism, but also, for many Europeans and some Canadians, made nationalism an attitude to be examined rather than an emotion it was "natural" to feel. And what had always been a rather dubious concept of racial homogeneity in Canada was utterly shattered by new immigration from Eastern Europe that did not meet the desired "Nordic" standard. The fragile rationalizations of Canada's racial "anomalies" had to be revised again. Canada became an urban country; by early in the 1920s more Canadians were living in cities than in the country, and this changed the whole notion of "the people" and of course, of the audience. A new technology had to be assimilated to a literature and a literary theory that had always focussed on nature. Lampman's "The City of the End of Things" was no longer simply a nightmare. The hostility between the English and the French over the conscription issue made it clear to wishful thinkers that assimilation was not the answer, and that French-Canadian culture would have to be taken seriously, and somehow integrated into the scheme of the national literature.

Changes in foreign literary theory were easy to ignore—most English-Canadian critics were not interested in theory. But changes in Canada, at the very focus of their interest, were less easily
overlooked. Gradually critics began to revise the Romantic nationalist theory to fit Canada; gradually they began to acknowledge those areas where the theory did not suit the Canadian situation. Instead of slavishly adhering to a theory that insisted that various "extrinsic" factors—notably a homogeneous people speaking a national language—be present before a national literature could develop, they began to apply it less strictly. Although they did not try to refute this deterministic and inapplicable theory, they turned it around somewhat by arguing that a national literature could develop a national spirit that might compensate for Canada's lack of some of the less malleable prerequisites for nationhood—like a distinctive and homogeneous geography, or a national language. These small changes were often made in a defensive spirit; faced with a new Canada they did not always like and a new generation of critics with a theory that seemed to neglect, even to reject the idea of a nation, the Romantic nationalists made some small concessions.

Romantic nationalist ideas began to be supplanted in Europe and Britain at the turn of the century by naturalism and aestheticism. Later, the New Humanism of Irving Babbitt and the ideas of T. S. Eliot and the Symbolists, and later still, the ideas of the New Critics affected criticism in the United States and Great Britain. In Canada, these ideas did not take hold, at least not when Canadian literature was being considered. Consistently, English-Canadian critics proved more conservative than foreign critics, and, less understandably, than English-Canadian writers as well. This last was a tendency that began early, as Robert L.
McDougall notes in his "A Study of Canadian Periodical Literature of the Nineteenth Century":

The few performances of the British American [1863-64] in the field of literary criticism suggest the lingering, yet still quite vigorous, presence of thorough-going romantic concepts; its practice of fiction, on the other hand . . . suggests the modification of romantic themes and overtones under the influence of a growing taste for psychological realism and realism of setting.4

Desmond Pacey makes a comment about Lorne Pierce that reveals the same disjunction between criticism and literature. Pierce, who Pacey feels was the representative critic of the 1920s, firmly maintained Romantic tastes and ideas throughout the rise and establishment of modernism in Canada.5 Yet the reluctance of critics to espouse new critical theories was, in the Canadian context, understandable. The new ideas were not particularly useful in promoting either an infant literature or a faltering nationalism, and indeed the focus in these new theories on the universal and the best did not allow one to study a mediocre and struggling literature with a clear conscience. Romantic nationalist theories did. As a result, criticism lagged behind literature in its theoretical aspect. The 1920s, when Martha Ostenso, Robert J. C. Stead, and Frederick Philip Grove began to bring their versions of realism to fiction, and A. M. Klein, F. R. Scott, Robert Finch, and A. J. M. Smith, among others, began to bring modernism to poetry, were precisely the years when Romantic nationalist critics had the greatest influence. Indeed, even those who were challenging the Romantic nationalists for institutional control—the modernist
and realist writers themselves—used Romantic nationalist ideas in their writing. Modern critics also fall back on the old ideas, almost by default, since little serious work has been done on the theory of national literature since the German Romantics first outlined their ideas. Eli Mandel gives another reason for the appearance of these ideas in modern criticism by arguing that "as soon as we add the word Canadian to criticism, we move the object of our concern into a particular space and time, a geographical and historical context." Modern critics are used to working with a theory that prohibits the consideration of context, especially a political context like the one implied by national literature. These critics often fall back on ideas of Romantic nationalism, many so well integrated into our set of stock notions that they seem self-evident. Although some of them, particularly those concerning race, have failed to survive Hitler and Martin Luther King, at least to the extent of losing their academic respectability, others have proven quite durable. As the tenets of Romantic nationalism were designed to justify national unification, and to support cultural self-determination, their appeal to nations that feel threatened either politically or culturally is enough to explain why these ideas were and are so popular and so persistent in Canada (both English and French).

The cause, therefore, of what some literary historians have called a "time lag" in English-Canadian critical trends is not that Canadians were unaware of what was going on in the outside intellectual world. British and American books were uncrated in
Canadian bookstores as soon after publication as transportation would permit, or published simultaneously here. The practice of importing university professors, or hiring Canadians who had been educated abroad (as almost all with doctoral degrees had before 1950), ensured that the latest ideas current abroad would reach Canadian universities. Canadians subscribed widely to British and American periodicals, and literary circles were up-to-date on the latest literary controversies. Claude T. Bissell comments:

In turning over the pages of the Week, one is not oppressed by the consciousness of a time-lag, to use a phrase much favoured by our literary diagnosticians. If anything, the Week was too quick to catch on to the popular fashions. This anxiety to keep abreast of the times often led to a flurry of excited critical comment that had to be revised later when more sober judgments prevailed.  

Barrie Davies makes much the same point about the criticism in the "At the Mermaid Inn" column written for the Toronto Globe by Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, and Wilfred Campbell.  

The whole idea that intellectual movements in Canada were always "a day late" as Charles G. D. Roberts put it in 1883 was true, not because Canadian men of letters were ignorant, but because many of the new ideas did not suit Canada's situation as well as the old ones.

The world was out of step with Canada in other ways. Finally Canadians had faced a great national crisis, and had come out of Ypres, Vimy, and Passchendaele feeling at long last like a nation. Lorne Pierce outlines some of what he felt were the landmarks of national development in his An Editor's Creed, 1960:

There had been Vimy, and I think that Canada as a nation
was born on that fatal ridge. Canada had paid a terrible price for national sovereignty in the winnowing of the nations and never looked back. In 1920 there was born the Group of Seven, and in 1922 the Canadian Authors' Association, the little theatre movement spread from a barn in Naramata, B.C. to Hart House and beyond, while music and ballet, the arts and crafts suddenly became alive, awakened from their long slumber. The whole country seemed to be outward bound, conscious of its emerging identity.  

Alfred Bailey, arriving at the University of Toronto in 1927 from Halifax, comments that he "found there a spirit of Canadian nationalism which was new... The paintings of the Group of Seven were everywhere in evidence and were clearly regarded as representing the first authentic expression of a Canadian spirit..." The nationalism of the critics of the turn of the century was impelled by a fear that Canada might not hold together as a nation. After the First World War this strong tradition of literary nationalism was strengthened by the impetus of war-time patriotic pride, the need to unite a Canada shaken by the conscription crisis and "flooded" by immigrants of bewilderingly diverse backgrounds, the desire to preserve idealist, "aristocratic," "British" values against "vulgar," materialistic American values, and finally, by a desire to make money out of nationalism at a time when, as Lorne Pierce put it, "everything patriotic sold." As Sandra Djwa points out in her "The Canadian Forum: Literary Catalyst," the average Canadian became nationalistic just as the Canadian intellectual (sometimes inspired by his European or American counterpart) began to doubt the value of nationalism: "Canada's strongest sense of 'the new nationality' came at the very point when nationalism in all of
its forms was suspect and at a time when a growing cultural continentalism made such a position difficult if not impossible to maintain. Many European thinkers felt that the First World War had been caused by excessive nationalism, and anti-nationalist articles reflecting this belief began to appear in Canadian periodicals.

During the 1920s, the Dalhousie Review, which was far from radical in its general tone, published articles expressing a wide range of opinion on the subject. Some writers simply recite the nineteenth century position. J. W. MacMillan, a professor of sociology at the University of Toronto, writes in his "National Harmony in Canada," 1923, that "unity is necessary for nationhood." Working from the premise that some races are more advanced than others, he argues that "harmony in race and religion is not to be looked for . . . between people whose racial inheritance or religious outlook is widely different" (p. 188). Not only are some races superior to others (the English, French, and German "races" seem to be his favorites), but so are some languages—"Cree and Bantu" are not vehicles of "high culture" (p. 187). Apprehensions similar to MacMillan's that immigrants of varied "races" would "Balkanize" an already divided Canada are expressed in A. R. M. Lower's "Canada—A Motherland," 1927, and his "Motherlands," 1938; and L. Hamilton's "Foreigners in the Canadian West," 1938. Several other articles quite seriously argue the reality of race. J. A. Lindsay's "National Characteristics" begins with a familiar idea: "National character is mainly the result of three factors—viz., race, environment and history." In opposition to these stands
A. O. MacRae's article, "Must Nationalism Pass?" 1923, which foresees a future Parliament of Man and a move from nationalism to humanism, and one by John Wilson, "Nationalism and the Church," 1932, which proclaims that "nationalism, as we knew it in the days before 1914, is dead." Edward Sapir, in his "Culture, Genuine and Spurious," which the Dalhousie Review published in 1922, comments that ethnologists "fight shy of broad generalizations and hazily defined concepts" and are "rather timid about operating with national 'spirits' and 'geniuses'." Yet he concludes that sometimes it is "convenient to identify the national culture with its 'genius'" and goes on to set out the standard stereotypes of the Frenchman and the Russian. Even those critics who, like Sapir, were unwilling to accept the old clichés about culture were hard pressed to find something plausible to replace them. The earliest clear attack on the whole idea of the racial and biological transmission of culture I have come across is Alfred Bailey's "On the Nature of the Distinction between the English and the French in Canada," 1947. He states that "a man may think in a way that can be described as English; but if he does he has learned to think that way through his social contacts with persons of English culture in some of its various manifestations. His doing so is thus a cultural and not a biological phenomenon."  

Much of the change in ideas about nationalism and race can be ascribed to the influence of foreign writers (and in Bailey's case to the influence of his studies under sociologists Morris Ginsberg and Karl Mannheim at the University of London in the 1930s). Yet there was a powerful incentive coming from within Canada to change
the old idea that racial homogeneity was essential for nationhood. In facing the need of the West for mass immigration from nations that did not fit the "Nordic" ideal, writers turned from the old biological concepts to concepts that emphasized the importance of education and culture in forming a nation. People's minds seemed easier to adapt to Canadian needs than their bodies. After all, a critic whose concern for the nation renders him reluctant to abandon Romantic nationalism is likely to be equally reluctant to cling to those parts of the theory that seem to prove that Canada is not a nation, or that require policies that are detrimental to her progress. This explains the shift in nationalist critics from the use of biological analogies to psychological ones, often equally determinist, but less rigid in their implications.

W. J. Alexander addressed the Classical Association of University College on 16 January 1906 on the issue, and his address, "The Future of the West" was duly reported by the Toronto Mail:

The greatest problem of the North-West was to make it a unit and thoroughly Canadian. It was a hopeful sign that the people who were giving tone to the country were native Canadians, but on account of the heterogeneous population it would be no light task to work out national ideals there. The churches were potent factors in doing so, but one great need of the West was an increased interest in higher education to counterbalance any undue attention to material prosperity. The onus of such an undertaking would largely fall on the teachers and university men of the East.

Obviously addressing the same issue, Robert Falconer, president of the University of Toronto between 1907 and 1932, in his "Education
and National Character," 1925, writes:

It has been previously said that the youth, if well educated, will, when they come to maturity, act in conformity with national character, but it cannot be forgotten that this remark applies to a homogeneous and stable people. Where, however, there is a large influx of different nationalities, the problem of maintaining as well as creating a definite national character is all important.20

He was hopeful of success in this delicate task, however, since he argues that the "West, full of vigour, displays unmistakably the originality of the Canadian type which is all its own and takes control of all other elements that are introduced into the country" (p. 34). Since the West was receiving a large number of non-British immigrants, much to the alarm of racial purists, Falconer's insistence that the "type" was already there and able to assimilate all other types is understandable. Since education, rather than intermarriage is his solution, he is clearly using the idea of "type" in a cultural, rather than a biological sense: "Incoming peoples should as far as possible be educated along with children of older Canadians" (p. 34). B. K. Sandwell wrote in 1918 that "it is highly important that our older centres of learning should continue to send out all over the country a supply of men trained in culture, moderation and Canadian national feeling."21 Clearly the East had discovered enough of a national identity to feel the urgency of converting the West to it. This shift from viewing the people as the source of culture to viewing culture as a tool for forming the people was a significant and representative shift at the national level.
Robert J. C. Stead expressed many of these views in his literary works. Many writers, like MacMillan, felt that only the "white races" were fit immigrants. Stead, in his poem "The Mixer," 1907, seems reconciled to most immigrants, although, "with a few unique exceptions" they are "a disappointing lot," and reassures his readers that Canada will "turn 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow and brown." A letter from John D. Logan to Lorne Pierce, 7 February 1924, reveals that Earl Grey, Governor-General between 1904 and 1911, bought copies of Stead's *The Empire Builders*, 1908, where "The Mixer" appeared, for colonization publicity purposes, and that later, the Canadian Pacific Railway bought copies of Stead's *The Cowpuncher*, 1918, to distribute to prospective immigrants. (Stead became a publicity agent for the CPR in 1913 and for the Department of Immigration in 1919.) K. P. Stich, in his "European Immigrants in the Fiction of Robert Stead," seems surprised that Stead, given his job, did not place more emphasis on European immigrants in his novels, and wonders if Stead "wanted to avoid the widely disputed problems of 'strangers within our gates' and 'enemy aliens' in his fiction." Doubtless there is some truth in this. But most of all, Stead apparently wanted to present the model immigrant to the West, the one from Eastern Canada. As Stich notes, "he emphasized individuals' attempts to start a new life, [but] he preferred these individuals to come from Eastern Canada" (pp. 76-77). Like Falconer, Alexander, and Sandwell, Stead wanted the European immigrants to be exposed to a strong English-Canadian influence; it seems likely that he was directing his novels at an audience of prospective immigrants.
from Ontario and the Maritimes as much as at an audience of prospective European immigrants.

J. Murray Gibbon, who was Stead's superior at the CPR, in his address to the Empire Club, "Canadian Letters and the New Canadian," 1923, tackles people like MacMillan, pointing out that even the British aristocracy had foreign blood, that much of the best recent American literature was written by immigrants, and finally responded to those who argued that immigrants might not be "worthy of receiving or capable of appreciating [the] heritage of English literature." He retorted: "The question is not so much whether the immigrant is worthy of the heritage of Shakespeare, but whether we ourselves are the worthy heirs. The plays that fill the Canadian theatres are not the literary plays—but plays such as 'Up in Mabel's Room,' or 'Getting Gertie's Garter'" (p. 333).

Gibbon was the first President of the Canadian Authors' Association, and his generosity in distributing free railway passes expedited the Western reading tours of writers like Grove, Wilson MacDonald, and E. J. Pratt—another Eastern cultural mission to the West. As Canadian social commentators, writers, and politicians concerned themselves with the West, Quebec became less of a thorn in the flesh of the advocates of cultural homogeneity, and more of an ally. MacMillan writes:

There is no reason for alarm at the prospect of the English and French languages continuing side by side in Canada. . . . Each inherits a rich literature, is adapted to thinking processes of every sort, and is equipped with words for every modern situation. This is not true of many of the languages imported into Canada by recent immigrants, which close the door upon modern knowledge by their lack of expression, while the few ballads which constitute their
literary inheritance make a poor substitute for Shakespeare or Molière.\textsuperscript{26}

Many early critics had simply ignored the problem of assimilating French-Canadian literature into the national literary theory, possibly on the assumption that the French would be assimilated first. But important critics had always pointed out that since French Canada had a stronger national feeling than the rest of Canada, this was unlikely. John George Bourinot wrote in 1893:

When we hear aspirations whispered nowadays that there may be only one language in Canada, it is well to consider the influence of ... nervous poetic French on the national feelings of the large population in the province of Quebec. The French language is likely to be deeply seated for some generations yet while there are French-Canadian poets.\textsuperscript{27}

Charles G. D. Roberts commented even earlier, in 1883:

In the midst of this Anglo-Saxon Canada there is an offshoot of another race, which displays the most persistent vitality and the most enduring individualism. It does not seem possible to believe what so many prophets tell us, namely, that we are destined to absorb or blot out our French-Canadian brothers. ... They have attained a richer energy of national feeling and patriotic devotion than has yet quickened in our sluggish veins. More closely have they identified themselves with the soil that bears them.\textsuperscript{28}

Alfred Baker upheld the principal of a bi-racial Canada in his 1916 presidential address to the Royal Society of Canada:

One or two writers of surpassing merit in English or French would help to give us political cohesion, and impart to the two dominant races that intellectual influence which makes for unity, and against which no third race could long or successfully struggle.\textsuperscript{29}
Just as the issue of race had, for the most part, been discussed in a few polite paragraphs by English-Canadian critics until the European immigrants began to outnumber the "native-born" Canadians of British descent, so did the issue of class remain almost dormant until a large urban working class began to be visible. To begin on an extreme note from the old guard--Andrew Macphail was 78 when he wrote what follows--is to realize how "aristocratic" the viewpoint of many of the Romantic nationalists was. In his "Art and Democracy," Macphail equates democracy with anarchy and argues that "democracy never yet created a civilization, and without a civilization there can be no art," since art "requires a civilized aristocracy." He continues in a Malthusian and Social Darwinist vein: "Too much time is devoted by university-educated women and weak-kneed clergymen to the poor, surrounded by ugliness--they should turn their gaze to beauty and art" (p. 177). He concludes in a way that indicates how many of the old "idealists" that S. E. D. Shortt discusses in his The Search for an Ideal must have felt in the 1920s: "The social fabric is falling" (p. 178). Younger idealists felt this too; Edward McCourt writes in 1948 that "Canada and Canadian literature have come of age in a time of spiritual confusion and bewilderment without parallel since the fall of the Roman Empire." Lionel Stevenson sees the simple Romantic nature poetry produced by Canadians as a refuge from the disturbing social problems of other countries.

Certainly the critical meaning of popular changed between 1900 and 1920. James Cappon, in his Charles G. D. Roberts and the Influence of his Times, 1905, calls for a national literature that
will appeal to the people as did the poetry of Burns, and says that this appeal "has always, of course been the line of the great popular or national poet, and nothing less popular seems capable of catching the ear of the democracy of our time." Here he equates popular and national. In his second book on Roberts, published as Charles G. D. Roberts by Ryerson in 1925, although most of this work relies heavily on the earlier text, Cappon invests popular with a negative note. He dismisses Roberts's animal stories with comments such as "Roberts must popularize his tale . . . which gives it the appearance of a fake history. . . ." and argues that the tale "easily falls into lower popular forms of the romantic" (emphasis added). The "people," whose taste was once regarded as a touchstone of a poet's ability to capture the national soul, become the familiar modern mass audience, whose taste is usually regarded by modern academic critics as a touchstone of a poet's superficiality.

Much early English-Canadian literary criticism was more elitist or "aristocratic" in its outlook than Matthew Arnold's; one strong reason for this was the proximity of the republicanism of the United States. Not only did a national literature provide, in Dewalt's words, the "subtle but powerful cement" of national unity, it also preserved Canadians from falling victim to the lure of the vulgarities of mass culture, urbanization, modern technology, and materialism. The real wilderness which might have inspired a critical or poetic "garrison mentality" was quickly replaced by the wilderness of cheap novels, "trashy" magazines, and advertising that menaced the culture of the small Canadian élite. Pelham
Edgar complained in 1909 that "it is certainly the prevailing stress of lower class sentiment which disfigures our streets, cheapens our literature, and debases the standards of our public honour." In Canada the tension between culture and anarchy was intensified by popular literature's tendency to be not only vulgar, but also American. The obvious preference the majority of English-Canadian readers showed for American popular literature was a frequent cause of rhetorical despair in English-Canadian critics, concerned that the "national sentiment" so necessary for the development of a great national literature might be eroded. The answer was, for those who were optimistic enough to feel there was an answer, to replace the American popular literature with Canadian popular literature, and to educate the masses. This seems ordinary enough—except that in this formulation literature is no longer seen as a product of the people; instead of arising out of their inarticulate desires and inchoate qualities, it is to be used to teach them and to mould them. When J. D. Robins dedicated his anthology A Pocketful of Canada, 1946 to "the man in the street and the woman in the streetcar," it is not because they are, like the reaper singing in Romantic fields, or the fishermen hauling in their nets, the (at least supposed) source of the myth, the song, the folklore that underlies the literature in the anthology, but because they are, like most modern audiences, at the receiving end of a one-way cultural message. Interestingly, Robins edited this anthology for a body named on the title page as "The Canadian Citizenship Council." Just as the new immigrants needed to be educated by Canadian literature into an understanding of Canada, so, apparently,
did the urban masses, people who had never seen the Laurentian Shield, need to be inspired by wood-cuts of pine trees and poems about the vast Canadian wilderness.

As the phenomenon of mass culture forced itself on the attention of English-Canadian literary critics, they had to revise their definition of the audience, often turning from the people to something like Coleridge's "clerisy." Since the people resisted all attempts to convince them to be the kind of audience Romantic theory demanded, the critics were to provide it. As Grove put it in a CBC radio broadcast on "Literary Criticism" in 1938, the "critics of the nation are the visible representatives of the invisible but none the less real audience of the ages" which gives the writer "the ideal audience to which he can address himself."37

The critics, for Grove, could fill the function formerly performed by the people, by producing a "homogeneity of judgment" or a "national movement of spiritual experience" which has "proved to be the only thing that has ever justified the existence of any nation on earth" (p. 49). Even though Grove realizes that the old reliance on the public as the true judge of literature must go, he cannot abandon the system, which requires a relationship between the poet and his audience to form a "national" spirit—he simply substitutes a national critical audience for the people.

English-Canadian critics began to deal more flexibly with the related issues of myth and folklore around this time. As realism became more acceptable, the concern about Canada's lack of myth lessened. Even Canada had real life. In 1915, Robins wrote that "Marconi battling with nature for the secret of wire-
less is interesting and temporal; Sigurd battling nine days on
the gloomy, mist-girt Drachenfels with the fiery Dragon is self-
exploratory, sublime, eternal."38 Pratt, although his ideas were
in accord with Romantic nationalism in most ways, could write:
"At first sight it might be said that an object such as a bull-
dozer could not be regarded as a thing of beauty. . . . Relate it
to a deed and it takes on a life colouring. . . . What are the
air and ether made for but to transmit those glorious despatches
of human valour and sacrifice. . . . "39 Like landscape, tech-
nology, invested with the human, became Romantic and poetic again.
Writers became reluctant to accept Canada's lack of myth and folk-
lore as an irreparable defect. At her death, Marjorie Pickthall
was working on a novel, "The Beaten Man," in which she hoped to
"show the possibility of the birth of Canadian legend, the making
of the white man's myth."40 She was specifically countering Rupert
Brooke's widely repeated opinion that Canada is bare of interest
for the poet: "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. . . ."41 Pickthall notes
that 'such figures there are; but they are reticent, brown spirits
who do not speak to the usurping Anglo-Saxon."42 Myth, she felt,
although it was "in the end a collective memory, passionately typi-
fying the heart of a whole race, a composite flower rising from a
soil made fruitful by the disappointments and the dreams of man,"
could be constructed: "Let no one, poet or not, think . . . that
the process by which man inevitably idealizes his experiences has
passed from the earth with the coming of the internal-combustion
engine" (p. 119).

Yet despite the slight increase in flexibility, forced by the social changes of the 1920s, most Romantic nationalists remained oriented towards the past—and often towards the European or Classical past. E. K. Brown was one of the few critics who pointed to a need for yet more change:

It has been necessary to realize that the very large majority of Canadians do not any longer live in the wilds; and that if one is to interpret Canadian life in a realistic way one can no longer do so in terms of animal stories, Indian legends, clearings in the midst of frozen wastes and the homespun pioneer virtues. . . . The metropolitan areas of the two largest cities of Canada taken together contain almost two million people. A country in which this condition exists . . . is no longer satisfactorily interpreted by poetry of nature alone.43

Most Romantic nationalists, however, clung to their Romantic poetic tastes and standards more fervently than to the belief that each generation of poets would "reflect the nation" in a new way.

Nine general critical works about English-Canadian literature (several also considered French-Canadian literature), were published between 1920 and 1950: Ray Palmer Baker's A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation, 1920; John D. Logan's and Donald French's Highways of Canadian Literature, 1924; Archibald MacMechan's Head-Waters of Canadian Literature, 1924; Lionel Stevenson's Appraisals of Canadian Literature, 1926; Lorne Pierce's An Outline of Canadian Literature, 1927; Vernon Rhodenizer's A Handbook of Canadian Literature, 1930; W. E. Collin's The White Savannahs, 1936; E. K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry, 1943, rev. ed. 1944 (discussed in chapter six); and Edward McCourt's The Canadian
West in Fiction, 1949, rev. ed. 1971. Of these, only Collin's does not fit into the Romantic nationalist tradition; the other critics take the value of nationalism in literature for granted, although Stevenson rejects the need for Canadian subject matter. McCourt, writing of the West, is most concerned with the issue of immigration, and his easy acceptance of novels written by Vera Lysenko and Frederick Philip Grove as Canadian certainly seems the simplest way to deal with the "problem." MacMechan and Pierce are both extremely concerned to integrate French-Canadian literature into their discussion of Canadian literature. For the most part these works consolidate more than they modify; oddly, the most original--Stevenson's Appraisals--is in many ways the most conservative.

Of these nine works, the four intended as textbooks are the least interesting. MacMechan wrote for his course at Dalhousie, Logan for his (and Rhodenizer's) at Acadia, Pierce aimed at a general school audience, and Rhodenizer wrote for his course at Acadia after using and rejecting both Logan's and Pierce's textbooks. All four books are organized as literary histories, and work from the central Romantic nationalist thesis that a nation's literature reveals its soul. MacMechan's, because it is selective and has a clear evolutionary thesis, is the best.

The purpose of MacMechan's Head-Waters of Canadian Literature, published in 1924 by McClelland and Stewart is, by tracing the gradual growth of the national spirit through the works of the most important writers, to decide whether Canada has a true literature--a literature that reveals "the life, the soul of a people." Like
most Romantic nationalists, MacMechan sees literature as dependent on political status—"Only after Confederation are the writers of Ontario distinctively Canadian" (pp. 99-100). Geography is also crucial to Canadian literature:

Nature-worship is the "note" of Canadian poetry, French as well as English. Poets of other nations find beauty, love, the soul their first concern; but our native bards seem to turn instinctively to the external world. Perhaps it is because the Canadian climate, with its fierce extremes of heat and cold, forces them to fix their eyes upon the procession of the seasons.... (pp. 170-71)

MacMechan sees a danger in younger poets moving to more cosmopolitan themes and settings, because this leads to "loss of touch with the creative, life-giving, native soil" (p. 237). He defines as Canadian writers only a limited group—those who, born in Canada, or at least educated here, write on Canadian themes. His criteria are established, for example, in his discussion of Marjorie Pickthall:

Though born in England, Miss Pickthall came to Canada as a child, was educated and spent her formative years in this country; but environment has exerted little influence on her verse. (p. 221)

MacMechan would clearly very much like to claim Pickthall as a Canadian poet—he says that at least "Canada cannot be denied the honor of having given her a home and being the first to acclaim her authentic gift of song" (p. 222) and points to Canada's "subtle contribution" to her poems. This subtle contribution, alas, is that "maple leaves are entwined in a song of the nativity" (p. 226), that she occasionally writes of winter, and that the "clear Canadian
skies and hopeful air may have had some influence on the serene tone of all Miss Pickthall's poetry" (p. 227). MacMechan's regret that he cannot enshrine Pickthall in the canon is palpable: "The patriotic critic is wistfully conscious that Canada has neither part nor lot in this achievement, and he wishes his country could lay claim to it" (p. 229). Obviously, then, a poet who did not write about Canada was not a Canadian writer even though "formed" and educated here. And MacMechan puts great emphasis on the importance of "formation" by Canadian institutions. Sara Jeannette Duncan's success "is proof positive that Canadian conditions un- sided can form a writer of outstanding ability" (p. 138). Writing about Albert Lozeau, MacMechan takes the point even further:

What makes Lozeau's work significant is that his culture is exclusively Canadian. He has submitted to no alien influences. He has not travelled, even in his own country. He has escaped the deadening effects of ordinary school and college training. His long illness has forced him back upon himself... (p. 176)

Although he elsewhere notes the importance Lozeau places on "Chenier, Hugo, Lamartine, Musset, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, and the other great masters" (p. 165), MacMechan here seems blind to the rather vital influence of reading. Because, for the Romantic nationalist, "imitation is an admission of inferiority" (p. 220), and because a national literature must be sui generis, MacMechan is forced into making a contradictory statement. What seems to be MacMechan's wilful blindness is the effect of his institutional conditioning and theoretical allegiance, and is, of course, only the reverse of many New Critics' wilful blindness to the importance of social and
political influences on a text.

Although MacMechan is working with many of the familiar ideas, he has set them in a framework that is both geographical and historical. He sees an institutional pattern of development moving from east to west and from local to national. The idea that literature needs a sound institutional basis—of educational institutions, magazines and newspapers, publishers, literary societies, history books—and therefore follows the frontier rather than precedes it, was common enough at the time, and has been developed by Wilfred Eggleston in his *The Frontier and Canadian Letters*, 1957.\(^{45}\) In each region, as it is settled, MacMechan follows the development of these literary institutions as "proof of the rapid growth of a vigorous local patriotism" (p. 28). Like many Romantic nationalists MacMechan puts a great deal of emphasis on the writing of history, because "a people that is unmindful of its past can have no future" (p. 199). Without a national spirit, no literature can be produced—MacMechan uses the writing of history, which "proceeds from local, provincial, or nation self-consciousness and pride" (p. 27) as a marker of progress in the development of patriotism. In his last chapter he points to the production of such national historical reference works as *Chronicles of Canada* and *The Makers of Canada*, and to the foundation of journals such as *Queen's Quarterly* and the *University Magazine*, as precursors of a true national literature. The rich contributions of Canadians to the production of Canadian history are the result of "a potent force working silently for national unity" (p. 234). The foundation of these historical and literary institutions is inspired by "the strong
sense of nationhood, which is felt first by the keenest minds, by the intellectual leaders, the makers of opinion and by them communicated to the mass" (pp. 198-99). Again the interrelation between literature and nationalism, between poet and people is made clear.

MacMechan emphasizes material development strongly in connection with literary development, and this connects with the need to involve the people in the literary process. MacMechan links the development of a national literature with the prosperous First World War and post war period, when finally Canadian writers could make a living in Canada and were selling in their own country. At last the all-important audience for national literature had developed:

The Canadian public is interested in itself, and is able and willing to buy home-grown books. . . . A Canadian public has been formed which is ready to welcome the work of Canadians and is becoming more and more competent to judge that work. (p. 235)

As MacMechan notes in the preface, his book's "chief singularity lies in treating together the Canadians who write in French and the Canadians who write in English." Although he believed as strongly as most in the necessity for national cultural homogeneity he also was able to face facts:

Any account of Canadian affairs must recognize the basal fact that the country is inhabited by two races which are not in harmony with each other. This antagonism is more or less pronounced, according to circumstances of actual social contact, or of commercial rivalry, or of political excitement. No good end is served by shutting one's eyes and denying that this antagonism exists. (p. 85)
MacMehan acknowledged that there had been attempts to bridge the gap, but noted that they were all from the English side. Consideration of each side's position in Romantic nationalist terms reveals why this was so; of course the English were in a dominant economic and political position and could afford to be magnanimous. Besides, cultural conversion is better than coercion.

But in terms of Romantic nationalist theory, Quebec had all the advantages, all the qualifications for perfect nationhood—Canada as a whole, or even English-Canada separately, did not. English-Canadians insisted that the French spoken in Quebec was not a national language, but a decadent and bastardized patois, but their jealousy of Quebec's nationalism comes through at every turn; MacMehan comments of two famous French ballad writers, the "English of Canada may well envy the French in the possession of Crémazie and Gérin-Lajoie" (p. 69). For the English-Canadians, Canada without Quebec would be even less like a real nation than the somewhat defective nation they had; for the French-Canadians, a Quebec without Canada seemed perfectly reasonable. So while English-Canadian literary critics struggled to rationalize their nation so that it fit the theory, the French-Canadians simply forged ahead, confident at least that they had a nation, if not a state. In literature they had the theoretical, and therefore, the psychological advantage, which may explain the early maturity and late excellence of Quebec culture, despite the fact that it suffers even more than the rest of Canada from literary domination (from France) and from having only a small market for its literature.
Archibald MacMechan, like Dewart, saw literature as a political force that could act as a cement to hold the two main parts of Canada together. He wrote several literary columns, but the most long-lived was "At the Sign of the Book and Beaver," which ran from March 1906 to September 1907 on the editorial page of the Montreal Standard, then changed its name to "The Dean's Window"; under this title it ran until MacMechan's death in 1933. (MacMechan revised several of these columns for Head-Waters.) In this column, to his predominantly English audience, he wrote occasionally on both English- and French-Canadian literature, in order "to do what I can to promote a good understanding between the two great sections of our people. . . . Literature offers a common meeting ground above the storms of party." In his first column on a French writer, Octave Crémazie, he quotes in French without translation. Although he does not try to minimize the differences between the two literatures, he points out that their authors "are both affected by the genius of the land they live in, and by the political institutions they have framed" (p. 53). In Head-Waters, he notes that Ontario's "literary development shows a fair parallel to Quebec's" (p. 100). (This is the thesis of Ronald Sutherland's Second Image, 1971.)

MacMechan gives a good historical account of the rise of French-Canadian nationalism, although he criticizes many of its premises. His corrective account of the historical ideas of François-Xavier Garneau, Octave Crémazie, and Louis Fréchette is always couched in terms most understanding of the position of a conquered nation: "The French in Canada must always labour under
a sense of grievance, just as the English would if the status of
the two races were reversed" (pp. 69-70). His admiration of pat-
riotism, and of its positive effects on literature, as well as
his desire to present the predicament of the French in a sympa-
thetic way, leads to the conclusion that the tendency in the
French history "to decry all things English and exalt all things
French" is "natural enough and almost laudable" (p. 70). None-
theless he takes care to revise Garneau's picture of the oppressed
habitant, abandoned by France to the English oppressors, arguing
that the British liberated the French in Canada from feudal
tyrranny, and concludes: "If the British were tyrants, the his-
torian must explain the paradox of the alien race fighting for
their tyrants instead of against them, within sixteen years of
the Conquest" (p. 67). While disagreeing completely with such
writers as Garneau and Fréchette, MacMechan must emphasize that
their methods and inspirations are similar to those of English-
Canadian poets. For example he compares Lampman and Lozeau; both
have the "mark of the native-born Canadian" which is "his equal
delight in the heat of summer and the cold of winter" (p. 172).
Clearly life in the same landscape is seen as a unifying factor.
Another unifying factor, MacMechan suggested, would be "a native
fiction" that would interpret the "half our people who are French
and Catholic"49 to the rest. William Henry Drummond was "the first
and best interpreter of the French-Canadian" (p. 88). But fiction
was necessary too, and not the "utterly unreal" romances of Gilbert
Parker, but a more realistic view of the ordinary people. Writers
should describe "the life of Jean Baptiste with his ten or a dozen
children in his little cabin, on his little strip of farm, his hopes and fears, his relation with his neighbours, his parish priest, his deputy." Although MacMechan himself has an incorrect, or at least stereotypical picture of the habitant in his mind, it was one made commonplace by the French roman de la terre as well. MacMechan's solution to regionalism, especially in Quebec's case, was for writers to write of their own region and its ordinary people so as to create a feeling of national solidarity and brotherhood.

John D. Logan is to English-Canadian literary criticism what James MacIntyre, the "Cheese Poet" is to English-Canadian poetry. Logan may well have studied under William James and George Santayana while he was getting his doctorate at Harvard, but he does not appear to have learned much from them. No one can doubt his enthusiasm, nor the sincerity of his desire in his Highways of Canadian Literature, 1924, to show how Canadian writers "expressed in literature the slowly emerging consciousness of a national spirit and a national destiny in the Dominion." And no one can deny that, apart from the three chapters written by Donald French, the work stands as a monument to all that was worst in Romantic nationalist literary criticism. It seems likely that French only became involved in the project when, as McClelland and Stewart's literary editor, he tried to grapple with the manuscript. Judging by Lorne Pierce's complaints about Logan's Thomas Chandler Haliburton volume in the Makers of Canadian Literature series, it is probable that one of the conditions for publication set by McClelland and Stewart was that French be given credit for
what Logan acknowledges in the Preface as a "critical revision of the whole work" (p. 7). Logan's repetitious, clumsy, pompous, and idiosyncratic style is still painfully evident in the edited version. The style could perhaps be overlooked if Logan had no other faults. But he is given to establishing artificial and pedantic distinctions which need to be propped up with pages of repetitious qualification. He sets up "epochs," "movements," and "schools" in a literary history that is constantly in danger of dying without issue. (Ironically, he is constantly trying to set up one writer or another as the "father" of one of his specious trends.) He tries to cover the period from 1790 to 1924 not only for belles-lettres, but also for history, essays, hymns, journalism, and other miscellaneous writing. He is working from familiar tenets, but in a confused way. He makes judgments that seem to result from bias rather than from the application of the few criteria he does set out for Canadian poetry. A Canadian writer should have been born after Confederation in Canada, or at least have arrived with an unformed mind so as to absorb "the Canadian nationalistic spirit" (p. 94). His works should ideally be set in Canada, or at least express "the growing sense of the Canadian national spirit" (p. 95). And he should stay loyal. Robert's nature poems, because his "vision of Canadian nationality and his interest in expressing it forsook him" (p. 114) are subjected to the following confused judgment:

For though they be beautiful, simple, and realistic, the ethical element in them is always a reflection, a moral platitude, from the poet's own moralizing, or a recrudescence of some older poets' moralizing.
The public is quick to detect insincerity in a poet. While it would not be just to accuse Roberts of insincerity whenever he attempts to moralize in his nature-poetry, ... it is still true that Roberts' nature-poetry is too superficial, too obviously 'an effort' to make pretty or charming pastels of Canadian scenery and pastoral life, too lacking in thoroughly humanized treatment of Nature, to be popular or cherished for its own sake by the Canadian people. (p. 124)

Other Romantic critics have criticized Roberts in this vein—Lampman, his insincerity, Waldron, his failure to deal with human life—Logan has stirred all these ideas together with just enough praise to arouse the suspicion that he feared to give offence. And this tendency to make direct statements—that Roberts's nature poems are "beautiful, simple, and realistic"—and then to knock them flat, or qualify them into meaninglessness—is typical.

Logan, in his chapter on Carman, begins "Bliss Carman is the only Canadian-born poet who reasonably and inevitably challenges comparison with English and United States poets of admitted distinction" (p. 139). He then qualifies this for a page and a half. After listing how Carman is outdone in almost every poetic skill by other lesser Canadian poets, he reiterates "Yet indubitably Bliss Carman is the very foremost of Canadian-born poets" (p. 140). Logan, although he makes the occasional perceptive statement, should never have been allowed to publish this book. That it was the first since Archibald MacMurchy's outdated Handbook of Canadian Literature, 1906, to provide a general history of English-Canadian literature, is McClelland and Stewart's only excuse.

Lorne Pierce's An Outline of Canadian Literature (French and English), published by Louis Carrier in 1927, is clearly an out-
growth of Pierce's work on the Makers of Canadian Literature series for Ryerson Press. The book hesitates in genre between annotated bibliography, biographical dictionary, and literary history, with small patches of theory at beginning and end; perhaps this simply indicates that it is, as the foreword states, intended to be a textbook. Pierce's style is uncertain too; he has an unfortunate tendency to misplace modifiers, to drop into sentence fragments, and to use overblown or over-genteel language. Of Lozeau he writes: "As for love itself, his amative poems are flushed with the warm color of health, being as delicately chaste as they are sweetly lyrical."  

His central critical tenet is familiar:

A great literature may be defined as the fine flower of an organized, self-conscious society. It is the characteristic utterance of the soul at the centre of things, about which the life of a people integrates. . . . In so young a country as Canada, possessing so many diverse and ill-blended national strains, it is scarcely to be expected that we should achieve, at so early a stage, a definite, authentic, national consciousness. (p. 17; cf. pp. 236-37)

He also, like so many other earlier critics, discusses the question of literary antecedents:

We are the inheritors of many centuries of Indian traditions, and the best of this will ultimately find a place in our literature and art. Moreover we trace our cultural ancestry back to the chansons of Normandy. Our roots are also buried in the same soil that nourished Caedmon, the Niebelungenlied, and Ossian. (p. 17)

The fact most worth noting in Outline is Pierce's evident concern for the improvement of French and English Canadian cultural
understanding. He dedicates the book to Camille Roy, a prominent French-Canadian literary critic, and quotes in French without translation. He speaks somewhat wishfully of a "literary federation" demonstrated by the inspiration of "Kirby, Mrs. Leprohon, Mair and others" by "French history and tradition. . . ."

He continues:

The year in which William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* appeared, 1877, is an important one in the history of our literature. Trails had been cut between Upper and Lower Canada connecting their intellectual life, but this novel, by its very commercial success, and in spite of its artistic shortcomings, opened up the highway from Niagara to the Citadel, from the heart of one tradition to the core of another, and since that day a multitude have walked thereon. (p. 12)

Despite his evident wish to see greater cultural contact between English and French Canada, he sees French Canada as separate not only from France, but also from English Canada: "French Canadian fiction is essentially national. Instead of *intrigues de boudoir* there is a preoccupation with the great traditions of their history, their manners, family life and religion" (p. 18). Pierce then suggests a list of French-Canadian novels that the English Canadian should read to "find a highway to the hearts of our fellow countrymen, which constitutes the only real rapprochement" (p. 23). This interest in French-English harmony is characteristic of Pierce's entire career--from his inclusion of French authors in the Makers of Canadian Literature series to his *Toward the Bonne Entente*, 1929, to his image of the bridge in his *An Editor's Creed*, 1960. In his conclusion, "The Genius of Canadian Literature," Pierce
attempts to analyse the national character as reflected in
Canadian literature. Most of his conclusions are backed up,
however, not from the literature, but from one simple generali-
zation about Canada. This is a young country, and therefore "our
literature is marked by simplicity and sincerity, the eagerness
and genuineness of youth" (p. 238-39); he adds qualities like
expansiveness, fellowship, humour, and idealism, and uses adject-
tives like unstudied, artistically open-handed, and natural.
Canadians are possessed of "optimism," "courage," "the pioneering
spirit," and "simplicity" (p. 239). The Canadian attitude to
realism "lacks the stern philosophy and morbid psychology of the
Continent, and on the whole is more optimistic and wholesome"
(p. 242). Canadian literature is mystical, practical, and reticent
all at once. Finally Pierce points to the Canadian love of nature.
The long list of adjectives and attributes does not permit Pierce
to be very coherent, and he concludes that although Canadian litera-
ture shows "no single controlling purpose," it must be national,
because a national literature is necessary for "self-preservation"
and because a "score of our French writers in Quebec have been
crowned by l'Académie Française," and praise of the English writers
has come out of London and New York (p. 244).

Pierce, like so many of these critics, learned about Canadian
literature as he went along, and his work, like that of several
others, occasionally conveys the feeling that to know the names,
dates, and general clichés concerning national writers is suf-
ficient achievement. And it was, to a point, since even to learn
a little about Canadian literature involved searching out obscure
works and doing primary research. The problems of these self-
taught critics result from the lack of an institution—without one all critics begin from scratch, borrowing desperately from the thin accounts of the past, unable to progress because they are always starting over again.

Vernon Rhodenizer had been using Lorne Pierce’s An Outline of Canadian Literature, 1927, in his Canadian Literature course at Acadia University—he had put it on the course in 1928 to replace John D. Logan’s and Donald French’s Highways of Canadian Literature, 1924. Of this work Rhodenizer comments, tactfully, that "Logan's evaluations of the writers examined are sometimes highly personal." Rhodenizer clearly felt he could do better, for in 1930 Graphic Publishers brought out his A Handbook of Canadian Literature. Rhodenizer does not say anything particularly new; he relies heavily on his English-Canadian predecessors whom he acknowledges, not in footnotes, but in a "syllabus" at the end of the text. The main body of the text consists of historical and biographical discussion to which he adds some formal comment. Although Rhodenizer says nothing particularly original, which is perhaps not surprising in a textbook, he is earnest and sensible, rather than enthusiastic and sweeping, and writes in a plain, straight-forward style.

In the small amount of theoretical discussion that Rhodenizer undertakes, he extricates himself from difficulties with Romantic nationalist theory by an admirable flexibility. Where other critics confronted with the bad fit between Romantic theory and Canadian reality lapse into despair or optimistic rhetoric, he puts Canada rather than the theory first. He is extremely concerned with "the
French question" and argues that "we all agree that for the future welfare of Canada, there must be goodwill between English and French Canadians" (p. 15). If the theory does not help the unity of Canada, he quietly drops it; for example he points out that "undue attention to race, language and religion would, because of basic differences, tend to disruption rather than unity" (p. 266). Perhaps it is not completely laudable in Rhodenizer that he often sees literature mainly in terms of its political function, but his approach seems more enlightened than that of earlier critics who seemed to be trying to alter Canada to fit the theory, rather than altering the theory better to fit Canada.

Rhodenizer shows a similar common sense in grappling with the perennial problem of a Canadian critic, Who is a Canadian author? He points out that "it is obviously impossible to make a hard and fast definition of a Canadian author, or even to specify more than one or two characteristics that his work must have" (pp. 11-12). He comes to the conclusion that Canadian critics must consider any work of literary quality that vitally touches the Canadian scene or Canadian people in its subject matter, regardless of how incidental may have been the author's residential contact with the country; or that, though there may seem to be nothing distinctively Canadian in the material, has been written by authors born and bred in Canada, whether or not they have remained in the land of their birth (pp. 12-13).

Despite this flexibility, Rhodenizer's main programme is still a Romantic nationalist one: "to ascertain whether there is a Canadian national sentiment of which Canadian men and women of letters
are the voice" (p. 17). And familiar terms and expressions recur --
blood, race, impressionable years, heredity, environment. Like
many critics, he sums up Canada's literary qualities using the con-
cept of literary evolution: "Canada is a young country, and in
general the spirit of its literature is the spirit of youth. Youth
is characterized by simplicity, sincerity, eagerness, romanticism,
idealism, optimism, courage, and the spirit of adventure. . . ."(pp.263-264)
Rhodenizer's account of the Canadian national character here resembles
Pierce's; both resemble William Arthur Deacon's "The National Character,"
in Deacon's Pens and Pirates, 1923. Confronting the question of
whether Canadian literature "reflects a consciousness of nationality"
(p. 264), he notes that in "the literature of no other country does
the description of nature smack more of the soil of the region that
produced it than it does in Canadian literature" (p. 264). Notice
the way he puts it--the region produces the literature; but this is
not therefore regional literature; Canadian poets describe regions
"in a manner that makes us feel that these regions are a part of our
country and therefore not alien to our interest." He continues:

In literature the prairies, as represented by Grove, for example, do not belong to the prairie provinces,
but to all of Canada, and the same is true of literary representations of the Atlantic region, the St.
Lawrence waterways, the Laurentians, the Niagara district, the Great Lakes, the Rocky Mountains, and
the Pacific coast. Canadian literature expresses what may be called a national consciousness of the
rich and varied natural beauty of Canada" (p. 265).

Rhodenizer goes on to assert that there is sufficient patriotic
poetry in Canada as well. He sums up the reasons why a national
literary consciousness is important by arguing that it is "a great
stimulus to the creation of literature," and that "literature that
is the product of national consciousness stimulates in turn that which produced it" (pp. 265-66)--here again is the cyclic theory of national literature. He also points out that public emotion is the source of great poetry and comments "it would be of great interest to know to what extent the work of the 'Group of the Sixties' is the result of the effect upon them during their most impressionable years of the accomplished fact of Confederation" (p. 266). The most important reason to nurture a national consciousness, however, is to make Canadians "whether they speak French or English, ... one in their love of Canadian soil and in their pride in Canadian achievement" (p. 266). And here he makes a statement that links him with a psychological rather than a biological approach. Instead of attempting to assimilate the French, or maintain racial and religious homogeneity, Rhodenizer argues that unity of spirit is what counts, and that "national consciousness ... is a sure and safe basis for the sentiment of national unity" (p. 266). Rather than insisting that Canada must have a homogeneous people in order to produce a national spirit or a national literature, he argues that the national literature can create the national consciousness necessary for a spiritually united people. Although this shift from an emphasis on the physical or the material reality may seem trivial and simple enough the change from "la race, le milieu, et le moment" to a focus on the literature first is the beginning of the shift to what M. H. Abrams calls the "objective" approach, which analyses literature as a "self-sufficient entity."57

Although Baker, Brown (discussed in the next chapter), and
McCourt tend to be more scholarly and more interesting than the four critics discussed above, they make no significant transformations in the theory. Nonetheless they begin to relate it to certain topics peculiar to Canada—for example the significance of the United Empire Loyalists is central for Baker, and the issue of regionalism is dealt with at length by both Brown and McCourt.

Ray Palmer Baker informs the reader in his preface that A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation, Its Relation to the Literature of Great Britain and the United States, published by the Harvard and Oxford University Presses in 1920, is "practically... the first draft" of "a doctoral dissertation presented at Harvard University shortly after the beginning of the Great War." Much of Baker's book performs the function of a dissertation; he has read a lot of obscure, forgotten, and often, as he admits, justly neglected literature (he includes history, oratory, and memoirs, as well as belles lettres). He evaluates it, using familiar terms like original, derivative, influential, and readable, finds a very few lost jewels, and concludes that Howe, Haliburton, Richardson, Moodie, Leprohon, Sangster, and Heavysege do deserve the critical interest of a later generation. What holds this set of chronologically arranged judgments together is a dual thesis—the first is the familiar evolutionary desire to trace "the development of the national consciousness" (p. 3); the second, less common, is to prove that "until the Confederation the literary forces potent in Massachusetts continued unimpaired in the North," and that before 1867, the "literature of the United States was the literature of Canada" (p. 183). Only
with Confederation, he asserts, "arose what may be called a Canadian literature" (p. 186). Baker does not rely on racial or geographical assumptions very heavily; his approach is historical. Indeed, he documents the rise of national consciousness rather sporadically, reserving his rhetorical talents for his second thesis. Not surprisingly, Baker's Who's Who entry (1938) is introduced with the information that he is of U.E.L. ancestry, and notes that he, although born in Ontario, is of one of the oldest families in America. His criticism then can be regarded, in part at least, as a contribution to the "loyalist hagiography" discussed by Carl Berger. But Baker does not affect the effusions of Lighthall. He gives equal space to non-Loyalist writers, and is not over-enthusiastic about Loyalist literary abilities. Nonetheless, he reiterates at every suitable point that the Loyalists were the begetters and preservers of the pre-Confederation Canadian literary tradition. For Baker, a writer's importance is based in part on quality, and in part (the larger part it seems) on that writer's literary-historical importance, on his importance to a tradition. The Loyalists were interested in literature—a necessary first step in its creation. Despite the presence of the Scotch and the French in Canada, "Fate . . . favoured the Loyalists," he concludes, since "on their side they had wealth, education, and official position; and to them must be given credit for the maintenance of literary ambition" (p. 51).

Although later research has supported Baker's position, occasionally his techniques of argument seem weak or unfair. His historical or sociological argument rests on his belief in the ability of the Loyalists to stamp "their peculiar ideas on the
communities in which they lived" (p. 34). His early admission that the details of the all-important Loyalist migration "are practically unknown" and that "in Canada, where research is limited, myth has taken the place of fact," (p. 19) is apparently intended to disarm the reader. He scatters statistical data for which he gives no source through the book, data that appear without transformation or acknowledgement in almost every succeeding literary critic who considers the pre-Confederation period. (I suspect many of these figures are taken from histories by Howe and other obviously interested early Loyalists.) Baker's main argumentative tactic is to deny English and Scotch writers any place in the early Canadian literary tradition, despite their merits, which he does scrupulously catalogue. For example he points out that the English tradition, which followed Pope and later Byron and Tom Moore, was imitative, and its adherents "failed to accomplish in verse what Richardson, who found his pattern in America, achieved in prose" (p. 158). He then devotes a chapter to Charles Sangster, who, he feels, was influenced by Byron.

Baker argues that the cultural homogeneity necessary for the development of a literature was provided by the early American immigrants:

The American character which the population had assumed during the Pre-Revolutionary Era thus became unalterably fixed. Everything points to the fact that there was no social or temperamental cleavage after the acknowledgment of Independence. The society of Boston and New York was merely transferred to Halifax, where it existed intact... (p. 178)

The Loyalists' chief boast was that "they rather than their former
countrymen represented the highest traditions of American culture" (p. 178). Now it becomes clear why Baker abandons both geographical and racial arguments; the Loyalists, as immigrants to Canada, had no more time to develop an attachment to the soil than did the Scotch or English with whom Baker is contrasting them, nor were they racially distinct. He argues, therefore, a cultural domination, one that lasted until the wave of immigration that settled the West around the turn of the century: "Until the last wave of immigration, over ninety per cent of the English-speaking people were of American birth . . ." (p. 186).

Although Baker argues for an "unalterably fixed" national type, this is a cultural type, and therefore by definition much less fixed than a racial type. Suspect though some of his argument may be, Baker is moving from a view of literature that focuses on its extrinsic determinants to one that sees literature as a product of cultural and literary influences. As well, Baker's positive attitude to the American influence on English-Canadian literature is a clear break with earlier anglophile English-Canadian literary criticism. Although the American influence on English-Canadian literature was not as all-encompassing as Baker tries to make it seem, there is no doubt that many critics ignored the question of American influence altogether, even when discussing Roberts and Carman, for whom New England transcendentalism was very important.

Although Edward McCourt, in his The Canadian West in Fiction,
published by Ryerson in 1949, is dealing with a region rather than the nation, he shows none of the defensiveness of many writers on regionalism. They are usually anxious to maintain that regional literature does not undermine a national spirit. He simply applies to the prairies the familiar tenets applied by other writers to the nation: "The Prairie Provinces constitute the most homogeneous of the great natural geographic divisions within this country." 

Compare this to Taine’s geographical opening paragraph in the first chapter, "The Saxons," of his History of English Literature: "As you coast the North Sea from the Scheldt to Jutland, you will mark in the first place that the characteristic feature is the want of slope..." 

For McCourt as well as Taine, geography is the beginning. McCourt continues, noting that less than half the population of the prairie provinces is Anglo-Saxon. He counters any impression of disparity this might give with the information that each province is similarly bordered by Americans to the south and a "vast, virtually unexplored hinterland to the north" (p. v). As well, Westerners are "united in their hostility to Ontario," and manifest a "remarkable unity of spirit" (p. v). Prairie dwellers share a "way of life as distinctive as the region which fosters it" (p. v).

Having established the unity and distinctiveness of his literary subject matter by establishing the unity and distinctiveness of the region that produces it, McCourt moves on to discuss the nature of regionalism: "True regional literature is above all distinctive in that it illustrates the effect of particular, rather than general physical, economic and racial features upon the lives of ordinary
men and women" (p. 55). For McCourt as for other Romantic nationalists, landscape description alone is not enough—Grove receives McCourt's special praise for his ability to describe "people in relation to their surroundings" because without this "the great novel of the prairies cannot be written" (p. 56). McCourt rejects the idea of race in the "strict ethnographic sense" in favour of the less rigid idea of adaption in each generation to the landscape. But this concept can be exclusive too, and for McCourt Frederick Niven's novels were weak because 'he was, even "after many years of residence in Canada, ... spiritually an alien. ... Knowledge, enthusiasm, even love are not enough" (p. 54).

Like many writers on national literature, McCourt writes as if the primary function of a regional writer is to express his surroundings: to write about anything else is less than ideal. For example, in what is a very astute summation of Frederick Philip Grove's strengths and weaknesses, McCourt argues that Grove should have stuck to his declared theme—"the struggle of man to conquer nature"—because this would have made Grove's works more regional. McCourt regrets Grove's focus on the struggle between the generations which, although "a natural development of that transitional stage of pioneer life when old and new inevitably clash," is as "old as the race" (p. 59). When McCourt discusses the history of the flourishing literary societies in the West it is mainly to point out that "insofar as the Society interested itself in creative writing its influence was probably detrimental, since it tended to encourage slavish imitation of existing models rather than the creation of a vigorous and authentic regional literature" (p. 7).
Here is the common tendency to wish for a pure contact with the land, uncorrupted by foreign literary traditions and influences. McCourt seemed to believe that an indigenous tradition would develop out of a writer's staring fixedly at the landscape, or noting meticulously the habits of its people.

For McCourt the Romantic nationalist theory provides a framework for a literary history and literary analysis far more interesting and sophisticated than the earlier ones—but it is still the framework.

Neither of the next two writers, although both wrote earlier than McCourt, can be seen as completely Romantic nationalist. Lionel Stevenson clearly derives from this tradition, and his central premise is Romantic nationalist—but in order to support it he is forced to abandon many assumptions vital to his predecessors. To say that W. E. Collin in his *The White Savannahs*, 1936, was ahead of his time, at least relative to the Canadian context, is to imply that Canadian literary criticism should have or would have eventually "caught up" to Collin. But his interests in T. S. Eliot and James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* never were and never became very important to English-Canadian literature or English-Canadian literary criticism. His Canadian poetic subject matter did not make his literary criticism English-Canadian.

His title does imply a concern with Canada as northern landscape—a concern typical of Romantic nationalism. But it is far more representative of Collin's interest in what he calls "the Easter cycle (Life-Death-Life)." Canada as Collin found her
seemed to be sleeping under a blanket of snow—frozen in a cold desert. That the title is derived from a line in Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" connects it far more strongly with Collin's interest in the origins of the religious impulse than with Canadian geography and climate. The "resurrection" in Canadian poetry for Collin was modernism as personified by F. R. Scott, A. M. Klein, Leo Kennedy and A. J. M. Smith. Collin's interest in what he calls "the geography of a heart" (p. 43) also removes him from the Romantic nationalist tradition. He is not concerned with Canadian literature as Canadian except briefly in his chapter on Lampman. When the book was published, he had been in Canada only thirteen years, and knew very little about the English-Canadian Romantic poets, let alone about English-Canadian Romantic criticism.63 Germaine Warkentin, in her introduction to the 1975 reprint, emphasizes the book's originality, and its isolation from the tradition in her comment that "The White Savannahs, as it had no predecessors, has had no posterity."64 This is certainly true. Yet Collin's switch from a focus on the real landscape to a focus on the mental landscape indicates the direction later Canadian critical theory would take. The poet, instead of being determined by the landscape, would begin to create it.

Lionel Stevenson's Appraisals of Canadian Literature, 1926, has been widely praised. Germaine Warkentin notes that Stevenson "broke the historical pattern of English-Canadian criticism by attacking certain central problems," and Carl F. Klinck and R. E. Watters call Appraisals "by far the best general study of its subject" before E. K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry, 1944.65
Stevenson, however, although good, is far from revolutionary. He refutes many of the earlier Romantic nationalist assumptions, but only to emphasize a central Romantic thesis—that the distinctive quality in English-Canadian poetry "may be summed up as a revaluation of mental equipment by fresh contact with the primumordial natural forces." The "reversion to the primitive" (p. 38) that is permitted by the Canadian's "intimate knowledge of primitive nature" (p. 41) allows him to write with "a pantheistic outlook derived largely from various mystical poets and philosophers of the past . . . vitalised and unified by genuine communion with nature in her pristine power, where civilization has never intruded her confusions" (p. 42). Not only does this passage reflect the Romantic's mistrust of civilization, but also Stevenson's religious interest. He was a member of the Toronto Theosophical Society, and maintained his contacts there even after he began his teaching career in the United States.

Stevenson thus devotes his critical originality to defending the most conservative strains in poetry. The poet is to give expression "to the old thing, to the thing older than old, the eternal" (p. 65). The old forms will do for Canada, although "certain literary sans-culottes in the United States" may have decided "that the existing forms must be abandoned, in favor of the visioned panacea 'vers libre', or some other entirely emancipated and virgin mode of expression" (p. 64). Thus although Canadian poets adopted Whitman's "hardy pantheistic creed, his joy in nature" (p. 51) they did not adopt his style since they remained according to Stevenson, "little concerned with human
institutions; their country is still characterised by the dominance of nature, and to represent the effect of nature on the human mind a simple and regular metrical pattern seems to be more appropriate than more complex or irregular rhythms" (p. 49). (He does not say why this is so.) English and American poetry of the 1920s is, according to Stevenson, "entering a period of classicism" (p. 60), emphasizing "form, the cultivation of intellectual conceits and elaborate images, the practise of satire, and the general subordination of feeling to cerebration" (pp. 60-61). This spirit, which he feels is a reversion to the Augustan, is "the outcome of highly developed culture, which finds the focus of its interest in human institutions and the intricacies of social relations rather than in the emotional side of man which is primitive and irrational" (p. 61). Stevenson feels that in Canada, where the primitive predominates, this form of poetry is impossible, since no "artificial mechanism of society" (p. 61) here distracts the poet from nature. (Note the use here of artificial and mechanism, both pejorative terms when used by a Romantic.) Here Stevenson is using the conventional idea that Canadian literature is in an early stage of its development, as is Canada, and therefore must use "primitive" forms. This, according to Stevenson, explains why there are no great novels or plays in Canada since these are sophisticated forms. (This is a point also made by earlier critics.) He feels that the two "most effective novels" (p. 61) written in Canada, Louis Hémon's Maria Chapdelaine and Marjorie Pickthall's The Bridge are nearer to the "epic or the folk-tale than to the English novel" because they deal with "man's conflict with the natural forces—internal and
external—rather than his relations with his fellows" (p. 62). Here Stevenson diverges sharply from the tradition. The Romantic nationalist critics had always insisted that the "human" themes were most important and the most fully-developed narrative genres, those that dealt with social issues—epic, drama, and historical romance—the most noble. Stevenson's move toward nature, always the favorite theme of the best English-Canadian poets, not only elevated the formerly inferior category "nature poetry" but also solved the problem of how to deal with technology and the masses. Stevenson concludes happily that "the Canadian poet is instinctively a romantic" (p. 61) and that since it seems likely that the "proportion of natural and artificial elements in Canadian life" will not change too quickly, "Canadian literature will provide a refreshing haven of genuine romanticism to which the reader may retreat when he seeks an antidote to the intellectual tension imposed by the future progeny of 'The Waste Land' and 'Spoon River'" (p. 62). The implied criticism of obscurity in poetry here is similar to complaints made by Edgar and Brown. Stevenson is clearly a conservative and an idealist. Nonetheless he modifies several more conventional Romantic nationalist assumptions.

Stevenson emphasizes the Canadian’s relative freedom from racial, religious, and class dogmas, a freedom that allows him to estimate "dispassionately the vast accumulation of tradition which forms modern civilization, in order to select and retain whatever appeals to him as appropriate to the new country" (pp. 40-41). (This is very similar to what A. J. M. Smith terms "eclectic de-
tachment." The break in continuity with Old World traditions is no longer seen as a defect in Canadian culture, but as an advantage. For Stevenson, the resulting detachment means that Canadian poets have an approach to nature that is unencumbered by convention. The Canadian becomes aware of nature "before his education in the traditions of culture begins" (p. 41). Thus even when an English-Canadian poet uses classical themes, he deals with them with a "freshness and a reality that might seem impossible in this late era" (pp. 41-42).

Stevenson, like many Romantic nationalists, is concerned with the impact of Darwinism on man's beliefs. As a result of Darwin's discoveries, man "became a mere product of the same forces which had shaped the rest of the cosmos" (p. 57). Stevenson notes that one could, as a result of the theory of evolution, decide to become a materialist, or one could raise material nature "to the level of the spiritual quality which man has always intuitively felt within him. There was no doubt as to which interpretation should be adopted in Canada" (p. 57). Clearly the kind of mystical pantheism adopted by writers such as Robert Norwood, Marjorie Pickthall, Wilson Macdonald, and Bliss Carman is congenial to Stevenson. He was troubled by the "war of churchman and scientist" (p. 42) and felt that "all institutions are insecure and established traditions are cracking" (p. 25). Canadian poets would counter this dissolution: "In response to the challenge of science they have produced a mystical system which is consistent with the scientific theories and yet gives fresh significance to the spiritual element" (p. 98).
Stevenson differed from his predecessors also in his revision of the older model of Canadian literature. He too is concerned with investigating "the existence and nature of any distinctive Canadian quality" in literature (p. vii). He feels, however, that a quality based on the "superficial distinctiveness which Canadian settings and events provide" (p. xii) is only an inferior and transitional phase of a distinctive Canadian "quality of outlook or philosophy" (p. xi). Thus, unlike most earlier critics he downplays Canadian subject matter in his discussion and, although he does devote a large proportion of the book to this topic, it is only as a "survey of prospects and possibilities, not of achievements" (p. xii). He separates the Canadian outlook from "local colour" completely, arguing that since external elements of distinctiveness would tend to obscure the inner qualities of the poems, those which deal with the universal poetic themes are best suited for exemplifying the essential Canadian spirit; it is when the Canadian poets are handling the same materials as their confrères of other nations that the difference in outlook is most pronounced (p. x).

This Canadian outlook is derived from the relationship between the poet and nature, but Stevenson uses a psychological, rather than a biological analogy to describe it. Although the idea that the link between the poet and the land was somehow mysterious and spiritual was well-established, earlier writers had usually noted that a poet was, or was not, "rooted in the soil" and left it at that. Stevenson describes the relationship in more detail:

The intercourse is subconscious, if one may use the slang of the psychologist for something that is really, in this case, more rare and exalted than the movements
of the conscious intelligence. The poet draws his life from the latent forces of the country, and in his turn he gives form to that which must otherwise remain unrevealed to men. (p. 11)

At first, this seems so similar to the old idea of the national spirit, emanating from the people and the land, and recreated in the work of the poet, that the substitution of psychology for biology seems a trivial one. Yet this focus allows Stevenson to drop some of the more troublesome elements implied by the biological analogy, although he occasionally becomes enmeshed in the old concepts or uses the old terminology. Since the relationship between land and poet is psychological, dependent neither on the development of a race, nor on a poet's birth-place, he can argue that the "assertion that only native-born Canadians can produce the national literature, or that only Canadian scenes can constitute it" (p. 3) is foolish. Yet he does come close to insisting that a Canadian writer should be born in Canada, in a later passage:

From childhood surrounded by this vastness and potentiality of nature, the Canadian becomes aware of it long before his education in the traditions of culture begins. Since his sympathy with nature is practically an inbred trait he instinctively responds to those features of religion, myth, or philosophy that retain some meaning as interpretations of Ancient Earth and man's relationship to her. (p. 41)

Here we find the insistence on the "imprinting" of the child during his "impressionable years" before foreign traditions have influenced the purity of his vision. Yet Stevenson's admiration for Hémon leads one to believe that his earlier statement that citizenship is unimportant is a considered one; he probably would feel that
any poet who could break down "the barriers of convention," (p. 10) and could see the landscape clearly could write a "Canadian" poem or novel, as Hémon did.

A nation needs a homogeneous outlook as much in Stevenson's theory as it did in the accounts of the earlier critics; in Canada, he notes, this has been "disrupted by the constant transfusion of peoples from varied races, each with a different mental background"; gradually the "inherent character of this continent" will reduce these differences (p. 6). But Stevenson steers clear of the implications of these statements, and puts emphasis instead on the relationship of the individual poet with nature. This means a de-emphasis of the glorious national past and of human interest; these influences interfere with the poet's clear view of nature; he must clear away "the barriers of convention, of alien or obsolete traditions" in order to commune with his country (pp. 10-11). That Canadian nature is not pervaded "by the sense of the past, the atmosphere of countless settled generations" (p. 11) is for Stevenson an advantage, rather than the handicap earlier critics felt it to be. Canadian authors, unlike their European counterparts are not "brought up in an atmosphere saturated with history" (p. 39). Nature is a-historical: "In Canada three hundred years of history have scarcely made an impression on the immense and ancient mountains and lakes and plains" (p. 41). And Lampman is therefore "free from the insistence of 'human interest' that formerly tyrannized landscape art and nature poetry: Nature is herself the dominant personage, and not a background for the poet's mood" (pp. 80-81). Stevenson is
as selective in his choice of what most affects the Canadian poet—primordial nature—as were the earlier critics who focussed on the North or on the cold climate. Stevenson argues that the image of the "frozen North" although "sufficiently distinctive . . . has fallen into the hands of the popular fiction-mongers and scenario-concocters, who have reduced it to a convention utterly divorced from reality" (pp. 29-30). The cold climate is not essential to his theory anyway, since he does not base it on the development of a national racial type. Stevenson, while he on the one hand limits the Canadian poet's subject matter to nature, on the other hand expands it to include "universal" themes. This expansion helps solve the problem of Canada's lack of a mythology—since for Stevenson the Canadian poets are placed at the beginning of poetic evolution, "the modern mind is placed in circumstances approximating those of the primitive myth-makers . . . ." (p. 39). In Canada, then, a vital mythology can evolve, whereas in "Europe all these concepts have long ago ceased to be vitalized by the Anteus-contact with earth" (p. 38). Greek classical myth can be revitalized by the Canadian poet with a "new contact with nature"—Stevenson cites Marjorie Pickthall's "exquisite poem" "The Little Fauns to Proserpine" as an example (p. 54). The contact with nature helps distinguish Canadian poetry from American, which is marked by "the preoccupation, even in Whitman's time, with cities and factories and immigrating swarms . . . ." (p. 10).

Stevenson has clearly found a way to defend his favorite poets—all strongly influenced by Romanticism and the Celtic twilight, and in a way that neatly includes both their "native"
and "universal" (often classically-influenced) poems in the category "Canadian." His distaste for modern civilization is patent—he avoids even the minimal theoretical connection with society defended by earlier critics. In reducing the source of distinction in Canadian literature solely to a contact with a wild or primordial nature, Stevenson made one break with earlier tradition; in using a psychological model he made another. Many of the elements upon which he laid so much stress appear in the work of Northrop Frye. In his Conclusion to The Literary History of Canada, 1965 Frye connects three images that also appear in Stevenson. Frye quotes Pratt's line concerning "the dragon of the Lake Superior rocks in Pratt's Towards the Last Spike:
"On the North Shore a reptile lay asleep / A hybrid that the myths might have conceived / But not delivered." 69 Stevenson, in commenting on the "immense," "ancient," and "unexplored" landscape, comments:

The inhabitants seem to be precariously perched on a monster not yet conscious of their presence, and if they were to relinquish the perpetual effort of maintaining a foothold their mushroom cities and sporadic cultivation would vanish more rapidly than they have appeared (p. 41).

Pratt's "Laurentian monster," according to Frye is responsible for the "tone of deep terror in regard to nature" that Frye finds in Canadian poetry. Nature in his theory as well as Stevenson's is responsible for the development of a distinctive Canadian psychological stance: "confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing,
and formidable physical setting... communities are bound to
develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality.\[70\]
Stevenson, however, does not see terror as the central response
to nature, despite his "monster" image; his poet is neither
"oppressed\[4\] or alienated; on the contrary he gladly submits
himself to nature's power" (p. 81). Stevenson is more concerned
with developing a theory which incorporates the sentimental pan-
theism of his favorite poets; Frye prefers sterner, more "realis-
tic" stuff.

John Sutherland noticed the similarities between the bases
of Frye's and Stevenson's ideas and the dissimilarities in their
conclusions and comments: "There is as much evidence to support
Stevenson as Frye, and we may assume that the latter has grasped
no more than a meagre half-truth about one group of Canadian poets.
Why, in any case, should he feel that fear, the perception of
nature's cruelty, or preoccupation with death, are the peculiar
possessions of Canadians?\[71\]

Whatever one may think of Stevenson's ideas, he manipulates
the tradition skillfully, producing results that allowed him to
see the poets he regarded as the best as also the most Canadian.

It is easy to see how the advent of realism and modernism
rendered much of this criticism obsolete. Poems or novels that
dealt with the city, technology, "universal" themes, or foreign
culture were almost impossible to discuss positively in Romantic
nationalist terms. Even E. K. Brown, who dealt quite sympatheti-
cally with the modernists, had difficulty appreciating the new
movements fully, and never reconciled himself to social poetry.
Chapter Six

E. K. Brown

1905-1951

Significantly, "The Causerie," after Sainte-Beuve's "Causeries de Lundi," was the title of the literary column in the Winnipeg Free Press to which E. K. Brown contributed between September 1947 and March 1951. A. J. M. Smith, in a review of Brown's On Canadian Poetry, 1943, makes it clear that this title's echo of the past is not incongruous with Brown's critical practice:

"The suspended judgment and the disarming acknowledgement suggest the Paris of Sainte-Beuve and the Oxford of Matthew Arnold; but our critic must be heard in the Toronto of William Arthur Deacon and the Montreal of S. Morgan Powell Smith."¹ John Sutherland (writing not only of Brown, but also of Ralph Gustafson and Northrop Frye), comments that they are all conservative: "They assume that certain ideas or attitudes of nineteenth century poets, fortified by a limited number of contemporary examples, constitute a general description of Canadian poetry. The past becomes a bastion for them. . . ."²

The temptation to dismiss Brown because he is old-fashioned would be strong if so many critics had not resisted it. Desmond Pacey refers to Brown's On Canadian Poetry as "one of the two good books on Canadian poetry"; Northrop Frye comments "E. K. Brown was the first critic to bring Canadian literature into its proper context"; A. S. P. Woodhouse says that Brown wrote one of
the "most important contributions to the history and criticism of Canadian literature yet"; and B. K. Sandwell comments that "no one, I think, in his generation, made a more lasting imprint upon Canadian literary taste. . . . [H]ere was the beginning at least of a reasoned and informed criticism of Canadian current literature." This praise should not obscure the realization that Brown was squarely, if somewhat belatedly, in the tradition of moral idealism and Romantic nationalism espoused by so many of his predecessors. Brown's ideas were not fostered by provincialism, nor by an ignorance of the latest in literature and criticism, but by his Romantic nationalist convictions. He was certainly not unfamiliar with the alternatives. It should be remembered that between 1926 and 1929, when John Glassco was crashing avant-garde parties and Morley Callaghan sparring with Hemingway, Brown was also in Paris, at the Sorbonne. Indeed, in much of his criticism, he explicitly rejects the alternatives to his views, usually because of their distance from social concerns.

Brown's insistence on the interdependence of society and literature, author and audience, is reflected in the organic image he uses in his definition of literature: "A great literature is the flowering of a great society, a vital and adequate society." This premise, central to Romantic nationalism, underlies all his ideas, and marks him off from those modern critics and authors who, according to him, see poetry as a "complicated game" or an "elegant diversion." Critic, reader, and poet all have responsibilities towards one another, and all influence one another. The critic should realize, as Brown wrote of Arnold,
that "the man of culture must recognize two obligations—to strive to possess the best ideas, and to strive to make his ideas prevail." In praising the critic Edmund Wilson, Brown writes that "like Coleridge, Taine, Arnold and the other masters of criticism since the Revolution, Edmund Wilson passes far beyond the area of belles-lettres to occupy himself learnedly and anxiously with the most general problems in modern thought and action." Brown himself demonstrated this wider concern in his articles on education, his war work for Mackenzie King, and his several articles promoting federalism. He saw it as his duty to educate the Canadian public about Canadian literature, and indeed was even more of a "missioner of culture" than Dewart. The didactic tone present in almost all his work is especially strong in "Our Neglect of Our Literature," 1944, and "The Immediate Present in Canadian Literature," 1933.

The audience is responsible to the critic as well as to the artist: "What is really lacking is not Canadian criticism in any sense of the term but an audience for it." Brown's ideal critic, then, like Brown himself, is more a man of letters, intimately concerned with his society, than a specialist critic.

The poet's responsibility is not simply to his society in general, but, more specifically, to his nation. Great literature interprets national life:

Why was War and Peace bought in such quantities in 1941 and 1942? Because it was amusing? Certainly not. Three hundred thousand copies were bought because War and Peace interprets Russia, because it shows the sort of
people the Russians are. . . . If you wish to find out what a nation is really like, the history books will tell you something, but the great novels will tell you more.  

Here Brown adds a slight twist to the Aristotelian idea that poetry is truer than history because poetry is more universal— for Brown it is truer because more national. Literature should not be created for a small group of intellectuals; its function necessitates the careful response of a national audience: "When we acquire . . . pride [in ourselves] our literature may appear to us a vital expression of our national genius. In the best works of our best writers . . . that is what it is today."  

Here reappears Herder's Volksgeist. For Brown, the literary unit was emphatically the nation, not the individual; national genius, not individual genius, was what mattered:  

The ways of genius cannot be fully predicted but the "occasional instance," the single man of genius, is not a literature, and does not bring a literature into being. . . . [T]he stimulus such a writer could give, great though it would be . . . would be a passing stimulus, unless it were assisted by social conditions friendly to creative composition (pp. 26-27).  

Literature for Brown was not holding a mirror up to nature, it was holding a mirror up to the nation: "The literature we have in Canada is our reflection: it shows very clearly what we are and what we are not."  

The writer "is always expressing more than something that happened to his individual self. He is affected by the kinds of people that make up his nation, and the kinds of things that they are interested in."  

National literature has to move through the people, rather than directly from
poet to poet; therefore the literary tradition involves the whole society:

As the general public indifferent to poetry and stupidly distrustful of poets comes to know of Pratt, the place of poetry in the national society will be improved with significant, though perhaps delayed repercussions on the kind of poetry that is composed in Canada (p. 163).

To Brown, who felt that the audience should be both appreciative and exacting, showing a "strong and discriminating interest" in literature, the attitude of the Canadian audience was "unsound and disabling." Despite this negative attitude to the apathetic public, for Brown, public response was still a touchstone for the national note, and therefore, for quality: "No poems from our nineteenth century are so widely known and quoted, often by quite unliterary people, as some of Lampman's sonnets" (p. 117). These unliterary people, even when at their most apathetic, according to Romantic theory provided the poet with a voice: "Lampman's voice is too genuine to be ignored for ever in any country where the language he used with such patient and suggestive fidelity is the language men speak" (p. 118). Brown blames social and economic conditions, in large part the responsibility of the apathetic audience, for the lack of quality in Canadian literature. He frequently points to cases where he feels neglect by the audience and the lack of a literary community has damaged an author's work (pp. 101 and 165). In his "The Immediate Present in Canadian Literature," 1933, he comes to the conclusion that Canadian civilization is not worthy of its authors:
"In our present phase, in which the artist is not an integral part of the national life, the attitude of sincere and profound writers will and must be one of protest and revolt." Later in the same article, he notes:

I do not claim that the great artist is always and everywhere essentially a rebel against his community. . . . What I claim is, merely, that here and now the Canadian artist is properly in rebellion against the Canadian community: that his rebellion is in some sort indispensable to his intellectual and artistic integrity; and that the guilt for his rebellion lies not with him but with the community of which he is, by its own tacit wish, no organic part.\textsuperscript{16}

Here the rebellion of the artist was presumably to serve the same end as Brown's own criticism: the reformation of the Canadian audience. This reformation was vital because "in the long run, it is the society which makes the literature."\textsuperscript{17}

A poem, to be worth consideration, must be."genuine" and must"offer delight."\textsuperscript{18} These two criteria encapsulate the central tension in Brown's thought between the judgment of poetry based on the sincerity of the poet and the judgment of poetry made in terms of the audience. Given these criteria, it is not surprising that Brown used the biographical and sociological approaches rather than a purely textual approach. Although Brown occasionally makes statements which seem to imply that he feels the audience is the final determinant of poetic value, he means this only in a limited sense. The audience that is the final determinant of poetic value is the appreciative but exacting audience that Brown and critics like him were attempting to develop out of the undiscriminating and apathetic Canadian reading public.
Without a fertile soil, national poetry withers. The nation, although it has a soul, remains unaware of it until this soul is presented by the artist. Here Brown writes about the Group of Seven:

The violent colours and decisive lines in which these painters presented our own landscape showed us something strong and decided in ourselves. Perhaps we did not at first like to be found out behind our drab defenses; but in the end we have admitted the truth and enjoyed having our painters tell it to us.\textsuperscript{19}

The poet and the artist see the true nation more clearly than the nation sees itself. Neglect of literature and art causes the loss of the national soul, a check in the progress of civilization, and the decay of poetry. The artist, in the face of this neglect, could withdraw himself from his society, but in doing this he was cutting himself off from his roots and endangering his art, just as the expatriate or the exile did: "The expatriate will find it more and more difficult to deal vigorously and vividly with the life of the country he has left" (p. 9). The critic had to do his best to bring nation and artist together again—and it was the national audience which had to transform itself first.

In this belief, Brown made several practical attempts to reach an audience that did not read scholarly literary criticism. He wrote "The Causerie" for the Winnipeg \textit{Free Press}, gave many lectures outside the university, made several radio broadcasts, and was associate editor of \textit{The Canadian Forum} from December 1930 to December 1933. Perhaps his role in the founding of the annual
review of Canadian writing "Letters in Canada" in the University of Toronto Quarterly was his most permanent contribution to Canadian letters apart from his critical writing. He coedited the Quarterly with A. S. P. Woodhouse from 1932 until 1941. Although Brown then went to Cornell, and never taught in Canada again, he continued to write the poetry section of "Letters in Canada," which he began in 1935, until 1949, when Northrop Frye took over. His purpose in co-founding and writing for "Letters in Canada" was the hope that it "may have a modest share in the diffusion of interest in Canadian literature, in the raising of aesthetic and intellectual standards in Canada, and in the discovery of writers who might otherwise pass, for a time at least, neglected or misunderstood." He also was at the forefront of the teaching of Canadian literature at the University of Toronto.

Brown's opinion concerning the merits of teaching Canadian literature in the university changed over the years. In his papers at the University of Toronto Archives is a typescript, regrettably undated, in which Brown expresses the belief common to many early nationalists that

the function of a professor of English literature is to know and to teach and to write about the best literature written in English. He seeks to spread among his students a delight in literature, a hunger for the best literature. His contribution to the building of a Canadian literature lies in his success in developing high standards of taste and in awakening that delight and that hunger.

In 1931, in his "The Neglect of American Literature," he writes that "if one were to trust the University of Toronto calendar, Toronto would be in the case of McMaster [with no courses in
American literature], but the truth is that for four or five years an optional course on American literature has been furnished in one of the four colleges." Since Brown did not start teaching at University College until 1929, he could not have been the originator of this course, but a note in his lecture, "American Literature" indicates that Brown saw it as the prototype for the course that he originated and taught at Toronto in 1934-35. In this course, designed for fourth-year Honours students, Brown devoted six lectures at the end of the year to Canadian literature. By 1944, when he was already teaching in the United States, Brown seems to have become much more positive about the teaching of Canadian literature in Canadian universities:

Another step we could and should take is to make more of our literature in the Canadian universities. When I taught at the University of Toronto I lectured on Canadian literature, and I sought to make its great qualities plain. I do not think that I spent enough time on it, and in general I think the subject is dealt with too briefly in our universities. As a result the graduates, a large potential buying public, are not sufficiently impressed with the merits of our literature, or sufficiently instructed in its great names. Of course our literature is not as yet comparable, either in quality or extent, with American literature.

We can almost feel, in the careful qualification of this and of many of Brown's statements, his need to pass between the Scylla of the "truculent advocates" of Canadian literature and the Charybdis of the cosmopolitans. Sometimes what look like reversals of opinions or even contradictions are simply Brown's attempts not to inflame his audience unnecessarily. He admitted as much
in "Letters in Canada" for 1943:

Some of [C. G. D. Roberts' s] admirers have complained now and then that the comments on Sir Charles' work in these surveys were grudging. If there is any ground for such complaint, it lies in the fear I had lest his great age, the strong loyalties he evoked, and the immense influence he had come to wield should prejudice the reception throughout the country of some kinds of poetry that he did not fully appreciate. 25

In writing of Arnold, he several times mentions the fact that "Arnold was a man of international interests and standards in a time of rampant nationalism." 26 He defends Arnold against those, like Walter Raleigh, the first professor of English at Oxford, who felt Arnold's cosmopolitanism hindered him from understanding national literature. 27 Although Brown never alludes to Canada in these discussions of Arnold, it seems likely that Brown identified with Arnold's difficulties. He was fighting a battle against the "my mother right or wrong" kind of criticism:

On the cover [of a book by Wilson Macdonald] Bliss Carman is quoted as having said that this collection is "the greatest satire since the days of Juvenal," an example of the bad old kind of critical opinion from which we are slowly escaping. 28

He also had to defend himself from accusations of being just this bad old kind of critic himself:

Careful interpretation, conducted with insight and a measure of sympathy, must precede judgment, and in writing of recent or contemporary poets it is much wiser to make sure that one's interpretation is adequate than to press on to judgment. . . . The practicing critics in Canada have been more concerned, in the exercise of judgment, to establish that poems are genuine than to declare that they are great. . . .
It is obvious to anyone that there has not been in the range of Canadian poetry anything as impressive as the best writing of the few best English and American poets of the past hundred years; but there is no reason in this to require of our practising critics that they bewail the absence of something to equal The Waste Land. When I say that 1948 has been a year of exciting achievement in Canadian poetry, I mean that at least half a dozen poets have brought out books in which there are genuine poems which offer delight; I do not mean that Shakespeare will be required to move over. . . .

Despite his didactic approach, and his strong belief in a literature that promotes the greater good of society, and more specifically, of the nation, Brown would have defended himself against charges of any bias towards national or moral poetry. He actively cultivated an ideal of disinterestedness. Just as Sainte-Beuve and Arnold resisted final judgments, so did he—Smith remarks on "Professor Brown's usual urbane caution." Nonetheless, although he did it light-handedly enough, as was natural in one of liberal convictions, ultimately Brown judged both poetry and criticism in terms of their social relevance. Brown saw and praised in Arnold and Edmund Wilson the same flexibility that Edgar admired in Sainte-Beuve. The critic had to allow for his personal bias: Wilson, Brown felt, managed this excellently:

Like every man he is held within the bonds of his temperament, and within those of the social pressures around him. The reader is sure that the critic has done his utmost to release himself from such bonds, that he has never wantonly tightened them, as almost all his contemporaries have done.

Brown's Matthew Arnold: A Study in Conflict, 1948 documents his
disappointment in Matthew Arnold's failure to live up to the
deal of disinterestedness he preached:

The style which for a space has been beautifully
even and accomplished will suddenly break into pieces;
the impeccable manner sustained long enough to have
seemed second nature will suddenly exhibit some gross
and incredible flaw; or the structure will be per-
fectly disinterested and some detail will crop up
drenched in controversial or petulant personal
feeling. Such incoherences, artistic disasters,
indicative of a divided mind and spirit, may occur
in any of the genres that Arnold practices. . . .32

The whole thesis of this book is that great art and great criti-
cism are fundamentally disinterested. Brown's belief in his own
objectivity was made easier because the liberal humanist ideas
he espoused were so widely accepted they seemed self-evident
truths. Despite his "disinterest" Brown clearly felt that great-
ness in criticism, as well as in literature was only achieved by
dealing with great human problems.

All of Brown's English teachers believed in the social value
of literature. As an undergraduate he was influenced strongly by
both Pelham Edgar and W. J. Alexander. Although a student of
Alexander's at University College, Brown attended Edgar's lec-
tures at Victoria.33 And it seems clear that Brown left for the
Sorbonne with his intellectual baggage already packed by Alexander.
Brown recalls "There was not a series of his lectures I did not
hear at least twice, and the course on nineteenth-century poets
given to students in the final year of the Pass Course I heard
four times."34 At the Sorbonne Brown worked under Charles Castre
and Louis Cazamian, both literary historians in the tradition of
Hippolyte Taine. They also practiced *explication de texte*, which uses detailed annotation to set literature in its social context. (Despite this textual focus, *explication de texte* is not connected, either historically or theoretically, with New Criticism.) All these critics had an intensely conservative respect for the past coupled with a keen interest in the contemporary (which, after all, was the clearest manifestation of the progress of the national spirit).

Brown was therefore quite strongly opposed to any critical approach that threatened to sever or to reduce the link between literature and society. He praises Alexander for rejecting the German scholarship so common at the turn of the century:

> At Johns Hopkins and in German universities he had viewed with a mixture of wonderment and contempt a scholarship that was focussed on minor documents of remote periods, and without a thought of the bearing these might have on the understanding of great books and great problems.36

Nor did the more up-to-date approaches being worked out in the United States appeal to Brown any better. For example, in his "The National Idea in American Criticism," 1934, he criticizes those who, like Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt, co-founders of the "New Humanism," conspired to "erect an aesthetic stripped of all social relation." The appeal to the past of Babbitt's New Humanism is not what Brown dislikes—it is that the appeal is to the Classical, rather than to the American past. For Brown a literary tradition that is not national cannot be much use in discussing a national literature. He quite clearly viewed New Criticism and psychological criticism as unhealthy forms of
navel-gazing, especially since these criticisms often rejected authors who were concerned with precisely the problems Brown thought vital:

Balzac's desire to do something about what horrified him in the France of his time does not recommend him to most of the good critics who are now writing. If the professorial critics have been approaching Balzac in narrowly historical terms, the others have not been approaching him at all. Energetic, expansive writers who want to get something done, men like Burns and Hugo, leave them frigid. They offer no help to a critic who is building up a purely aesthetic system or nervously contemplating his own anxieties. 38

He did praise certain aspects of Marxist criticism as elucidated by Edmund Wilson, because it could "throw a great deal of light on the origins and social significance of works of art," yet he condemns F. R. Scott's "verses on social themes" as "mere doggerel." 39 Brown's comment, in response to the argument that criticism should look towards a scientific and collectivist future, rather than towards an outmoded past, is revealing:

"Despite the powerful impact on art of the society in which it is created, the essential concern of art is with the humanity, not with the political and social framework of man." 40

Brown condemned poets as well as critics for obscurity—for forgetting their audience. His initial reaction in 1930 to T. S. Eliot, therefore, was negative; Brown dismissed him as "just an insignificant belated echo of Baudelaire, Corbière, and Jules Laforgue" and predicted that the vogue for him would pass quickly. 41 Eight years later, in his "Mr. Eliot and Some Enemies," however, Brown has clearly changed his mind; his realization that Eliot was indeed an important force in contemporary literature meant that
Brown could dismiss him no longer. Perhaps it was the excellence of A. M. Klein's poetry, obviously influenced by Eliot's, that converted Brown, who referred to Klein as "our greatest living poet" in 1933, before Klein had published a single book. Nonetheless Brown bases his final praise for Klein and Eliot on their ability to reach an audience, however limited: "Mr. Eliot, one of Klein's principal masters in form, has once and for all demonstrated that learned poetry can be deeply felt, deeply imagined, and a perfect communication to its proper reader." Brown's criticism of Canadian writing, especially his On Canadian Poetry, reveals how strongly Romantic nationalism influenced him in his practical work. On Canadian Poetry not only won the Governor-General's award for non-fiction in 1943, but has frequently been singled out as a "classic" and a "landmark of Canadian criticism." Nonetheless, although it is well and clearly written, Brown introduced few ideas in it that had not been current since Dewart, nor did he use many new methods in relating these ideas to specific poets. Lorne Pierce's comment in a letter to Brown concerning the manuscript of On Canadian Poetry, reveals, however, that while Brown's ideas might have been familiar, his judgments were radical. Pierce makes it clear that Brown's lukewarm opinion of the merits of Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts, and Marjorie Pickthall would upset the nationalistic "boosters" of Canadian poetry, and quite possibly annoy some of Pierce's friends (and Ryerson's authors). (It is amusing to notice that the same year, Brown, in his turn, complains that A. J. M. Smith's The Book of Canadian Poetry, devotes only forty meagre pages to Scott, Carman, and
Roberts, and suggests that 140 would be more appropriate.)

Fortunately, *On Canadian Poetry* was reviewed by two critics of importance, W. E. Collin and A. J. M. Smith, who were both opposed to Brown's views. They both deal with him as the humanist he was. Collin comments: "Some of Mr. Brown's judgments are cogent only to the humanist. . . . But if we question the humanist criterion, then the cogency weakens and may fade out altogether;" Collin makes Brown's approach quite clear:

There is no room here to discuss a theory which views literature as a product of societal environment. But it has long been felt that determinist theories of this sort, the favourite tools of literary historians, are inadequate when we come to grips with literary genius.  

Here Collin repeats the common critique of the biographical method of Taine—that it reveals only those things about a man which do not explain his poetry. Collin notes that Brown draws back at the point where he has to move from external to internal considerations: "Once or twice Mr. Brown speaks of an inner experience and an outer form, only to advise us that the inner experience is an impenetrable secret." Collin has high praise for Brown's abilities as a scholar and historian, but not for his skills as a critic.

A. J. M. Smith was a member of 'The McGill Movement', a group which Brown called "sad young men" who had risen "in angry revolt" against the older poets, whom "they insulted in the radical journals as the 'maple tree school'" (p. 60). In his review of *On Canadian Poetry* Smith tended to pick out of Brown those ideas which
backed up his own views (an indication of Brown's prestige):
"Professor Brown boldly affirms . . . the truth that the ro-
mantic poets of the Roberts-Carman-Lampman school have little
claim to be considered national poets. . . . This is an opinion
that the younger poets and critics of Montreal and Toronto will
greet with enthusiasm. . . . 50 Simply because Brown does not
boldly affirm that any of the poets he discusses in the Canadian
poet does not mean that he does not spend a good deal of time,
particularly with those he considers best, trying to fit them
into this ideal mould.

Brown's treatment of Archibald Lampman demonstrates how
concerned he is to set Lampman in a context where he can be con-
sidered as a national poet; this, despite his comment that Lampman's
vision is not "strictly national" (p. 46). That Lampman
died so young, and wrote mostly nature poetry, makes Brown's task
more difficult, and his underlying bias more obvious. According
to Romantic nationalist assumptions, a national poet should express
all aspects of national life; a great poet should show ability to
deal with the whole range of human emotions.

Brown, like many earlier critics, found the pure poetry of
nature less valuable than the poetry of human nature. In his
desire to show that Lampman is not limited to nature poetry,
Brown is forced into speculation about what Lampman might have
done, based on his words in 1891 that "for the poet the beauty of
external nature and the aspects of the most primitive life are
not always a sufficient inspiration." 51 In an attempt to prove
that Lampman was more than a mere nature poet, that he had a com-
prehensile view of society, as well as of landscape, Brown is attempting to back up his initial claim that "in Canada Lampman is the nearest approach to a national classic in verse . . . ." (p. 88). He argues:

It should now be evident that in his later years Lampman's conception of life was much more comprehensive than his readers and interpreters have generally supposed. "It is idle to conjecture what the course of his development might have been," Scott declared, unveiling the memorial cairn at Morpeth, "but one can hazard that it would broadly have tended towards the drama of life and away from the picture of nature" (p. 107).

In a later article, "Archibald Lampman; 1861-1899: "What We Lost" Brown engages in precisely this kind of 'idle' conjecture:

If Lampman had lived beyond that February night in 1899, he might have given us a series of poems on the events of our history not unlike E. J. Pratt's "Brêbeuf and his Brethren"; or he might have turned from the past to the present and written of the Indian in the wilder parts of the country as Scott did; or even have produced narratives of strange and terrible events in outlying farm houses and pioneer villages. 52

Brown clearly felt that what Canada lost in Lampman was a national poet. He bases much of his argument on a poem which remained in manuscript at Lampman's death: "At the Long Sault." Brown remarks "I can never forget the joy I experienced as I deciphered it . . . ." (p. 108); he was joyous because here at last was the poem which proved that Lampman could deal with the national genre: "The issue was epic in significance; the background was grand; the incident superbly heroic in quality" (p. 108). That it had to be deciphered from a "yellowed and crumbling" manuscript made it all the more momentous and romantic a discovery. (The passage
describing this discovery was added in the 1944 revision of On Canadian Poetry.)

Brown's emphasis on Lampman's ability to deal with human themes led him to insist that Lampman was also capable of writing of "passionate love" (p. 100). In his article on Lampman in 1949, he went further to claim that Lampman was "a highly modern and sophisticated lover." 53

Collin demolishes the whole structure by pointing out that Lampman's love poems are his weakest, and that even Brown had considerably modified his praise for "At the Long Sault" elsewhere. Brown's claims may seem ridiculous, yet despite the distortions of Lampman's work caused by the attempt to cram it into a foreign and pre-conceived mould, that of "Great National Poet", many of the comments he makes, on Lampman's revisions for example, are valuable. And it might be argued that Brown's over-emphasis on the national is no more distorting than some recent critics' under-emphasis of the patriotic and national elements in the early poets.

Something of Brown's historical method can be learned from his treatment of Lampman. Brown comments of Lampman's life:

Every element in his early environment told against the development of Canadianism in Lampman, but Canadianism did develop very early. . . . It must, I think, be assumed that Lampman's Canadianism was of the rarest and most precious kind, that it was instinctive (pp. 91-92).

The emphasis on "Canadianism" here is not surprising; what is interesting is Brown's pleasure in its instinctive quality. Both Brown and Lampman shared the Romantic conviction that a
national poetry should arise naturally, unforced, from the land and its people. Lampman's famous account of his "conversion" to Canadian poetry while reading Charles G. D. Robert's Orion is quoted by Brown. In Lampman's account, and in Brown's account of it, are all the trappings of the Romantic insistence on the mystical origin of national poetry. Lampman wrote:

I sat up most of the night reading and re-reading Orion in a state of the wildest excitement and when I went up to bed I could not sleep. It seemed to me a wonderful thing that such work could be done by a Canadian, by a young man, by one of ourselves. It was like a voice from some new paradise of art, calling us to be up and doing.

He promptly connects the experience with a real, natural paradise, the college gardens in spring:

The dew was thick upon the grass, all the birds of our Maytime seemed to be singing in the oaks, and there were even a few added tongues and trilliums still blooming on the slope of the little ravine. But everything was transfigured for me beyond description, bathed in an old world radiance of beauty, the magic of the lines was sounding in my ears, those divine verses as they seemed to me, with their Tennyson-like richness and strange earth-loving Greekish flavour. I have never forgotten that morning, and its influence has always remained with me (p. 92).

Lampman presents himself as Adam, hearing Roberts's divine voice calling, "in the cool sunshine of the spring morning." This is not simply a description of literary influence, this is a Romantic account of the descent of the national muse. Yet it is important to notice that even while Lampman makes it clear that a major source of his delight was that Roberts was a Canadian, his experience consists, finally, of seeing the new world "bathed in
an old world radiance of beauty"-- of seeing Canada through European literary spectacles. The passage itself lists the main influences on the Canadian poets of the time: the Romantic poets, Tennyson, the Greeks, and the Bible.

Brown comments: "Could a nation's poetic history begin with a more charming freshness?" Then he too falls into a Romantic passage:

It is delightful to look back across the years to that bright spring morning in the semi-wild meadows about the old Trinity building, to evoke the delicate, young Ontario poet destined to die long before he had grown to his full power, reading from the slim booklet of the young man from New Brunswick. . . . (p. 92)

All the appropriate images are here--spring, youth, natural beauty, old buildings, a poet destined to die young, like Keats or Chatterton, the significant, slim, volume--Canadian poetry had a Romantic beginning. Brown also emphasizes Lampman's estrangement from Canadian society, especially from the Ottawa politics of the time (p. 93). His Canadianism had to spring, not from family background, not from petty political allegiances, but rather from the pure sources of nature and art. Brown is to a degree aware of the poetic value of Lampman's biography; Lampman's early death made him "our Canadian symbol of the fragile artist worn down by the rigours of our climate and our social and economic structure" (p. 120). This is not the modern poet who deliberately estranges himself from society; this is the Romantic poet cast out and rejected by an unfeeling, materialistic audience.

In dealing with Duncan Campbell Scott, Brown seems to feel less need to talk about the poet's national qualities. It is as
if, because Scott's subject matter is satisfactory—Canadian, heroic, passionate, historical and human—Brown can relax and discuss technique. Brown comments that Scott "by his choice of the wilds . . . has won an immense advantage over his contemporaries" and continues "of all Canadian poets, indeed of all Canadian imaginative writers, he has best succeeded in making great literature out of such distinctly Canadian material as our aboriginals supply" (pp. 123 and 130). (Here Brown differs from Edgar, who did not feel Scott's contact with the native people a particularly useful one.) Brown considers Scott's major characteristic to be "restrained intensity" and he discusses much of Scott's work in terms of this central characteristic. Collin comments on this approach: "Sometimes we feel that he is a French type of critic working with an idea of the dominant characteristic of a poet's art [Taine's "master faculty"]; the essay on D. C. Scott is such a critic's work." Of all the essays, this is the one closest to modern criticism in its detailed examination of the text.

Since Brown feels that Pratt's most distinctive quality is originality, the essay on Pratt takes the biographical approach. Brown sees Pratt escaping from contemporary Canadian life not to the landscape, as Lampman did, but to the sea. Brown concludes that he is not, therefore, "fully a part of Canadian culture," just as Newfoundland was not then part of Canada. Since Brown does not feel the need to relate Pratt to Canada, he can give full scope to his interest in the personal life of the poet. The famous stag parties explain the rollicking conviviality of such
poems as "The Witch's Brew"; and Pratt's burning of his psychology thesis and the failure of his philosophical poem Clay are cited as evidence that he had tired of the "approach to human experience by way of philosophy and psychology" (p. 146). The words originality, temperament, personality, and genius are common in this essay. Brown is guilty of the "personal fallacy" over and over again: "What happened within Pratt in the years just before he wrote 'The Cachalot'?" (p. 153); and "The long depression which enveloped Canada in 1929 ... was sobering to Pratt" (p. 157); and finally, to explain the composition of Brébeuf and his Brethren:

He went back to the national past not simply, if at all, as an escape, but rather to be reassured as to the qualities of Canadian life. He wished to be sure that we could bear the strains of war. To a Canadian the lines quoted from Brébeuf and that poem as a whole must have a special appeal. Brébeuf and his fellow-martyrs are the Canadian types of sanctity—they are the only Canadians canonized at Rome. Theirs was a great role, perhaps the supreme role, in our heroic age—*la histoire est une épopée*, a national anthem tells us, though we do not always believe it; nowhere are we closer to the epic level of Canadian life. ... (p. 158)

In this quotation, the whole question of national poetry and the epic arises again. After all, Brebeuf died 218 years before Confederation; he lived and died a Frenchman, not a Canadian, either in his own or any contemporary's terms, and indeed there are those today who would argue that as a hero of Quebec he cannot be an English-Canadian hero too. The fact that Brébeuf died before Canada existed as a political entity is no problem to a Romantic critic, since many national heroes die well before their country exists; they are created retroactively, and their own
views on their function or nationality are of no importance. The French-English question, as always, is more serious.

Brown is at his most confused in his discussion of regionalism, colonialism and nationalism, because in many ways the literary theories he had inherited conflicted with his federalism, his other political beliefs, and with the Canadian situation. He should perhaps be excused for his failure of rigour when he sidesteps the political implications of theories he clearly believes are valid for literature, since they derive from foreign situations. Yet his ability to remain in his confusion in the face of his excellent knowledge of both Canadian and American literature is somewhat distressing.

As a Liberal, recently retired from Mackenzie King's personal staff, he is satisfied with the political status quo, or at least sees it as inevitable: "In the contemporary world autonomy is the most luxurious of privileges, one which this anxious country cannot now afford and will not be able to afford in any measurable future" (p. 17). Since the literary theories he espouses imply, or even state, that both autonomy and nationalism are necessary to great literature, the next passage traces a somewhat circuitous route. He begins:

Autonomy almost always breeds chauvinism, and usually brings as an immediate consequence an unwholesome delight in the local second-rate. Its advent opposes strong obstacles to international currents of art and thought. This is to be set firmly against the notion that out of autonomy all good things soon issue. (p. 17)

The words immediate and soon here leave him some leeway, for he knew perfectly well that Canadians were as capable, if not more
capable, than Americans, of "an unwholesome delight in the local second-rate" and of "opposing obstacles to international art and thought." Indeed, much of the book is filled with complaints about just these qualities in the Canadian audience. Yet he was forced into an awkward theoretical position, like all Canadian Romantic critics, (except Goldwin Smith) by the fact that his literary theory demanded independence, while his political beliefs called for dependence on Great Britain as a defence against the United States. He then continues in his discussion, almost reversing his argument:

Still it must be appreciated just as clearly that dependence breeds a state of mind no less unwholesome, a state of mind in which great art is most unlikely to emerge, or to be widely recognized if it did. A great art is fostered by artists and audience possessing in common a passionate and peculiar interest in the kind of life that exists in the country where they live. . . . From what was said a moment ago it will be obvious that in a colonial or semi-colonial community neither artist nor audience will have the passionate and peculiar interest in their immediate surroundings that is required (pp. 17-18).

Brown causes confusion (it is not clear whether he shares it, but it would seem so) by not making a clear distinction between the political and the psychological. At one point he seems to argue that without political autonomy, a Canadian literature of any value cannot develop; he then goes on to say that a colony can throw off the colonial mentality--"Scotland being almost wholly free of the spirit of colonialism" (p. 19).

Brown saw a danger, not only in cultural dependence on Britain, but also on Canadian "colonial" attitudes to the United States. He
believed this dependency could be broken by a national crisis:
"It is probable that, as Lampman supposed, a national crisis of
supreme intensity would call forth emotions of such strength
and purity as to issue in a significant expression in the arts"
(p. 20). Brown felt the crisis remained in the future, due to
the "orderliness and forbearance of the Canadian character" (p. 20).
Here Brown uses a well-worn concept of turn-of-the-century
literary theory--the idea that some kind of crisis, probably
military, is needed to produce that national spirit so important
to the development of a national literature. England has had
these desirable crises aplenty: "There has been no moment in
our history comparable with what England knew on the eve of the
Elizabethan efflorescence, when the Armada approached her shores,
or at the height of the Romantic achievement, when Napoleon
gathered his forces at Boulogne . . ." (p. 20). Northrop Frye's
dark comment, presumably inspired by passages like this, seems
apposite here:

We do not know what the social conditions are that pro-
duce great literature, or even whether there is any
causal relation at all. If there is, there is no
reason to suppose that they are good conditions, or
conditions that we should try to reproduce. The notion
that the literature one admires must have been nourished
by something admirable in the social environment is
persistent, but has never been justified by evidence.
One can still find books on Shakespeare that profess
to make his achievement more plausible by talking about
a "background" of social euphoria produced by the defeat
of the Armada, the discovery of America a century before,
and the conviction that Queen Elizabeth was a wonderful
woman. There is a general sense of filler about such
speculations and when they are given in a negative form
to explain the absence of a Shakespeare in Canada they
are no more convincing. 57
George H. Clarke (head of English at Queen's University) in his review of *On Canadian Poetry*, points to another area of confusion in Brown:

Dr. Brown seems a little confused at times in speaking of great art as "fostered by artists and audiences possessing in common a passionate and peculiar interest in the kind of life that exists in the country where they live . . . " and thereafter declaring that "regional art will fail because it stresses the superficial and the peculiar at the expense, at least, if not to the exclusion, of the fundamental and universal."58

For Brown, an interest in a region could not also be interest in the nation. When Brown (who was a strong federalist) speaks of the *dangers* of regionalism (p. 19), it is clear that he is thinking of political dangers: "Among most Canadians there is little eagerness to explore the varieties of Canadian life, little awareness how much variety exists, or what a peril that variety is, in time of crisis, to national unity" (p. 24). One can trace Brown's dislike of regionalism to two sources; first, it undermined federalism and Brown was a federalist: "There is little doubt that the Fathers of Confederation, or the majority of the leaders among them, expected and planned for a much more unified whole than has so far come into being" (p. 24); and second, he connected regional art with provincialism:

The advent of regionalism may be welcomed with reservations as a stage through which it may be well for us to pass, as a discipline and a purgation. But if we are to pass through it, the coming of great books will be delayed beyond the lifetime of anyone now living (p. 25).

Regional art, in Brown's view contained "nothing . . . that the
author had not encountered in his own experience" (p. 24) and was concerned only with those things immediately at hand, such as landscape, local history, and regional life. The substance of great literature—"the presentation of all general problems of human experience" and of that which "was deep in human character" and "striking in thought"—was not found in regional writing (pp. 143 and 144). Brown does not seem to realize that it is possible to write about universal values in a particular geographical setting. He maintained this argument in the face of Lorne Pierce's point, made in a letter to Brown concerning the revision of the 1943 edition, that much great art is regional:

In the States you have had the New Englanders, the South, Middle West, and Hollywood; here something similar will develop. Each will have its own ethos. You can't have a cosmic art, and both Canada and the United States are empires. There is no British Empire novelist; it is all too vast. We will have to be content with a Prairie dramatist or a Quebec woodcarver etc.59

Georges Bugnet, in a review of On Canadian Poetry "Où l'on rencontre un canadien," 1946, is generally more positive about Brown's work than either Smith or Collin. Bugnet balks, however, at Brown's concept of regionalist art. He points out that if this concept is accepted, it would be extremely difficult for anyone to write a truly national novel, and impossible for a Quebec writer. He comments:

Naturellement, si l'on pense que le Canada est, ou pourrait être un tout, Quebec n'est plus qu'une region, l'Alberta ou l'Ontario ne sont que des regions. Mais l'Attique, aussi n'était qu'une region... Pourtant, quelle magnifique littérature y germa... 60
Despite the impression Brown leaves that regional literature deals only with the surface aspects of local life, and that regional literature and universal literature do not overlap, in other contexts it does seem that Brown believed that there was such a thing as a Canadian subject, even a Great Canadian Subject. 61 He felt that Pratt, in Brébeuf and his Brethren, came closest to finding it:

The history of Canada abounds in great subjects for fiction, drama, and poetry; and it has been a standing complaint that writers have either declined to present them at all or have presented them in a manner so painfully inadequate that silence seemed better. The choice of one such subject by our noblest living poet is a white milestone in the development of Canadian literature. 62

In what follows he remarks on Pratt's passionate imaginative sympathy with the heroic ideal. The words great, strong, noble, true, and heroism are common in the passages that follow. Here can be traced the romantic belief in the epic foundations of national literature. Clearly the simple choice of a suitable topic or genre is not enough to guarantee a great national poetry—but it is a beginning, almost a pre-requisite. Brown felt that the early imitative lyrics of Lampman were at least partially redeemed by their content:

What is significant is that in taking so much from Wordsworth as he does, the young poet applies it so surely and sharply to scenes and situations in his own immediate world, in this instance a wintry field surrounded by a snake fence and a snow-shoer making his way across, something as Canadian as pea-soup and maple sugar. (p. 89)

Statements like the last one have the tendency to make the modern
reader cringe a little—the temptation is all too great to skip over this kind of thing in a critic as good as Brown because it is reminiscent of the "Mounties and maple leaves" school of Canadian literature. Yet by ignoring such things, and highlighting those which please us, we do his total outlook harm, and create the impression that he was more modern than he was.

Brown's view of Canadian subject matter as a "natural resource" shows up in his criticism of Morley Callaghan and Mazo de la Roche. Brown saw Callaghan's neglect of the particularity of Toronto and de la Roche's transformation of the Ontario countryside into an English county as betrayals of unique and neglected themes (pp. 12-13). Although he does not say that this has damaged the value of their art, not only in the Canadian, but also in the international context, he implies it. The "natural resources" emphasis comes out most clearly in the "quarry" imagery of this passage:

The New Provinces poets have not been widely read; they have not counted for much in the general culture of the country. This is because of their language, which they did not devise but share with most of the best contemporary poets in the United States and some in England. This, much more than the sometimes bewildering irregularity of their prosodic patterns, or their preference of myth to lyricism, or their occasionally uncompromising subtlety or learning, is what scares away the larger audience. The boldness with language is not only easy to account for, it is practically inevitable. Conservative critics in the universities, and more vociferously in the newspapers (where the reviewing of poetry is usually in weak hands) have been saying that the experiments are not only unattractive but gratuitous, and should be called off. They cannot be called off. There is no direct way back to the quarries from which earlier poets drew their marble. Sooner or later another quarry will be found where the marble is of superb quality. Then
poets will no longer concern themselves so much in experimenting with language; they will take idiom more or less (although never entirely) for granted, and without the noisy heaving and straining that have been so characteristic of the past fifteen years in Canada, they will express their impressions, feelings and ideas in a way that can be more generally shared.63

I have quoted here at such length because in this passage several of Brown's favourite themes become obvious. First, he makes it clear that these poets will become important to "the general culture" of Canada when they devise their own idiom, rather than borrowing from abroad, and when they return to native "quarries" for their subject matter.

Brown had always given New Provinces and the New Provinces poets favorable reviews, although he was not entirely satisfied with their poetry. He did not approve of one path they had chosen--towards the poetry of political commitment--which they had outlined in the Preface to New Provinces. It was all right to abandon the "difficult lonely music" of their earlier, Eliot-inspired work; it was not all right to exchange it for poetry which Brown found, on the whole, even less satisfactory. Despite this poetry's avowed intention to appeal to the people, Brown found it more prose than poetry, filled with "abstract polysyllables, rhetorical exclamations, and all the rest of the dreary apparatus of inflated prose which some versifiers demand that we accept as being a finer distillation of poetry than Yeats' lyricism."64 In the long passage quoted above, Brown takes his usual audience-centred approach. This approach, often condemned because it leads, in some critics, to a dogmatic refusal to tolerate anything found "offensive" by large numbers, or to an inability to reject anything
widely popular, was never taken to such extremes by Brown. He resisted dogmatism because he believed the critic, however careful, was prone to personal bias, and susceptible to social pressure. His lack of faith in the unregenerated Canadian audience has been well-documented. It is perhaps his constant struggle to be fair to a wide range of work which makes him, despite his "old-fashioned" methods, still rewarding to read. Brown felt that the critic, as well as the poet, should deal with the whole range of national activity, not simply with the facets of it that appealed to him. In this belief, we see the man of letters, the man who comments on all contemporary literature because it is all a reflection of contemporary civilization, and on all national literature, because it is all a reflection of the nation, good or bad, and provides the latest message concerning the health of the national culture. It is the discipline of dealing with this broad range of material which provides the man of letters with his flexibility. Brown's influence is still important in Canadian literary criticism, as can be seen from this comment by Morton L. Ross in his "Canonization of As For Me and my House: A Case Study:" he calls E. K. Brown's review of As For Me and my House not only "the best of the initial reviews" but also "still the most balanced, subtle and succinct judgment...". He notes that several later critics, such as Roy Daniels and Edward McCourt, were in essential agreement with Brown's ideas on Ross, although they do not acknowledge him. Ross's article also shows the profound gap between the kind of criticism practiced by Brown, McCourt and Daniels, and that of later critics, whose focus
is on paradox, tension, irony, ambiguity and complexity: "This complexity, liberally employing the familiar clichés of the New Criticism, is finally so taxing that it raises questions about the critic's conception of his service to a reader" (p. 196). Here, perhaps, is Brown's secret; he never forgot the poet's audience, he never forgot that he had an audience of his own, however small.
Chapter Seven

Revising the Canon and Renewing the Theory:

A. J. M. Smith and Northrop Frye

Oddly, three of the most important critical works in English-Canadian literary history were published in 1943. One of these is E. K. Brown's *On Canadian Poetry*. The others are A. J. M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, and Northrop Frye's review of Smith.¹ Brown's review of Smith contrasted with Frye's rather neatly reveals the differences between Brown's Romantic nationalism and the positions of the other two critics. As Frye notes, Smith's anthology is important because it is a critical revaluation of the English-Canadian canon. For Frye, the anthology "proves the existence of a definable Canadian genius . . . peculiarly our own."² Brown, however, sees the new anthology mainly in terms of what it has rejected; for him, Smith has over-hastily reacted against "romantic and nationalist standards" which is, as Brown sees it, "almost to disown the whole past of Canadian criticism."³ Frye, however, argues that Smith has unearthed a buried tradition: this tradition, the *true* Canadian tradition, rejects the lyric, the optimistic, and the pastoral, and promotes the narrative, the terrifying, and the "sinister and menacing" in nature. Since Frye insists that Smith did not set out to dig up this tradition, that "the unity of tone [came] from the material itself,"⁴ perhaps it is wise to begin by looking at Smith's conscious
account of his intentions in compiling this anthology, and at
his general theories about Canadian literature.

A. J. M. Smith himself once noted that "satire . . . is
moral: it asserts or implies a standard of value." The stan-
dard his early pieces defends is a critical standard: his most
scathing comments about the early Canadian critics who allowed
their concern for Canadian literature to distort their apprecia-
tion of literature as literature are found in his "Wanted: Cana-
dian Criticism," 1928; "A Rejected Preface," 1935, and "Canadian
Poetry--A Minority Report," 1939; all these were written before
he began reading Canadian poetry for his anthologies in 1941. By
1942, he is not only defending a critical standard, but has
also become the champion of a revised canon of Canadian literature,
angry that earlier critics and anthologists presented a canon that
causd the "reading public" to draw "the not unreasonable, though
quite false, conclusion that Canadian poetry is dull, correct,
and imitative, that, indeed, to all intents and purposes there
is no Canadian poetry capable of interesting an adult mind" (OPP,p.13).
He spent the rest of his life applying his very adult mind and high
standards to the task of proving his belief that "nothing could be
further from the truth" (OPP,p. 13).

Yet his primary concern is still with standards, not with
theory. At first it seems Smith is totally unconcerned with what
makes poetry Canadian--all he is interested in is what makes it
literature:

Critics arose, mostly college professors or journalists,
who made it their main business to look for, and find,
some special quality, tone, or thing in the verse written in Canada which was uniquely expressive of the Canadian soil or of the Canadian landscape or of Canadian human nature. . . . It is not only the extremists among the patriotic critics who have been led astray by the search for a national spirit. An objective and uncompromising study of Canadian poetry as poetry remains to be written (TVCL, p. 179).

He praises Ralph Gustafson in the same vein for avoiding, in his *Anthology of Canadian Poetry (English)*, 1942, talk of "Nationhood, Empire, the Canadian spirit, and abstractions of that sort" (OPP, p. 1). Yet Smith, in instituting a salutary and long-overdue shift of focus in Canadian letters from national definition to the setting of a national standard, uses a theory of national literature that is as weak as the standard of the "patriotic professors," "hack journalists," and "earnest anthologists" (TVCL, p. 171); indeed it is their familiar set of "theoretical" commonplaces that he often falls back on. Smith is an Arnoldian critic, an empirical arbiter, who says "there, that is good." But despite the purity of his taste, he, like anyone who uses the adjective "Canadian" in a title, is inevitably tangled in the meshes of the concept of a national poetry. An examination of his attempts to define "Canadian" reveals that he uses many of the old assumptions unexamined. Smith, it is fair to add, never makes any claim to be a theoretical innovator. He, like many earlier critics, makes his most important theoretical statements in compressed form, in his case, mainly in anthology introductions. His main purpose in producing these anthologies is to revise the Romantic nationalist canon, rather than to overthrow the Romantic nationalist theory.
The introduction to Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, 1943, makes it clear that he does believe there is a quality that can be justly labelled "Canadian," although he has just as much trouble as everyone else in defining it; he, like many others, attempts to do so by drawing an analogy with the landscape:

None of these poets of Canada before Confederation had succeeded in creating a poetry that was clearly and definitely "Canadian" in the sense that it differed from the poetry of England as the flowers and foliage, the lakes and rivers, and the mountains and the very air itself of Canada differed from those of the mother-country (*OPP*, p. 26).

The geographical determinism that is hinted at here seems clear enough in a later comment in his introduction to *The Book of Canadian Prose*, 1965, in which he presents texts "which illustrate the special character that geography, climate, and politics have imposed upon the sensibility and thought of the Canadian people. The inevitable, often unconscious, and sometimes artistic expression of this character is what we mean by Canadian literature" (*TVCL*, p. 47). He sees the political component as the movement described by Whig historians as "from colony to nation," a movement congruent with the Romantic nationalist belief that as a colony became more independent, it would automatically produce a better literature.

It is in the 1943 introduction to *The Book of Canadian Poetry* that Smith draws the controversial distinction between "native" and "cosmopolitan" poetry, a distinction he still upholds in his 1977 introduction to his *On Poetry and Poets* (pp. vii–viii). This distinction, of course, revived all the old controversies over
whether everything written by someone born and bred in Canada was automatically Canadian or not, whether Canadian content was necessary to Canadian literature, and whether the imitation of European writers was to be praised or damned. He writes:

Some of the poets have concentrated on what is individual and unique in Canadian life and others upon what it has in common with life everywhere. The one group has attempted to describe and interpret whatever is essentially and distinctively Canadian and thus come to terms with an environment that is only now ceasing to be colonial. The other, from the very beginning, has made a heroic attempt to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing culture of ideas. (OPP, pp. 20-21)

The negative value of colonial opposed not only to heroic, but also to a phrase reminiscent of Arnold—"the universal, civilizing culture of ideas" give Smith's preference away. John Sutherland comments that Smith's "allegiance to the Good--i.e. the cosmopolitan--is fixed and irrevocable" and "also means that a Bad must be invented over which the Good can duly triumph." Smith simply reverses the faulty opposition set up by Romantic nationalist critics—they argued that what was not clearly national was not literature because it was imitative. Smith here comes close to saying that anything that is obviously Canadian, or of what he terms the Maple Leaf school, is not imitative enough and therefore not literature. As Eli Mandel notes in his "Masks of Criticism," Sutherland is able to show the weakness of Smith's argument: "Smith's native tradition consists of British colonists sentimentalizing nature; his cosmopolitan tradition consists of British intellectuals avoiding the real life of Canada." Smith
omitted the distinction in the second edition of the anthology, explaining that Northrop Frye had "added the necessary corrective—that this dichotomy is not a division between poets or groups of poets, but a division within the mind of every poet" (TVCL, p. 162; OPP, p. 116). Certainly this is an improvement, but Smith does not clarify how these qualities, whether they exist in the body of Canadian poetry, or in the mind of the Canadian poet, are to be defined.

Smith and the Romantic nationalist critics suffer from the same fault—attempting to attach a value, negative or positive, to poetry that is overtly Canadian—when it is clear that such poetry could be either brilliant or abysmal. The terms "native" and "cosmopolitan" do have their uses. Some English-Canadian writers seem to belong to a tradition that can be labelled "native" more clearly than others; frequently writers have works that can be classed as more "native" than their other works—for example, MacLennan is more "native" than Callaghan; Atwood's *Surfacing* is more "native" than her *The Edible Woman*. But the factors that make a writer or a work "native" do not necessarily make that work or that writer bad—or good.

Smith, like the early English-Canadian critics, is against obvious Canadianism, and for an unconscious expression of this mysterious quality; what sets Duncan Campbell Scott off from his contemporaries is the fact that he made so little conscious effort to be a national poet, and the Canadian element in his work, which developed as his art matured, has grown silently and apparently almost without volition, into the very unstressed essence of the work. This has meant that Scott was to be of little use to those who were anxious
to prove the existence of a political or economic national unity by pointing to the expression of a national spirit in our poetry and our art. (OPP, pp. 49-50)

Again the odd Romantic insistence that the most intelligent and best-educated writers be, at the same time, the least aware of what they are writing, and reiteration of the belief that because the Canadian themes in the best poets appear so natural and unforced, they must have grown naturally and unconsciously. Surely it might be argued that good and bad writers are equally aware of their attempts to be Canadian, but that, not surprisingly, the good ones inject "Canadianism" into their work with more grace.

Twenty years after the statement on Duncan Campbell Scott, written in 1948, Smith is still emphasizing the "distinction to be drawn between the explicit and somewhat journalistic verse that states or discusses in explicit terms the problems which face the people living north of the United States border, and the poetry, which stresses, indirectly and implicitly, the spiritual reality which makes a nation" (TVCL, p. 157). This "spiritual reality" is simply the Romantic spirit or genius of the nation. Surely here it could be argued that this "spiritual reality" is simply a set of literary conventions widely recognized as Canadian. Authors who use these conventions with subtlety are not doing so because they have necessarily communed with nature or the nation more intensely than others, but because they have read more literature and criticism, and thought more about the conventions of national literature.

Smith, although he is quite aware of the tendency of the literary institution to integrate good poetry into the national
tradition whether it "fits" the theory or not, attaches meanings to the words *national*, *local*, and *universal* that imply that these adjectives indicate a standard content and value; in 1948 he writes:

> The criticism that, at any rate in Canada, has focused its attention on these ["Confederation"] poets as the prophets of nationalism has made two serious errors: it has mistaken for national what is local or universal, and it has overemphasized the value of what it has chosen to see as national. (OPP, p. 48)

Smith's implication here is that bad poetry is local or regional; good poetry is universal; the category *national* therefore is either fabricated out of regional poetry (by those who, like the early critics, overvalue it) or subsumed by the category universal and there recognized as the "unstressed essence" in a work of what is classed (by Smith and other "cosmopolitan" critics) as primarily poetry, rather than Canadian poetry. Smith plays with the same ideas in his "Colonialism and Nationalism in Canadian Poetry before Confederation," 1944:

> This, I think, is the heart of the problem of nationalism in Canadian poetry (and in the other arts as well). Is a Canadian poet one who is indubitably a poet because he has, in sufficient strength, qualities which are recognizably the same in kind as those of the standard poets of the English tongue, and a Canadian poet because he happens to live and write in Canada, to use Canadian place-names, and to mention the flora and fauna of Canada? Or is he a poet as original and indigenous as Thoreau or Whitman? (TVCL, p. 37)

Although Smith rather unfairly refuses to answer these crucial questions, it seems that with a very few exceptions—Crawford and Pratt—he would argue that the Canadian quality is almost an accident of geography, and in most cases completely secondary to
poetic quality. He remarks that Whitman and Thoreau were exceptional even in America, and that "the rest of the American poets are no more and no less American than our poets are Canadian." He then continues, "we have called our poets (Carmen and Roberts, if not Sangster) national because they were recognizably poets, judged by the standards of the accepted English masters, and then have pretended to ourselves that they were Canadian" (TVCL, p. 37). Smith grants both Crawford and Pratt the quality of energy. He does not specify whether this is the same as the "indigenous" quality that they, like Thoreau and Whitman, and unlike their contemporaries, developed in their poetry (see OPP, p. 28 and TVCL, p. 8).

Discussing his "native-cosmopolitan" distinction in 1977, Smith does not seem to understand why the "Native" poets reacted against his classification; he says that "the poets in the Native category somehow felt cheated; subconsciously they wanted to be classed with the Cosmopolitans as somehow more sophisticated and knowing" (OPP, p. 15). This makes the "Native" poets seem petty and childish, but surely they did not want to be classed with the "Cosmopolitans," but with the good, with those "heroic" poets who tried to "transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing culture of ideas." In Smith's original passage, colonial clearly means, as it nearly always does, bad, or at best, limited, narrow, and unintellectual; universal means, as it nearly always does, good; surely the "Native" poets' reaction is understandable. (How rarefied Smith's conception of "universal" is revealed in his comment, in 1946, of Carmen's poetry, that it "was not, like that
of an earlier day... social, political, or practical. That is, it did not have to be superficial, it could be universal..." (TVCL, p. 75).

In 1968, in his "The Canadian Poet after Confederation," Smith, after discussing the "native-cosmopolitan" distinction, concludes that the Canadian poet must aim at art that "is neither native nor cosmopolitan" (TVCL, p. 163). Presumably this fusion would transcend both categories and reach the universal. He has, in this statement at least, detached the automatic assumption of value from "cosmopolitan," but only by denying either category any significance at all. Later, in 1976, he reintroduces the idea: "The native and cosmopolitan split... clearly exists in American poetry as well as Canadian. Consider Whitman, Sandberg, Vachel Lindsay, and William Carlos Williams on the one hand and Wallace, Stevens, Eliot, Pound, and Marianne Moore, on the other (OPP, p. 115). That Smith keeps worrying this distinction indicates that he thinks it is a useful one, but his constant concern with quality makes it difficult for him to see these terms as neutral with respect to quality. They indicate a distinction that should be made in terms of tradition or of content; quality is something that must be determined after this tradition or content has been anatomized. All poetry is imitative; not all poetry by Canadians is "Canadian"; neither "imitative" nor "Canadian" should be used to indicate a negative (or positive) judgment. That Smith sees fit to include both kinds of poetry in his anthology indicates that he realizes this; his concern about the distinction in his introductions is a reaction against past critics or anthologists
who put all value on "Canadian." His approval of Lighthall, (and indeed the "native"--"cosmopolitan" distinction itself) derives from Lighthall's unambiguous statement that "it is obvious that if only what illustrates the country in a distinctive way be chosen, the subjective and unlocal literature must be necessarily passed over, entraining the omission of most of the poems whose merit lies in perfection of finish. It is therefore greatly to be desired that a purely literary anthology be brought together by someone." 11 Smith seems to see Lighthall as a literary ancestor not only because of this clear statement concerning the difference between most "native" poetry and "universal" poetry; but also because Lighthall introduced the local Romantic Confederation poets to Canada as Smith, half a century later, introduced the modernists.

Smith's familiarity with Lighthall is not accidental; many of Smith's comments are parallel to those of his predecessors in a tradition with which he was perfectly familiar. 12 And his inclusion of French-Canadian work in his anthologies is something many of his predecessors would approve of.

In 1943, he argues that the best poetry of Roberts is a "delicate and objective nature poetry" which shines "with a sober varacity which gives [it] a high place in the regional art of Canada" (OPP, p. 32). Nature poems, although "Roberts' best contribution to the national literature," do not establish his claim as a national poet, nor do the similar poems of Scott, Carman, or Lampman:

The claim of this poetry to be truly national, adequately sustained in the field of scenery and climate, must, on the whole, be denied to a body of work which ignored
on principle the coarse bustle of humanity in the hurly-burly business of the developing nation (p. 36).

Smith praises James Cappon, W. E. Collin, L. A. Mackay, and Gordon Waldron for making a similar critical point, commenting: "Literary criticism in Canada, which is firmly rooted in romanticism, has not often presented this point of view" (OPP, p. 36). Again he appears to confuse theory and standards. Invariably the early critics would assert that a truly national poetry must deal with humanity; Lionel Stevenson seems to be the first critic to dismiss this requirement. Yet although they believed this, some did not apply this theoretical standard very strictly, while others, notably Waldron, did.

Another idea that Smith seems to derive from earlier criticism is a progressive literary evolutionism; he talks of "three stages—the colonial, the national, and the cosmopolitan"—adding an implicit positive value to the later stages: "The record takes on significance and attains a more than local relevance as technical proficiency makes possible a more intense and accurate expression of sensibility" (emphasis added, TVCL, p. 4). The assumption that later poetry is better poetry is similar to the assumption of early critics that literature had to pass through stages from barbarism to sophistication.

Finally, Smith seems to share the opinion of the early critics regarding the trustworthiness of a standard, even if a somewhat flexible one, derived from a wide knowledge of literature: "A catholic hospitality toward every period of Canadian literature and every type of poetry . . . does not demand the adoption of any
ambiguous standard of excellence. The true standard, after all, is one of degree, not kind" (OPP, p. 19). Sainte-Beuve's catholic taste, based on wide reading, was what, according to earlier critics, saved his work from mere impressionism.

In one of his latest critical statements, Smith adds to the quality of "eclectic detachment" which he sees as distinctive to Canadian literature, two others. First, a "complex myth-making imagination" is "one of the most powerful results of the special ardours and grandeurs of our northern environment"—a geographically determinist view. Second, Canadian literature has a youthful tone, "a simplicity and naivete, a sort of innocence of eye and heart, that instinctively avoids rhetoric and metaphor alike—a characteristic I would rather call *modesty* than *timidity*" (OPP, p. 121). Wondering whether this could be "a North American note, not exclusively a Canadian one" (OPP, pp.121-22) he decides that its "graceful diffidence" is not in keeping with the spirit of the "more aggressive and self-confident United States" (OPP, p. 122). This of course, fits well with the traditional stereotypes of the "loud" American and the "quiet" Canadian.

Smith's importance to the Canadian literary institution should not be judged by the consistency of his theory, but by his empirical evidence, in the shape of his anthologies, that a Canadian literature does exist. Without a single great author, like Chaucer or Shakespeare, whose works are good enough and cover enough aspects of national life to be "representative," Canadians fall back on anthologies, and Smith gave them their first good ones.

Even if Northrop Frye had not acknowledged his debt to his
Canadian critical predecessors, it would still be safe to argue that anyone emerging from Victoria College when he did would necessarily have been influenced by the Romantic nationalist ideas of Pelham Edgar, J. D. Robins, and E. J. Pratt. If Frye's literary theory is taken as a whole, what is central to Romantic theory: national context—in its geographical, social, historical aspects—becomes insignificant, and literature autonomous. But Canadian literature, because it contains no "classic" (p. 213), no "major writer" (p. 214), is different: "it is more significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature" (p. 214). The categories of Canadian life that Frye chooses to apply to Canadian literature are Romantic nationalist categories; he relates literature to the nation: to its geography, climate, "nature," politics, material progress, religion, myths, language, and history. Sometimes Frye dismisses or refutes one of the more unworkable Romantic nationalist assumptions, but he never discards the whole system. Indeed, one of his best-known remarks on Canadian literature implies that the secret of Canadian identity can be comprehended by locating Canada in time and space, by focussing on the landscape. The Canadian sensibility "is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?"' (p. 220).

Although Frye differs with some of the most cherished tenets of the Romantic nationalists, for him, as for them, nation, especially as contrasted with region and universe (or occasionally, empire), is a central category. Frye's attitude towards the literary relationship between region and nation has shifted over
time. In his review of Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, "Canada and Its Poetry," 1943, which he calls his "first critical article of any lasting importance" (p. vii), he confesses that before reading Smith's anthology he could not decide "whether Canada [was] really a national unit in any sense that [had] a meaning for culture" (p. 132). Smith convinced him that "a definable Canadian genius" (p. 131) did exist. Frye goes on to state that poetry "flourishes best within a national unit" (p. 132) and that the "imperial and the regional are both inherently anti-poetic environments" (p. 133). He might appear at first glance to be shifting to a defense of regionalism in his "Preface to an Uncollected Anthology," 1956: "it is not a nation but an environment that makes an impact on poets . . ." (p. 164). He is not, however; the environment he goes on to describe is not only national, but also distinctive from that of the United States:

A country with almost no Atlantic seaboard, which for most of its history has existed in practically one dimension; a country divided by two languages and great stretches of wilderness, so that its frontier is a circumference rather than a boundary; a country with huge rivers and islands that most of its natives have never seen; a country that has made a nation out of the stops of two of the world's longest railway lines: this is the environment that Canadian poets have to grapple with, and many of the imaginative problems it presents have no counterpart in the United States, or anywhere else. (p. 164)

In 1965, when Frye wrote the Conclusion to the first edition of *The Literary History of Canada*, he was still concerned with the nation, with what is "central in Canadian writing" (p. 247), with a "distinctive emphasis in that tradition" (p. 249), and with a
Canadian "imaginative continuum" (p. 250). Frye's "imaginative continuum" resembles the Romantic "national spirit"; he acknowledges the weakness of the concept with disarming irony:

One gets very tired, in old-fashioned biographies, of the dubious embryology that examines a poet's ancestry and wonders if a tendency to fantasy in him could be the result of an Irish great-grandmother. A reader may feel the same unreality in efforts to attach Canadian writers to a tradition made up of earlier writers whom they may not have read or greatly admired. I have felt this myself whenever I have written about Canadian literature. Yet I keep coming back to the feeling that there does seem to be such a thing as an imaginative continuum, and that writers are conditioned in their attitudes by their predecessors, or by the cultural climate of their predecessors, whether there is conscious influence or not. (p. 250)

This is a fairly explicit statement of the problems of basing a theory, not on the rock of verifiable data, but on the vapour of an "unconscious" and therefore invisible cause. Freud may have made this idea quite plausible at the individual level, Jung may have made it somewhat plausible at the human level; it is very difficult to argue that such a "collective unconscious" as a "Canadian imaginative continuum" can have evolved within historical time without the participants in that collectivity, that is, Canadian poets, being conscious, not to say pre-mediated about it all. Frye is more uneasy here than he was in his 1943 review, where he wonders whether he or Smith might have forced an arbitrary pattern onto Canadian poetry, and then resolves his doubt by stating that "Mr. Smith has brought out this inner unity quite unconsciously because it is really there" (p. 143). This Romantic insistence on unconscious poetic influence runs counter
to what is a major theme in Frye's general literary theory, and a minor one in his Canadian literary theory, that "practically all important poetry has been the fruit of endless study and reading, for poets as a class are and must be, as an Elizabethan critic said, 'curious universal scholars'" (p. 136). Indeed, he reverts to this thought at the end of the long Irish great-grandmother passage above, concluding that "nothing can give a writer's experience and sensitivity any form except the study of literature itself" (p. 250). This apparent contradiction between conscious and unconscious influences on poetry is resolved in Frye's separation of form and content. Form is derived from other literature, the Canadian content from "experience and sensitivity":

The forms of literature are autonomous: they exist within literature itself and cannot be derived from any experience outside literature. What the Canadian writer finds in his experience and environment may be new, but it will be new only as content: the form of his expression of it can take shape only from what he has read, not from what he has experienced. (p. 232)

The forms are learned consciously, through study and education; the content is assimilated unconsciously, and therefore, like the Romantic critics, Frye sees the poet linked to the land by an unconscious, irrevocable, and exclusive bond formed during the "impressionable years." Frye states this most strongly in his Preface to *The Bush Garden*, 1971, where he also first shifts to arguing that the region, rather than the nation is the source of literary inspiration in Canada: "The question of Canadian identity, so far as it affects the creative imagination, is not a 'Canadian' question at all, but a regional question" (pp. i-ii).
He uses sociological and biological analogies and images to make his point, commenting that "it is with human beings as with birds: the creative instinct has a great deal to do with the assertion of territorial rights," and continuing "there is always something vegetable about the imagination" (p. i). Then he turns to the modern vocabulary of Pavlov, B. F. Skinner, and the early sociobiologists:

An environment turned outward to the sea, like so much of Newfoundland, and one turned toward inland seas, like so much of the Maritimes, are an imaginative contrast: anyone who has been conditioned by one in his earliest years can hardly become conditioned by the other in the same way. (p. ii; emphasis added)

In this Preface, Frye for the first time gives a description of the several regions of Canada and their various impacts, perhaps because earlier, too strong a focus on the regions would have shattered his concept of a national landscape and a national spirit derived from it:

Anyone brought up on the urban plain of southern Ontario or the gentle pays farmland along the south shore of the St. Lawrence may become fascinated by the great sprawling wilderness of Northern Ontario or Ungava, may move there and live with its people and become accepted as one of them, but if he paints or writes about it he will paint or write as an imaginative foreigner. And what can there be in common between an imagination nurtured on the prairies, where it is a centre of consciousness diffusing itself over a vast flat expanse stretching to the remote horizon, and one nurtured in British Columbia, where it is in the midst of gigantic trees and mountains leaping into the sky all around it, and obliterating the horizon everywhere? (p. ii)

This is a form of boundary building based on birth, or at least
on early childhood upbringing (the "impressionable years" discussed in chapter two) as emphatically as is race, although its implications are less pernicious. What Frye disparages later as "the blood-and-soil bit" (p. iv) seems here to have become the "mind-and-soil bit." People are not vegetables, nor birds and what distinguishes them is the complexity of their language, mental processes, and culture; it seems dangerous as well as fallacious, to emphasize man's biological nature so strongly in discussing the creation of art, which is the highest product of civilization, and therefore furthest removed from man's more "animal" activities. Yet this is the logical culmination of the Romantic admiration for whatever is most natural, organic, and spontaneous.

Until he published the Preface to The Bush Garden, Frye had always placed regionalism in a very negative light. In the Smith review, 1943, he labels the combination of imperial and regional, colonial (p. 133). He feels that the French have been more affected than the English by regionalism which has made Quebec into a cute tourist resort full of ye quaint junke made by real peasants, all of whom go to church and say their prayers like the children they are, and love their land and tell folk tales and sing ballads just as the fashionable novelists in the cities say they do. (p. 133)

He connects regionalism here with sentimentality, nostalgia, and the childish. In his "Canadian and Colonial Painting," 1940, he finds the same quality of regionalism in the painting of Horatio Walker, "one of those wise and prudent men from whom the greater
knowledges are concealed," and goes on to describe Walker as looking "round wildly for some spot in Canada that had been thoroughly lived in, that had no ugly riddles, and plenty of picturesque clichés" (p. 201). In his description of Walker's art, Frye's adjectives—ready-made, quaint, simple, childlike, predigested—reveal his belief that Walker was simply pandering to those who "found in a queasy and maulin nostalgia the deepest appeal of art" (p. 202). With his own shift thirty years later to an emphasis on the importance of the region, although he labels this article "polemical and immature" he still argues that it "got hold of a genuine theme" (p. vii). Instead of praising those who, like Tom Thompson, face the terror of the emptiness of Canadian nature, and reviling those who, like Walker, flee from it, calling the former "Canadian" and the latter "colonial," he resolves the opposition by postulating an alternating rhythm in Canadian life between opposed tendencies, one romantic, exploratory and idealistic, the other reflective, observant and pastoral. These are aspects of the tension of unity and identity already mentioned. The former is emotionally linked to Confederation and Canadianism; the latter is more regional and more inclined to think of the country as a series of longitudinal sections. (p. vi)

From 1971 on, Frye, instead of discarding the regional, will link it to a complex of notions—the pastoral, childhood, the past—what William Blake calls Beulah—and will save it by bringing it into opposition with the "evocation of stark terror" that is the "outstanding achievement of Canadian poetry" (p. 138) as Blake balanced the lamb of his Songs of Innocence with the tiger of his Songs of Experience.
This is certainly not a complete capitulation to regionalism. To be regionalist without regard to national unity produces "the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism," while to be nationalist without regard to region is to produce "empty gestures of cultural nationalism" (p. iii). So the answer remains in positive ambiguity: "The tension between this political sense of unity and the imaginative sense of locality is the essence of whatever the word 'Canadian' means" (p. iii). And the tragic wintry vision of the national poet facing the terror of empty nature, and the comic springtime vision of the regional poet facing the gentler aspects of Canada have both genuine and escapist versions. The nineteenth-century Canadian nationalist poet has "two natures . . . one scribbling ready-made patriotic doggerel and the other trying to communicate the real feelings his country inspires him with" (p. 133). The pastoral myth, "in its popular and sentimental social form" is "an idealization of memory, especially childhood memory," but the "same myth exists in a genuinely imaginative form . . . in some of the best Canadian writers" (p. 241). For Frye any unit larger than the nation is an environment hostile to literature. Since Canada is a nation but not a region—a long-standing stumbling block for the critical importers of Romantic nationalist theory—neither pure nationalism nor pure regionalism will do. Some kind of compromise is necessary; fortunately, as Frye points out, "the Canadian genius for compromise is reflected in the existence of Canada itself" (p. 219).

Like so many shifts in English-Canadian criticism, this shift in the Preface to The Bush Garden from a focus on nationalism alone
to a focus on nationalism in tension with regionalism seems to be the result of events in French Canada, although Frye mentions Western and Maritime separatism in the same discussion. He writes strongly for the Quiet Revolution, which he sees as social and cultural, and against separatism, which is obviously political:

Separatism is the reactionary side of this [social] revolution: what it really aims at is a return to the introverted malaise in which it began, when Quebec's motto was je me souviens and its symbols were those of the habitant rooted to his land with his mother church over his head, and all the rest of the blood-and-soil bit. One cannot go back to the past historically, but the squalid neo-fascism of the FLQ terrorists indicates that one can always do so psychologically. (pp. iv-v)

Oddly, the criminal tendencies here ascribed to unmodulated regionalism are those usually connected with nationalism of the kind promoted by Hitler and Mussolini. Frye implies that Canada, unlike European nations that are more unified geographically, more "region-nations," cannot sink into this kind of reactionary regionalism or nationalism because Canadian nationalism must come to terms with several regions.

By 1976, in his Conclusion to the second edition of The Literary History of Canada, Frye seems to have relaxed. (René Levesque's separatist victory in Quebec was still to come.) He notes of separatism that "one gets the feeling that it is being inexorably by-passed by history, and that even if it achieves its aims it will do so in a historical vacuum."16 In the context of the "two solitudes" he writes that "it is man's destiny to unite and not divide" (p. vi), but he makes it clear that he is not a continentalist, and
that he fully approves of the kind of nationalism that aims for
economic and cultural independence from American domination of
Canada: "The nationalism that has evolved in Canada is on the
whole a positive development, in which self-awareness has been
far more important than aggressiveness."¹⁷ He is a strong nationa-
list still, but has come to believe that regionalism is part of
his nation's culture. Not only is Frye here working within the
Romantic nationalist tradition in the content of his literary
argument, but also he is, in turning his hand to political com-
ment, performing the role of the man of letters more than he is
acting as the less socially-involved critic.

Frye's consistent rejection of the universal or the imperial
is based on his association of it with the exploitation of natural
resources and technology—a "grim earnestness of expansion" (p. 134)
that fosters "an anonymous international art" (p. 176). Just as
the early French-Canadian writers were taken in by the negative
side of regionalism, so were the nineteenth-century English-Cana-
dian writers occasionally tricked by a falsely glowing vision of
what is really "the City of the End of Things." Unfortunately for
the future of all poetry, the natural environment that is, whether
at the regional or the national level, the only source of true
imagination, is rapidly vanishing, since

In our world the sense of a specific environment as
something that provides a circumference for an imagi-
nation has to contend with a global civilization of
jet planes, international hotels, and disappearing
landmarks—that is, an obliterated environment. The
obliterated environment produces an imaginative dyst-
rophy that one sees all over the world. . . . (p. iii)
With the city, Frye associates sterility, decadence, and the obliterating of not only the environment, but also the individual imagination; of a literary cliché he writes: "it is only from the exhausted loins of the half-dead masses of people in modern cities that such weary ideas are born" (p. 135). So Frye rejects the universal in favour first, of the national and then of the national in tension with the regional. But how is the poet brought into contact with these two environments?

The attempt to link land and literature as closely, as inevitably, and as irreversibly as possible, so central to English-Canadian criticism, is central to Frye too. Taine's category milieu has survived better than either race or moment. For Frye, the quality that distinguishes Canadian literature from others finds its source in geography, whether regional geography or national geography; in 1952 he writes:

There would be nothing distinctive in Canadian culture at all if there were not some feeling for the immense searching distance, with the lines of communication extended to the absolute limit, which is a primary geographical fact about Canada that has no real counterpart elsewhere. (p. 10)

From the beginning, despite Frye's half-deprecatory passage about the Irish great-grandmother written in 1965, he has seen the primary impact of this environment as psychological, rather than racial or biological. It is "an attitude distinctively Canadian" (p. 131), a "mentality" (p. 225). In his 1943 review, he writes:

But, according to Mr. Smith's book, the outstanding achievement of Canadian poetry is in the evocation of stark terror. . . . The immediate source of this is
obviously the frightening loneliness of a huge and thinly settled country. . . . Man's thrifty little heaps of civilized values look pitiful beside nature's apparently meaningless power to waste and destroy on a superhuman scale, and such a nature suggests an equally ruthless and subconscious God, or else no God. (p. 138)

This connection between the environment and a psychological response is close to Lionel Stevenson's in his *Appraisals of Canadian Literature*, but for Stevenson the primary emotional response is love, while for Frye it is terror. Stevenson's poets are pantheists; Frye's are nihilists, or, at best, existentialists. Frye's insistence on the "primitive" quality of the landscape that confronts the artist (or that the artist should force himself to confront) is very similar to Stevenson's. For both critics the contact between artist and landscape is a means by which he can come, despite the pressures of the modern, materialistic, anonymous world, into contact with the same forces that inspired early man to make myth.

In his 1965 Conclusion Frye allows for a positive reaction to Canadian nature, commenting:

> In such an environment, we may well wonder how the sentimental pastoral myth ever developed at all. But of course there are the summer months, and a growing settlement of the country that eventually began to absorb at least eastern Canada into the north temperate zone. (p. 244)

Frye's insistence here that literary trends must be derived from climatic or geographical facts seems oddly inconsistent with his general literary theory where he insists that literature must be seen as primarily based on literature—as a self-enclosed heterocosm. With respect to Canadian literature, for Frye, as for the Romantic
nationalists, climate and landscape are the main determinants of literature.

Frye also accepts the necessity of evolution implicit in a theory that links environment so closely with literature. As the environment changes, so will the literature:

The poet's vision of Canada as a pioneer country in which man stands face to face with nature is bound to be superceded by a vision of Canada as a settled and civilized country, part of an international order, in which men confront the social and spiritual problems of men. (p. 154)

Frye, however, unlike the early critics, manages to make some use of what is, according to Romantic theory, Canada's confused poetic evolution. He notes, like so many others, the disadvantage that "the Canadian literary mind, beginning as it did so late in the cultural history of the West, was established on a basis, not of myth, but of history" (p. 231). He uses the conflict between the highly sophisticated literary language inherited by the early poets and the primitive and terrifying aspect of Canadian nature to explain what he considers to be several distinctive features of Canadian literature, beginning from the premise that "the imaginative content of Canadian poetry, which is often primitive, frequently makes extraordinary demands on forms derived from romantic or later traditions" (p. 174). His favorite example of a poet who embodies this conflict is Duncan Campbell Scott:

He writes of a starving squaw baiting a fish-hock with her own flesh, and he writes of the music of Debussy and the poetry of Henry Vaughan. In English literature we have to go back to Anglo-Saxon times to encounter so incongruous a collision of cultures. (p. 219)
Another is Pratt:

... what I think would have fascinated me in Pratt's poetry, even if I had never know him, is the way in which, unlike any other modern poet I know, he takes on so many of the characteristics of the poet of an oral pre-literate society, of the kind that lies immediately behind the earliest English poetry (p. 183).

Frye suggests that Pratt has exhausted this vein, and that Canadian poetry must evolve into a new mode. If literature evolves, presumably an autonomous Canadian literary world or tradition will develop and this dissonance between form and content will lessen. In 1965 Frye depicts the early Canadian writers, "who have found their way back to the real headwaters of inspiration" as "heroic explorers" and comments that "the Canadian imagination has passed the age of exploration and has embarked on that of settlement" (p. 234).

Like Pelham Edgar, who sees Canadian literature as "a sluggish diversion from the main stream with no current or impulse of its own," Frye sees the Canadian writer as "removed from his literary tradition" (p. 232). The Canadian writer, he notes in his "the Narrative Tradition in English-Canadian Poetry," 1946, is "compelled to take the language he was brought up to speak... and attempt to adjust that language to an environment which is foreign to it..." (p. 145). Here is the familiar concept that a "distinctively Canadian language" would produce a distinctive national literature. Since Canada does not possess a national language, the poet must develop a distinctive literary language. Frye writes in the Smith review as if this had already been achieved: "While Canadian speech is American, there is a recognizable Canadian accent in the more highly organized speech of its poetry" (p.131).
But this "accent" has not as yet turned into a fully developed literary language, and until it is, the Canadian poet finds himself cut off from the English tradition and without one of his own:

To an English poet, the tradition of his own country and language proceeds in a direct chronological line down to himself. . . . But to a Canadian, broken off from this linear sequence and having none of his own, the traditions of Europe appear as a kaleidoscope whirl. . . . (p. 136)

It is the lack of tradition which leaves the poet's mind so vulnerable to the landscape; gradually as a Canadian autonomous world of literature develops, the Canadian poet will withdraw "into the country of mythology . . ." (p. 238). Then the English-Canadian critic will be able to discard the Romantic nationalist categories. Until, however, a "Canadian author pulls us away from the Canadian context toward the centre of literary experience itself, then at every point we remain aware of his social and historical setting" (p. 214).

For Frye, the only Canadian poet who seems to have come close to pulling us away from the Canadian context is Pratt. Tom Marshall, in his Harsh and Lovely Land, 1979, begins his chapter on Pratt with the statement that "E. J. Pratt set out, apparently, quite deliberately, to be Canada's national poet." Frye comments on much the same point that "Pratt's devotion to the narrative represents a deep affinity with the Canadian tradition, although as far as I know (and I think I do know) the affinity was entirely unconscious on his part" (p. 242). Elsewhere he says that Pratt's feeling for the techniques of oral poetry was the result of "the
peculiar influence of his Newfoundland and Canadian environment on him: I am quite sure that he was unconscious of this aspect of his work" (p. 184). Both statements are unsupported, although Frye's friendship with Pratt gives his assertions more authority. Frye emphasized Pratt's unconsciousness because like Brown with Lampman, he wishes to show that Pratt is Canada's national poet naturally: premeditation is frowned upon as much in literature, apparently, as at murder trials. The whole question of whether a writer is conscious of the national aspects of his work constantly recurs in Canadian literature; and yet if the somewhat fraudulent Romantic insistence on spontaneity is dropped the issue loses significance. If a writer indicates that a particular theme in his work is intended and consciously chosen, fine; if he does not, several possibilities arise. It is not there and is being arbitrarily supplied by the critic. It is there and the poet was, in the Freudian sense, unconscious of it, in which case the critic should take some time to make the whole psychological background clear. Or it is there and is so familiar and commonplace to the writer that he feels it unnecessary, even embarrassing, to point it out. Despite Frye I would argue that this last is the case with Pratt. If he were asked what characterized a national poet, he would reply, like any other critic or poet of the period, that a national poet usually writes epic or drama (i.e. narrative poetry), preferably incorporating national myth or history; that he deals with human, political, and moral issues as well as with nature; and that he is the voice of the people, and therefore must write in a clear, forthright way. Further, if Canadian, the national poet should try to choose
themes that bridge the gap between French and English, and region and region, that is, national themes. Although no other English-Canadian poet came so brilliantly close to the ideal of the national poet (Wilfred Campbell, with his D'Aulac, was aiming at that role), Pratt does follow a model well-known to all his contemporaries. That Pratt should be attracted by "primitive" and historic themes and by the narrative technique seems perfectly logical in terms of Romantic nationalist ideas. The building of the railway was a cliché of national endeavour when Lorne Pierce commented in 1937 "we excused ourselves" for our small literary output, "by mumbling the hoary wheeze about writing epics in railroads"; 20 Pratt's Towards the Last Spike, 1952, supplies the deficiency perfectly. Frye praises Pratt for having all the qualities set out by Romantic nationalist theory for the model national poet. And there is nothing wrong with the model, or with praising a poet for matching it. But Frye implies that Pratt somehow stumbled across his "national" themes and techniques accidentally. "Pratt," Frye points out, "has a primitive sense of the responsibility of the poet for telling the great stories of his people" (p. 185); this is less likely to be a primitive sense than something Pratt learned from any one of the dozens of English-Canadian critics who made lists of suitable poetic themes from myth and history. Pratt, like an oral poet, or like the ideal Romantic poet, has such a "central relation to his society, there is no break between him and his audience: he speaks for, as much as to, his audience, and his values are their values. Even if a professional poet, he is popular in the sense that he is the voice
of his community" (p. 186-187). Pratt, in other words, is the voice of the people. But why is it still necessary to insist that he is unconscious of this? Simply because Frye sees literature as completely separate from all other writing, forming its own traditions; part of this other writing is literary criticism. As a professor of English at Victoria College, University of Toronto, Pratt would have read much of the critical material I deal with here—or simply have heard it in his discussions with Edgar, Robins and others. Yet Frye cannot allow Pratt to derive a literary form from a critical tradition. Therefore, Frye creates for Pratt a somewhat implausible Canadian narrative tradition of earlier writers:

A striking fact about Canadian poetry is the number of poets who have turned to narrative forms (including closet drama) rather than lyrical ones. The anthologist who confines herself wholly to the lyric will give the impression that Canadian poetry really began with Roberts's "Orion" in 1880. Actually there was a tradition of narrative poetry well established before that (Sangster, Heavysege, Howe, and several others), which continues into the post-Confederation period (Mair, Isabella Crawford, Duvar, besides important narrative works by Lampman and D. C. Scott). (p. 242; see 150-55)

Pratt is more likely to have read and taken seriously the Romantic nationalist critics I have discussed, than these narrative poets. Frye seems torn between the desire to see Pratt as an isolated genius, arising out of the "peculiar influence of his Newfoundland and Canadian environment" (p. 184), and the desire to integrate him into an English-Canadian literary tradition. He points out that "there has been no connected tradition of narrative in English
literature since 1400," and that "no one except Pratt has worked hard enough and long enough at the form to discover its inherent genius" (p. 150). He also states that Pratt "has never followed or started any particular 'trend' in poetry."\textsuperscript{21} The problem is that Pratt is isolated from the "mainstream" of Canadian poetry, but fits neatly into a critical tradition; Romantic nationalism set out the theoretical requirements for a national poet, Pratt set out to fill them. Few other poets were either as interested or nearly as successful. Part of the problem was that the definition of national poet had been derived by European critics from an examination of their existing literary monuments of the past. It is not surprising that few Canadian poets, without contemporary examples to follow, were interested in adapting oral forms to a modern Canada. Yet that is what the Romantic nationalist theory insisted on; Canadian literature, for some, had to go back to the beginning—then, and only then, a true national literature could evolve; or, as Frye puts it, the writer, to find his true identity "within the world of literature" must withdraw "from what Douglas LePan calls a country without a mythology into the country of mythology, ending where the Indians began" (p. 238; emphasis added).

For Frye, Pratt sums up and exhausts several of the traditions, themes, or attitudes that Frye finds central to Canadian literature. He argues that "a narrative tradition begotten in the nineteenth century . . . reaches its culmination in Brébeuf and is hardly capable of much further development" (p. 154). Once Canada has its epic beginnings, there is no need to prolong the infancy. As well, Pratt has "expressed in Towards the Last Spike the central
comic theme, and in Brébeuf the central tragic theme, of the
Canadian imagination" (p. 173)—the marriage of the regions; and
the destruction of the Canadian by his "motherland"—a kind of
infanticide. (Another tragic theme has since arisen—the murder
of the mother by her children.) The comic and the tragic themes
are combined, Frye feels, in Pratt's "The Truant," which is
"the greatest poem in Canadian literature" (p. 173). Pratt's
"The Truant" comforts Frye, for in it a poet confronts the spirit
of the "obliterated environment" of the future, and defeats this
spirit with the humanity of imagination and the humanity of
Christ's suffering. Thus "The Truant" "foreshadows the poetry
of the future, when physical nature has retreated to outer space
and only individual and society are left as effective factors in
the imagination" (p. 250). Pratt is therefore Canada's "once and
future" poet; through his poetry, Canada "found its tongue."²²

Frye, despite the large number of similarities between his
assumptions and those of the early critics, cannot be classified
as a Romantic nationalist critic like Brown or Edgar. To be a
Romantic nationalist is not simply to accept uncritically a set
of assumptions, some rather dubious, for neither Edgar nor Brown
accepted all Romantic nationalist assumptions uncritically; rather
it is to see great literature as indivisible from social experience.
For Frye, the line between great literature and the merely good
is precisely the line between literature that is autonomous and
literature that is involved with society. In the fundamental
assumption of his criticism as a whole, that the body of great
literature can and should be studied in and for itself, he separates
himself conclusively from a tradition that sees literature as a product of society, indeed, of a particular formation of society—the nation. Yet in his Canadian criticism Frye does not adhere to his own principles, because, as already pointed out, he feels Canadian literature "is more significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature" (p. 214). This conclusion allows him to step away from his own theory, and to use the Romantic nationalist ideas central to the English-Canadian critical tradition. Thus, like many other English-Canadian critics, Frye is a Romantic nationalist at home, and something else abroad.

It is significant, I feel, that Frye concludes his most recent important comment on Canadian literature, his Conclusion to the second edition of The Literary History of Canada, 1976, with a statement that is implicit in all his work, and strongly explicit in most Romantic nationalist criticism (for example, Friedrich von Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern, that literature, art, and culture are what redeems civilization from oblivion. He comments that even tragedies like Macbeth and Othello are called plays, and "play is that for the sake of which work is done, the climactic Sabbath vision of mankind."23 Such a statement matches the feeling made plain in the earlier criticism, that Canada without a literature would not survive in any way that would matter; material success fails with the fall of the civilization, but the nation is resurrected into eternal life through the national spirit found in its literature.
Conclusion

Carl Berger, in his "The True North Strong and Free," comments that "by its very nature, nationalism must seize upon objective dissimilarities and tendencies and invest them in the language of religion, mission and destiny." Historians, politicians, newspaper editorialists, and poets select what distinguishes Canada from Great Britain and the United States (or what they would like to distinguish Canada) and gradually conventionalize these differences. Inherited ideas about what is a significant marker of nationality and what is not also affect which "objective dissimilarities and tendencies" are seen as important by Canadians. Thus what is "Canadian" is a consensus developed by a far wider segment of society than the literary institution, which for the most part modifies and adapts this consensus for its own use. Further, both the social consensus and the literary conventions shift over time.

The selection and conventionalization process, although gradual and collective, should not be called unconscious. This implies, through a biological analogy, a national "mind." Rather, at any period, there is a national "way of thinking about the nation." This way of thinking can be described by examining a wide range of texts of particular periods. To name this way of thinking the "national spirit" or "national genius"
may seem harmless enough—as indeed, often enough it is—but it implies that this consensus is a mysterious force that works independently of men and women who write in a particular time and place. George Saintsbury, an early critic of the ideas labelled here as "Romantic nationalist," comments in his A History of Criticism and Literary Taste, 1904, that the "literature of a nation, though we talk of it as if it were something existent per se, is merely the aggregate of the work of individuals."² Certainly a preoccupation with national literature may lead to the dangers neatly outlined by Saintsbury:

Your preoccupation with the idea that the Englishman will be insular and rebel to ideas, the German unpractical and "inner-conscious," the Frenchman logical, witty, tasteful, may very likely, according to the weaknesses of the poor but constant creature Human Nature, rather lead you to dispense with inquiry into the fact whether he, the individual Briton, Teuton, or Gaul, does really exhibit these characteristics. It will tempt you in the same way to exaggerate what tendencies he may have to them—to force them on him if he has them not—or even to leave him out of consideration if he is so impudent as too uncontestably not to have them.

Yet to see literature as solely the work of individuals is to ignore the forces of convention, influence, and tradition, and precludes the possibility of talking about the national literature at all.

Modern English-Canadian critics, faced with this choice, tend to postulate an essential concept or symbol that they see as the Canadian element in Canadian literature. Generally, this concept or symbol is derived from the literature alone, rather
than from the literature in the context of the authors' critical and literary beliefs, or in the context of the literary and historical relationships of the work. Most of the critics who try to approach Canadian literature through a central concept, theme, or symbol rightly manifest a certain uneasiness about this approach. For example, Margaret Atwood begins her *Survival* with what she admits is "a sweeping generalization."¹ She argues that "every country or culture has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core."² For Englishmen, it is the Island, for Americans, the Frontier, and for Canadians, *Survival*. This sounds like the resurrection of Saintsbury's "insular" Englishman. Claude T. Bissell, in his "Canadian Literature and the National Scene," suggests that *Survival* is "a return to the nineteenth century" in that Atwood has a strong belief in the national basis of all literature.³

Yet even if modern critics reject the idea of a national symbol, or spirit, or genius, if they distinguish a work written by a Canadian from other literary works, they are instantly and almost inevitably involved with a mysterious entity called "Canadian literature." The problem is that neither a country nor its literature—complex and amorphous entities that they are, can be defined neatly by a single concept or symbol. A writer does not, granted, deal with the real Canada, although he may think he does; rather he deals with the "real" Canada, which is a verbal and symbolic creation, a structure selected, for various
historical, ideological, and aesthetic reasons to stand for the real Canada. These conventions do not derive from the land directly, they are not single or simple, and they are transmitted in words. They are, therefore, learned conventions. A writer born and educated in Canada may choose to ignore them; a foreign writer may learn them so thoroughly that his works are instantly integrated into the "Canadian" literary tradition.

Elî Mandel deals with the issue of the "Canadian" convention, somewhat obliquely, in his "Images of Prairie Man." The application of what he says about prairie literature to Canadian literature solves some major critical problems. He writes:

If we mean seriously to talk about images of prairie man, we are in fact concerned with prairie art and prairie literature, and we believe that somehow, as art and literature they can be distinguished from other forms of art and literature.

This sounds familiar enough. But Mandel refrains from talking about the impact of a flat landscape on the mind. Against this determinist view he sets Paul Hiebert's "superb parody of such an approach to literature," and quotes Miss Drool on Sarah Binks's literary relationship with the Saskatchewan landscape: "Unschooled, but unspoiled, this simple country girl has captured in her net of poesy the flatness of that great province." Literature does not, for Mandel, mirror nature. For him, as for Frye, it mirrors literature. (In fact, Mandel's approach, at least with respect to Canadian literature, is more purely Frygian than Frye's.)
Mandel, using Austin Warren's terms, argues that realism, far from being an accurate description of reality, is a "literary-philosophical movement like romanticism or surrealism," or in Mandel's words, "an imitation of certain clichés and stereotypes about landscape and environment." Therefore the "prairie" in "prairie literature" is "a mental construct, a region of the human mind, a myth."

The earlier critics insisted that the distinctively Canadian qualities of Canadian literature were strictly determined by a direct relationship, sometimes biological, sometimes psychological, between the real landscape and the poet. If this view is abandoned in favour of Mandel's position that literature, even in Canada, is more determined by literature than by reality, one serious confusion in the use of the term "Canadian" can be cleared up. In the Romantic nationalist usage, all literature written by writers who had been suitably exposed to the Canadian landscape was "Canadian" whether it dealt with Canada, or fitted into an indigenous tradition, or not. This made the struggle to find the elusive national note, flavour, or idiom, next to impossible. The term Canadian is best used as it is in British literature, or French literature, to mean all literature written by nationals, without the implication of a particular subject matter or Canadian "essence." The tradition that seems to be attempting to embody that essence, normally singled out as Canadian, might be better labelled the "national convention."
This national convention was formed by writers and critics with a Romantic nationalist outlook, and its formation began even before Confederation. That this convention is so often argued to be Canadian literature is easily explained—the early critics firmly believed that it was. Their long domination of English-Canadian literary criticism and the English-Canadian literary institution explains the persistence of the belief that a novel set in the north woods is somehow more Canadian than a novel set in the Toronto streets, or that a historical novel about Riel is more Canadian than science fiction. If the answer to the question “What is Canadian literature?” is in large part that it is a learned convention, then the true importance of these critics’ ideas becomes clear. For it is they, sometimes as critics, sometimes as creative writers, and their contemporary writers, who formed the convention out of the resistant materials of a new, unnamed country, using theoretical tools designed for other places, other times.

The Romantic nationalists’ vital interest in promoting and establishing Canadian literature is likely, in the long term, to be as crucial as their theories. If these early patriotic professors, hack journalist critics, and earnest anthologists had not been prepared to fight the uphill battle against the apathy of the popular audience and often the active scorn of the educated or academic reader, then Canadian literature would not be the varied and respected literature that it is.
This national convention was formed by writers and critics with a Romantic nationalist outlook, and its formation began even before Confederation. That this convention is so often argued to be Canadian literature is easily explained—the early critics firmly believed that it was. Their long domination of English-Canadian literary criticism and the English-Canadian literary institution explains the persistence of the belief that a novel set in the north woods is somehow more Canadian that a novel set in the Toronto streets, or that a historical novel about Riel is more Canadian than science fiction. If the answer to the question “What is Canadian literature?” is in large part that it is a learned convention, then the true importance of these critics’ ideas becomes clear. For it is they, sometimes as critics, sometimes as creative writers, and their contemporary writers, who formed the convention out of the resistant materials of a new, unnamed country, using theoretical tools designed for other places, other times.

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Notes

Introduction


2 See Goldwin Smith, Canada and the Canadian Question (1891; rpt. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1971), esp. p. 41.


Notes

Chapter One


11 Claude T. Bissell, "Literary Taste in Central Canada during the Nineteenth Century," The Canadian Historical Review, 31 (Sept. 1950), 248

12 McPherson, pp. 132, 134, resp.

13 MacLulich, p. 179.


Notes

Chapter Two


36 von Schlegel, p. 2.


41 Haberly, p. 89.

42 Edgar, "Have We a National Literature?" p. 9.


44 Jean-Charles Bonenfant, "Le Role comparée de la critique littéraire au Canada anglais et français," Culture, 13 (Sept. 1952), pp. 266-76.


53 An interesting example of this usage is found in Cecil Rhodes' will, where he stipulates that race should not disqualify anyone from applying for a Rhodes Scholarship. Norman Webster, in the Toronto Globe, 14 June 1980, quotes the Warden of Rhodes House, Sir Edgar Williams, who says that this was probably to ensure that Boer boys were not discriminated against, and concludes, "He wasn't thinking of colour at all" (sec. 1, p. 9). See also Henri Peyre, "Three Nineteenth Century Myths: Race, Nation, and Revolution," in Historical and Critical Essays (Lincoln: Univ of Nebraska Press, 1968), pp. 24-61; and A. G. Bailey, "On the Nature of the Distinction between the French and the English in Canada," 1947, in Culture and Nationality (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), pp. 210-222.

54 James Cappon, Charles G. D. Roberts (Toronto: Ryerson, [1925]), p. 71.


57 Hutton, p. 69.


59 Taine, I, 17.


William Arthur Deacon, "Four French-Canadian Novelists," Deacon Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 40, fol. 1.


Sutherland, p. 31.


Scott, Mermaid Inn, 22 Oct. 1892, p. 179

Editorial, St. John, Quebec, News and Advocate, 3 February, 1899.

Clara Thomas, "Traill's Canadian Settlers," Canadian Children's Literature, Nos. 5, 6 (1979), p. 36.


Thomas, pp. 34-35.

Hugh MacLennan, Two Solitudes (Toronto: Collins, 1945); Margaret Laurence, The Diviners (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974); I discuss this issue in more detail in "Romantic Nationalism and the Child in Canadian Writing," Association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures, Montreal, 31 May 1980; in press, Canadian Children's Literature; in literature, as I suspect in fact, the Scots were more likely to intermarry than the English.


MacMechan, Head-Waters, p. 97.

John D. Logan, Highways, p. 105.
80 Frederick Philip Grove, *Fruits of the Earth* (Toronto: Dent, 1933), pp. 163-64.


82 Moodie, p. 43.


84 John Ford MacDonald, William Henry Drummond (Toronto: Ryerson, [1925]), pp. 1, 2, resp.


90 Mrs. Humphrey Ward's *Canadian Born* (London: Smith, Elder, 1910), "would have been much better" remarks a reviewer in *The Canadian Bookman*, (2 [May 1910]), "if the manuscript had been submitted to some Canadian writer, familiar with the conditions in this country. . . . No novelist can be expected to write with precision of a country seen cursorily from a railway car . . ." (p. 70). Interestingly, it was submitted, in the proof stage, to Pelham Edgar, who comments in his *Across my Path* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1952) that the "hero was none other than the young Mackenzie King, whom Mrs. Ward seemed to regard as the type of the complete if not perfect Canadian" (p. 39). He concludes the anecdote: "What my comment was I cannot remember, but we were never invited again" (p. 40).


92 Bourinot, p. 18.

94 William Arthur Deacon, "Literature as Life Expression," E. J. Pratt's English Class, 7 April 1936, Victoria College, University of Toronto, Deacon Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto Box 36, fol. 6.


96 Rhodenizer, p. 12.


101 Pelham Edgar, rev. of Among the Millet by Archibald Lampman, Varsity, 2 March 1889, p. 119.


103 Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 6 May 1893, p. 306.

104 Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 3 Dec. 1892, p. 204.

105 Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 3 Dec. 1892, p. 203.


107 Minogue, p. 57.

108 MacMechan, Head-Waters, p. 15.


115 MacMurchy, p. 186.


121 Deacon, "Need", fol. 1.


125 Duncan Campbell Scott, "A Decade of Canadian Poetry," *Canadian Magazine*, 17 (June 1901), 158.

127 Saunders, p. 170.


129 [John A. Cooper], "Books and Authors," Canadian Magazine, 9 (June 1897), 178.


132 Cappon, Roberts, 1905, p. 50.

133 Brown, On Canadian Poetry, pp. 60, 61.


135 Dewart, p. x.


137 Scott, "Decade," p. 158.


139 Brown, On Canadian Poetry, pp. 25, 26, resp.

140 Brown, On Canadian Poetry, p. 26; compare Frye, Conclusion: "'Genius' is as much, and as essentially, a matter of social context as it is of individual character" (p. 215).


146 Baker, p. LXV.


152 MacMechan, "Achievement," p. 5.

153 Marshall, p. 65; compare Barker Fairley's comment in praise of E. J. Pratt's Titans in the Canadian Forum, 7 (Feb. 1927): "Best of all, we recognize . . . the existence, behind and around the narrative, of a mental climate which is not Anglo-Canadian, but which truly belongs to the uncivilized world" (p. 149).

154 W. A. Fraser, "Literature," Canadian Magazine, 13 (May 1899), 36.


156 Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 3 Dec. 1892, p. 203.

157 Lighthall, p. xxxiv.

158 John D. Logan, "The Genius and Distinction of Canadian Poetry," in Songs of the Makers of Canada (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), p. 20; compare Professor Gregg, "The Sonnet," Varsity, 15 Nov. 1884: "Zealously guard our literature, yet in its swaddling clothes, and the day will not be distant when it will stand erect in all the glory and beauty of perfect manhood" (p. 45). This is probably the Reverend William Gregg, D. D., Professor of Apologetics and Church History at Knox College, University of Toronto, when the article was published.

Marquis, p. 530.


Roberts, History, p. 423.


See Berger, Sense of Power; and Roberts, History, p. 441.


178 Brian Kiernan, "Literature, History and Literary History: Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century in Australia," in Bards, Bohemians, and Bookmen, ed. Leon Cantrell (St. Lucia, Queensland: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976), p. 4; see also Joseph Jones, Radical Cousins (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976), 179.


180 von Schlegel, p. 51; I use Eichner's translation, p. 118.


182 Dewart, p. xix.

183 Henry Steele Commager, "The Search for a Usable Past," American Heritage, 16, No. 2 (Feb. 1965), 95; A. J. M. Smith uses the phrase, "usable past," which seems to have originated with Van Wyck Brooks, in his introduction to Masks of Fiction (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1961), noting that "the problem of Canadian literature for the historian must be the discovery (or perhaps even the invention) of a usable past . . . "(x).

184 Berger, Sense of Power, p. 90.

185 Lighthall, p. xxii.


187 Lampman, Mermaid Inn, 2 July 1892, p. 106.

188 Dawson, "Plea," p. LXIV.


190 Frye, Conclusion, 1976, III, 330.

191 Frye, Preface, Bush Garden, p. x.

192 Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 11 June 1892, pp. 90-91.

193 Kate Seymour MacLean, "Education and National Sentiment," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 6 (Feb. 1881), 191.

See Baker, p. 53; Hector Charlesworth, in his Candid Chronicles (Toronto: Macmillan, 1925) comments that "all Canadian historians unite in emphasizing the significance of the Battle of Châteauguay... because it furnished decisive proof of the loyalty of French Canadians..." (p. 5).


Bourinot, p. 25.

Bourinot, p. 25.

Bourinot, p. 25.


"Books and Authors," Canadian Magazine, 13 (May 1899), 91.

Scott, Mermaid Inn, 28 Jan. 1893, p. 250.


Leon Slonim, "A Source for Duncan Campbell Scott's 'On the Way to the Mission,'" Canadian Poetry, No. 3 (Fall/Winter, 1978), 62-64; and Margaret Kennedy, "Lampman and the Canadian Thermoplae: 'At the Long Sault: May 1660,'" Canadian Poetry, No. 1 (Fall/Winter 1977), 54-59; Pratt also used Parkman for Brébeuf and his Brethren.

Scott, Mermaid Inn, 9 April 1892, pp. 48, 49, resp.; see also Lionel Groulx, "Si Dollard revenait...", in Dix ans d'Action Française, (Montreal: Bibliothèque de l'Action Française, 1926), pp. 89-122.

209 MacMechan, *Head-Waters*, p. 58.


211 "Books and Authors," *Canadian Magazine*, 14 (Jan. 1900), 298.

212 von Schlegel, p. 159.


214 Dewart, p. vii.

215 John D. Logan, *Dalhousie University and Canadian Literature* (Halifax: Privately Printed, 1922), p. 2n; see also Graeme Mercer Adam, Letter, *The Week*, 1 (4 Sept. 1884): "There is not a little in Canadian literature that deserves to be rescued from threatened oblivion and worthily reproduced in some permanent and accessible form" (p. 633).

216 A good example of this kind of article is Lawrence Burpee's "Canadian Novelists," *Sewanee Review*, 11 (Oct. 1903), 385-411.


218 Carole Henderson Carpenter, "Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada," Diss. University of Pennsylvania 1975, p. 7; Marius Barbeau comments in "Canadian-English Folk-Lore," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 31 (1918): "It is clear that a large mass of oral tradition survives in Canada, and that, on the whole, it is of the same type as that which, from the remote past, has been at the basis of literary and artistic productions in Europe" (p. 2).


220 Haliburton, p. 8.

221 Piper, p. 68.

222 Wilson, p. 18.


227 Robins, p. 315.

228 Robins, p. 316.

229 Robins, p. 316.

230 Robins, p. 316.


233 Berger, *Writing*, p. 3.

234 Berger, *Writing*, p. 3.


240 Stevenson, p. 25.

241 MacDonald, p. 16.

242 William Arthur Deacon, "Contemporary Canadian Literature," ca. 1952 Deacon Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Lecture One, Box 40, fol. 11.


245 Dewart, p. x.

Adam, "Nationalism," p. 119.


Frye, Conclusion, 1965, p. 222.

Lampman, Mermaid Inn, 7 Jan. 1893, p. 230; and 24 Sept. 1892, p. 157, resp.


Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 19 Nov. 1892, p. 192.


Pelham Edgar, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," University Magazine, 11 (April 1912), p. 479; and Baker, p. LXIV.


MacLulich, p. 87.

Taine, History, I, 35.


Lighthall, p. xxxv.

Lighthall, p. xxxv.

Marquis, p. 589.


Bourinot, p. 23.


Woodcock, p. 89.

It has too often been taken for granted that all literature dealing with the same subject, or from the same country, or period has something fundamental in common. For an examination of the concept of "period," see Claudio Guillén, Literature as System (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971).


Lister Sinclair, "The Canadian Idiom," Here and Now, 2 No. 4 (June 1949), p. 16.


Lampman, Mermaid Inn, 19 Nov. 1892, p. 194.

Abrams, p. 29.

286 Doull, p. 256.
287 William Arthur Deacon, Notebook, 1921, Deacon Papers Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 31.
291 Scott, Mermaid Inn, 29 Oct. 1892, p. 182.
292 Frye, Conclusion, 1965, p. 213.
294 Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire, 1861, as quoted by Wellek, History, III, p. 48.
296 Scott, Mermaid Inn, 11 Feb. 1893, p. 257.
298 Bourinot, p. 77n; Cappon, Roberts, 1905, p. 2.
299 Campbell, Mermaid Inn, 15 April 1893, p. 295.
304 Wellek, History, IV, 158.


308 Deacon, "Theory," pp. 121, 123, resp.


311 Baker, p. 97.


318 von Schlegel, p. 320.
Notes

Chapter Three


3 For example, Wilfred Campbell, Edward Hartley Dewart, Lorne Pierce, Northrop Frye, E. J. Pratt.

4 In a letter to Lorne Pierce, 5 June 1923 (Pierce Papers, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston), Arthur Phelps recommends that Pierce include Pratt in an anthology Pierce was compiling; in a letter to Newton MacTavish, 20 Feb. 1928 (Newton MacTavish Papers, North York Public Library, Toronto, Letter Book No. 1, Item. 54), Phelps asks MacTavish to speak to Mackenzie King about a Civil Service job for Grove; later, Margaret Stobie, in Frederick Philip Grove (New York: Twayne, 1973), notes that Phelps gave William Arthur Deacon one of Grove's manuscripts to read, and Deacon in turn convinced Graphic Press to publish it (p. 141.)

5 Lorne Pierce, Diary, 3 Sept. 1925, Pierce Papers, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston.

6 William Arthur Deacon, "In Fame's Antechamber," unpub. book ms. and Christmas message sent out to family, books, and authors, 1937, resp., Deacon Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.


8 Association of Canadian Bookmen Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Scrapbook No. 1.


10 Deacon to Barnard, 24 April 1939, Deacon Papers.


14 Lawrence Burpee, President's Address, Authors' Bulletin 3, No. 1 (July 1925), 4.

15 Kennedy, p. 100.


18 See Djwa, p. 12.


20 Margaret Atwood, Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 11.


23 John D. Logan and Donald G. French, Highways of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1924), pp. 363-64.

24 Duncan Campbell Scott, "A Decade of Canadian Poetry," Canadian Magazine, 18 (June 1901), 158.


27 Logan, p. 363.

28 See R. C. Wallace, Some Great Men of Queen's (Toronto: Ryerson, 1941), pp. 76-80.

29 M. G. Parks, Introduction, Head-Waters of Canadian Literature by Archibald MacMechan (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1924), v-vi.


35 Lionel Stevenson, Appraisals of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926), p. 64.


39 Deacon to Barnard, 24 April 1939, Deacon Papers.


41 Canadian Authors' Association, The Canadian Bookman, 13, No. 3 (March 1936), 66.


44 Edward McCourt, _The Canadian West in Fiction_ (Toronto: Ryerson, 1949), p. 5.


48 Editorial Comment, _Canadiana_, 2 (April 1890), 78.


52 See Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, _The Yearbook of Canadian Art_, 1913 (Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1913); two others appeared later, both edited by Bertram Brooker, entitled _The Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1928-29_ (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929) and _The Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1936_ (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936); Malcolm Ross dedicated his anthology, _The Arts in Canada: A Stock-Taking at Mid-Century_ (Toronto: Macmillan, 1958) to Brooker; see also Augustus Bridle, _The Story of the Club_ (Toronto: Arts and Letters Club, 1945) and the Arts and Letters Club Papers, Province of Ontario Archives, Toronto.


54 See M. O. Hammond, "Recent Canadian History: Some Books of the Years 1928 and 1929," Hammond Papers, Province of Ontario Archives, Box 1291, envelope 15.

55 Canadian Society of Authors, Report of Founding Meeting, _Miscellaneous Manuscripts_, Province of Ontario Archives, M1 2124, 1899, #3.

56 Canadian Society of Authors, _Bibliography and General Report_ (Toronto: [Hunter Rose, 1902]), pp. 5-6.
Canadian Society of Authors, Bibliography, p. 6.

for an account of the controversy stirred up by Edgar's paper, see Chapter three, note 97.

Canadian Society of Authors, Bibliography, p. 7;

[Palham Edgar] Canadian Society of Authors, Report of
the Canadian Society of Authors for 1906 and 1907 (n.p.: n.p.
[1907]), p. 4.

Edgar, Report pp. 4-5.

Edgar, Report, p. 6.

Edgar, Report, pp. 6-7.

See Lawrence J. Burpee, "The Copyright Situation," The Authors' Bulletin, 6, No. 1 (Dec. 1928), pp. 58-60;
Lawrence J. Burpee, Stephen Leacock, J. Murray Gibbon, "The
Copyright Bill," Bulletin of the Canadian Authors' Association,
No. 4 (April 1925), pp. 4-7; H. Pearson Gundy, "Literary Pub-
Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976), I,
188-202; George Parker, "The Canadian Copyright Question in
the 1890s," Journal of Canadian Studies, 11 (May 1976), 43-45;
George Parker, "The Canadian Author and Publisher in the Twen-
tieth Century," in Editor, Author and Publisher, ed. Wm. G.
Howard (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1968), pp. 28-46;
Royal Commission on Book Publishing, Background Papers (Toronto:
Queen's Printer, 1972); and Susan Sills, "The Role of the
Canadian Authors' Association with Respect to the Licensing
Clauses of Early Copyright Legislation and Canada's Adherence


G. W. Ross, "The Copyright Question," in Miscellaneous
Manuscripts, Province of Ontario Archives, MU 2124, 1899, #3.

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See Canadian Society of Authors, Bibliography, pp. 6-7.

Mary Jean Vipond, "National Consciousness in English-
Speaking Canada in the 1920s" Diss. University of Toronto 1974,
p. 334.

Vipond, p. 334; See also David M. Legate, Stephen Leacock

Canadian Authors' Association, Bulletin No. 1 (Jan. 1923);
"Constitution: Supplement to Bulletin No. 1."

Canadian Authors' Association, First Quarterly Bulletin,


Lorne Pierce, as quoted by Desmond Pacey, "The Course of Canadian Criticism," in The Literary History of Canada, 2nd ed., gen. ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976), III, 20; Pacey notes that John Sutherland used the last sentence of this quotation as the motto for Northern Review.

Lorne Pierce, Diary, Pierce Papers, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., Fall, 1922; all further references to the diary will be made in the text.


John D. Logan, Letter to Lorne Pierce, 18 Sept. 1922, Pierce Papers, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

Parker, "History," p. 150.


Gilbert Parker, Letter to Lorne Pierce, 29 May 1923, Pierce Papers.

Norman Shrive, Charles Mair: Literary Nationalist (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 259-64.

Acadia University Calendar, 1930-31; Mount Allison University Calendar, 1928-29; University of Western Ontario Calendar, 1928-29.

See Parker, "History," pp. 271-72.
The definite titles were Robert Norwood, by Albert Durrant Watson; Thomas Chandler Haliburton, by John D. Logan; Isabella Valancy Crawford, by Katherine Hale; "Charles Mair" by John Garvin; Peter McArthur, by William Arthur Deacon; "Robert Service," by Arthur Phelps; and William Kirby and John Richardson by William Renwick Riddell.


Lomer Gouin, Introduction to the French Section, Makers, pp. 2-3.

I have seen undated copies of Stephen Leacock, and one dated 1923, and the same for Robert Norwood. I suspect the ones dated 1923 were part of a second issue in January 1924, see text p. 177.

"Literary Criticism?" rev. of the first six volumes of the Makers series, The Canadian Forum, 4 (Aug. 1924), 244, refers to this as the first volume; Lorne Pierce, in a letter to William Arthur Deacon, 1 May 1923, Deacon Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, encloses a copy of Norwood "just fresh from the press." Other reviews, Toronto Mail and Empire, 26 May 1923 and Montreal Gazette 12 May 1923 make it clear that this is the first of a series.


Wallace, pp. 68-75.


See Michèle Lacombe, "Theosophy as a Canadian Intellectual Tradition," Journal of Canadian Studies, in press.

Lorne Pierce, Foreword, Cap and Bells, ed. John Garvin (Toronto: Ryerson, 1936), p. v; for more information about Garvin, see Parker, "History," p. 140; and Shrive, pp. 263-64.

Albert Durrant Watson, Robert Norwood, Makers of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Ryerson 1923 ), p. 10.

"Literary Criticism?" p. 344.

B. K. Sandwell, rev. of first six volumes of the Makers series, Canadian Historical Review 6 (March 1925), 89.
Lorne Pierce, Letter to William Arthur Deacon, 8 May 1923, Deacon Papers.

Scrapbook Number Five, Pierce Papers, fol. 102.


Alexander Clark Casselman, ed. and biographical intro., Richardson's War of 1812, by John Richardson (1902; rpt. Toronto: Coles, 1974).

Sandwell, p. 89.


See Lorne Pierce, Lord Tennyson and William Kirby (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929); this work was dedicated to James Cappon and published in 250 copies.


Allison, fol. 101; and Sandwell, p. 90.


Allison, fol. 100.


"Literary Criticism?", p. 344.

Sandwell, p. 88.

"Literary Criticism?", p. 344.
118 Katherine Hale, Letter to Lorne Pierce, 24 April 1924, Pierce Papers.


120 I suspect that Duncan Campbell Scott's memoir of Lampman, written for the Makers series, ended up in Scott's edition of Selected Poems of Archibald Lampman (Toronto: Ryerson, 1947).

121 Lorne Pierce, Letter to John D. Logan, 5 June 1924, Pierce Papers; Pierce sent Deacon a typewritten prospectus, 30 January 1924, which listed Logan as the author of "Joseph Howe," Pierce as the author of "Literary Backgrounds The Lakes," and A. A. [sic for G. G.] Sedgwick as the author of Gilbert Parker; this prospectus was earlier than Makers.

122 Logan lectured part-time at Acadia (alternate years), wrote for the Halifax Herald, and was Associate Archivist for the Maritime Provinces in Halifax during the 1920s. He eventually went to teach English at Marquette University, Milwaukee in 1926.


125 Compare Highways, p. 78 with John D. Logan, Thomas Chandler Haliburton Makers of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Ryerson, [1925]), p. 150.


127 Lawrence Mason rev. of Thomas Chandler Haliburton by John D. Logan, Toronto Globe, 4 July 1925, Scrapbook Number Five, fol. 11; rev. of Thomas Chandler Haliburton by John D. Logan, Saturday Night, 4 July 1925, Scrapbook Number Five, fol. 118.

128 John Ford MacDonald, William Henry Drummond, Makers of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Ryerson, [1925]), p. 92.

129 MacDonald, p. 107.


James Cappon, Letter to Lorne Pierce, 10 Jan. 1923, Pierce Papers; Edgar's ms. on Scott, which is now in the Edgar Papers at the E. J. Pratt Library of Victoria College, University of Toronto, was, according to a letter from John Garvin to William Dow Lighthall (27 Dec. 1922, Lighthall Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa) intended as volume 19 of Masterworks of Canadian Authors; I thank Sandra Campbell, who is at work on a critical biography of Pelham Edgar, for this information.

James Cappon, Letters to Lorne Pierce, 5 July 1923 and 30 July 1923, Pierce Papers.

Lorne Pierce writes two letters to William Arthur Deacon, 15 Jan. 1925 and 20 Jan. 1925 that indicate that Pierce is involved in publicizing the event, Deacon Papers.

For a description of Roberts's seduction technique, see Thomas H. Raddall's In My Time: A Memoir (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), p. 252; then as now, poets attracted female worshippers; then it was considered neither polite to take advantage of them, nor impressive to talk of having done so.


Compare Lorne Pierce, Marjorie Pickthall: A Book of Remembrance (Toronto: Ryerson, 1925).


Allison, fol. 100.


148 Makers, opp. inside front cover.

149 Lorne Pierce mentions the completion of the O'Hagan work in An Outline of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Ryerson, 1927), p. 133.

150 Makers.


152 Duncan Campbell Scott remarks in a letter to E. K. Brown, 8 Feb. 1943 (E. K. Brown Papers, Public Archives of Canada) that Pierce proposed a first run of Scott's edition of Lampman's poems of only 500; Pierce printed only 1,000 of Brown's On Canadian Poetry (Toronto: Ryerson, 1943).

153 Parker, "History," p. 275; in a note Parket says the Sales Record book is unclear about this: "Instead of a total printing of 1,500, it is possible that only 1,000 were printed" (p. 285).

154 Parker, "History," p. 271.

155 Dickinson, p. 38.

156 William Arthur Deacon to Anson B. Cutts, 14 March 1946, Deacon Papers.


158 Andrew Macphail, Letter to Lorne Pierce, 9 Nov. 1923, Pierce Papers.

159 Lorne Pierce, Letter to Andrew Macphail, 8 Feb. 1924, Pierce Papers.


161 [Andrew Macphail], "Norman Duncan: An Estimate," Edith and Lorne Pierce Canadiana Collection, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston.
[Andrew Macphail], "Norman Duncan."


Lorne Pierce to E. K. Brown, [1944], E. K. Brown Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, fol. 216. All further references to this letter are in parentheses in the text.


Brown, On Canadian Poetry, p. 86.

Brown, On Canadian Poetry, p. 25.


Dickinson, p. 47.


Brown, "Letters in Canada, 1945," p. 272; Lorne Pierce wrote E. K. Brown, 3 Feb. 1947, and commented: "I remember that one time you remarked in the Annual Review of Canadian Letters [sic] in the University of Toronto Quarterly that too many books of Canadian poetry were being published by Ryerson and that this was not healthy. I think you were right" (E. K. Brown Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, fol. 244).
178 Pacey, p. 24.

179 See Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 19 (1925), xviii.

180 H. Pearson Gundy, Foreword, Lorne Pierce: A Profile, by C. H. Dickinson (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), p. viii; Pierce also was important in the founding of the Bibliographical Society of Canada in May 1946.

181 See Dickinson, pp. 53-56 for a more detailed description of this donation to Queen's.


188 Lampman, Mermaid Inn, 18 March 1893, p. 276.

189 Lampman, Mermaid Inn, 18 March 1893, p. 276.

190 Lampman, Mermaid Inn, 18 March 1893, p. 276.


See John Seath, "The University and the Professions," Varsity, 10 March 1888, pp. 189-91.

Editorial Comment, Varsity, 5 Dec. 1885, p. 74; two articles in the Canadian Forum in the 1930s blame the German philological method for the lack of literary scholarship in Canada, A. F. B. Clark's "Literary Scholarship in Canadian Universities," Canadian Forum, 10 (April 1930), 244-48; and H. Steinhauer, "Why We Have No Great Canadian Scholars,' Letter, Canadian Forum, 10 (June 1930), 321-23.


Harris, p. 50.

Phillips, p. 35.

Varsity, 12 Dec. 1885, p. 86; Varsity, 3 April 1886, p. 220.


Lampman, pp. 275-76.


Editorial Comment, Varsity, 12 December 1885, p. 86.
211 Editorial Comment, Varsity, 7 March 1885, p. 207.
212 Editorial Comment, Varsity, 21 March 1885, pp. 231-32.
213 Editorial Comment, Varsity 3 Nov. 1888, p. 4.
216 W. J. Alexander file, University of Toronto Archives, Toronto.
220 W. J. Alexander, The Study of Literature (Toronto: Rowsell & Hutchison, 1889); compare Reginald Bateman [the first Professor of English, University of Saskatchewan], "The Teaching of English," in Reginald Bateman: Teacher and Soldier (London: University of Saskatchewan, 1922), pp. 36-62.
221 Phillips, p. 44.
223 Alexander, Study, [1884], p. 22.
224 Alexander, Study, 1889, p. 25.
228 Varsity, 9 Feb. 1892, p. 179.


230 W. J. Alexander, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives, clipping from the Toronto Star, 2 Nov. 1920.

231 W. J. Alexander, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives, clipping from the Toronto Star, 29 June, 1944.


235 Desmond Pacey, "The Study of Canadian Literature," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 2 (Spring 1973), p. 68; although I am extremely indebted to Pacey's account it is inaccurate in some respects: MacMechan began his course at Dalhousie in 1923-24, not, as Pacey has it, in 1921-22; B. K. Sandwell did not introduce the course at Queen's, it was introduced in 1921-22, presumably by John Ford MacDonald, who was acting head from 1920 to 1922 after Cappon's retirement. (Sandwell was head from 1924 to 1926.) Watters' course at the University of British Columbia, introduced in 1946-47, is not much different (judging only, of course, by the calendar description) from the one offered in 1925-26.

236 McGill University Calendar, 1907-08, p. 105.


238 Logan, Dalhousie, p. 7; see also his "Teaching Canadian Literature in the Universities," Canadian Bookman 2 (Dec. 1920), pp. 61-62.

239 Acadia University Calendar, 1919-20, p. 73.

240 I have been unable to identify this title; it may be Six One Act Plays, ed. Herman Voaden, published in 1926 by the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association.
241 Vernon Rhodenizer, Minutes of Canadian Authors' Association, 1931, Authors' Bulletin, 9, No. 1 (Sept. 1931), p. 16.

242 Lorne Pierce, Forward Outline p. [1].


244 Logan, Dalhousie, p. 2.

245 Logan, Dalhousie, p. 4.

246 Logan, Dalhousie, pp. 6,7, resp.; Logan, Aesthetic Criticism, p. 12.

247 Logan, Dalhousie, p. 1.

248 Logan, Dalhousie, p. 3.

249 Logan, Dalhousie, p. 7.

250 Logan, Dalhousie, pp. 11-12.

251 Parks, p. vii.

252 Parks, p. vi.

253 Parker, "History," p. 143.

254 For information about Allison, see A. G. Bedford, The University of Winnipeg (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976).

255 See Shortt, p. 60; R. C. Wallace, pp. 72-73; Charles G. D. Roberts to Edmund Clarence Stedman, 1 June 1888, rpt. in Report of the Committee on Research in English-Canadian Literature, 1976-78, Association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures, pp. 168-70.

256 Lorne Pierce, see text, p.180.

257 Queen's University Calendar, 1921-22, p. 107.

258 University of British Columbia Calendar, 1925-26, p. 95.

259 Bishop's University Calendar, 1926-27, pp. 62-63.


261 Mount Allison University Calendar, 1928-29, p. 54.
262 Pacey, p. 68.

263 University of Western Ontario Calendar, 1928-29, p. 119.


265 Letter received from James R. MacGillivray, 14 March 1980.

266 W. J. Alexander, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives, clipping from Toronto Star, 9 Nov. 1920.

267 W. S. Wallace taught Canadian Literature to Library School students at the University of Toronto, according to Charlotte Fee, one of his former students.

268 "Bookweek in Toronto," The Canadian Bookman, 12 (Nov. 1930), 236; this mentions the teaching of Canadian literature in a journalism course conducted by John Elton.


270 Vernon Rhodenizer, as quoted in The Author's Bulletin, 9, No. 1 (Sept. 1931), p. 16.


272 Rudy Wiebe, "A Novelist's Personal Notes on Frederick Philip Grove," University of Toronto Quarterly, 47 (Spring 1978), 191.


274 Letter received from James R. MacGillivray, 14 March, 1980.

275 Pacey, p. 68; Frederick Philip Grove's letters to Lorne Pierce, (Letters of Frederick Philip Grove, pp. 349, 337) indicate that Brown may have been teaching Grove's A Search for America to as many as 60 students in 1936.


277 Brown, "American Literature."

278 Brown, "American Literature."

280 University of Saskatchewan Calendar, 1945-46.

281 Personal interview with Carlyle King, 2 May 1979.

282 Pacey, p. 68


287 Canadian Bibliographic Centre, Canadian Graduate Theses in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1921-46. (Ottawa: n.p., n.d.)

288 Parker, "History," p. 75n; see also Douglas Bush, "Is There a Canadian Literature? Commonweal, 6 Nov. 1929, p. 13.
Notes

Chapter Four

1 See Across My Path (Toronto: Ryerson, 1952).

2 Acta Victoriana, 34 (Oct. 1910), 191; Edgar began lecturing in the French Department; he joined the English Department in 1902.

3 Northrop Frye, "Dean of Critics," Canadian Forum, 28 (Nov. 1948), 169.


9 Letter, Varsity, 23 March 1889, p. 149.


12 See A Study of Shelley with Special Reference to His Nature Poetry (Toronto: William Briggs, 1899); this was his doctoral dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1897.


15 "English Poetry Since Tennyson," University Magazine, 7 (April 1908), 262.
16 "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," University Magazine, 11 (Oct. 1912), 482-83.

17 "Tendencies in French Literature," Appleton's Popular Science, 55, No. 2 (June 1899), 208.

18 Claude T. Bissell, "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century," Canadian Historical Review, 31 (Sept. 1950), 247.


25 See "Drift of Modern Fiction," p. 135; and Oscar Pelham Edgar, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives, clipping from the London Free Press, 13 April, 1938.


28 Art of the Novel, pp. 358-59.


30 "Matthew Arnold as a Writer of Prose," p. 262.

31 "The Judgments of Carlyle," University Magazine, 12 (Dec. 1913), 635.


34 Bissell, p. 245.


37 "Matthew Arnold as a Writer of Prose," p. 256.

38 "Confession," p. 308.


41 "Ferdinand Brunetière," University Magazine, 6 (Feb. 1907), 111.

42 Oscar Pelham Edgar, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives, "Some Aspects of Canadian Literature," report of a lecture to the Women's Art Association, Toronto, 9 Nov. 1921, clipping from Toronto Mail, 10 Nov. 1921, p. 10.


46 For a Canadian example of this kind of criticism, see Archibald MacMachan, "In Memory of Scott," Dalhousie Review, 1 (July 1921), 123-38.

47 Introduction, Henry James, Man and Author (Toronto: Macmillan, 1927).


"Matthew Arnold as a Writer of Prose," p. 250.


"Ferdinand Brunetière," p. 115.


See text pp. 126-29.

Art of the Novel, p. 243.


Frye, p. ix.


Frye, p. x.

Art of the Novel, p. 230.


"Ferdinand Brunetière," p. 108.

Art of the Novel, p. 3.


72 Log of the English Literature Class, 1924-25, Edgar Papers, file 24; both Marjorie Pickthall and Wilson Macdonald read to this class in the 1924 term.


76 "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," p. 481.

77 "Fashions in Books," fol. 3.


83 Birney, p. 28.

84 Occasionally his "affectionate but patronizing" attitude backfired, as John Morgan Gray points out in his *Fun Tomorrow* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), p. 234.

85 George Parker, "A History of a Canadian Publishing House," Diss. University of Toronto 1969, notes that Edgar suggested various line changes to Scott, and also proposed titles for several poems (p. 259).
86 Oscar Pelham Edgar, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives.

87 See Canadian Society of Authors, Canadian Society of Authors: Bibliography and General Report, March 1902 (Toronto: Hunter Rose, [1902]); and Report of the Canadian Society of Authors for 1906 and 1907 (n.p.: n.p., [1907]).


91 See Oscar Pelham Edgar, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives.


93 W. J. Alexander, Dept. of Graduate Records file, University of Toronto Archives.

94 Oscar Pelham Edgar, Dept. of Graduate Records file, clipping, Saturday Night, Feb. 1933.

95 Thomson, pp. 15-16; Report of the Canadian Society of Authors, p. 7.


97 "Canadian Literature," 1911, p. 99; the enmity that Edgar incurred by this lecture was Wilfred Campbell's, who wrote the Globe indignantly to complain that Edgar was "trying to write me down in the eyes of the public." Campbell argues that Edgar's judgment was affected by Campbell's refusal to be included in a poetry anthology that Edgar was proposing to compile for Morang, a Toronto publisher.


100 Rev. of Among the Millet, by Archibald Lampman, Varsity, 2 March 1889, p. 119.

101 Frye, p. x.


103 "Have We a National Literature?" Toronto Globe, 31 Dec. 1904, mag. p. 9; the title of this piece and some of its contents are clearly inspired by Walt Whitman's "Have We a National Literature?" North American Review, 152 (March 1891), 332-38.


105 "Fresh View," p. 484.

106 "Have We a National Literature?" p. 9.

107 "Have We a National Literature?" p. 9.

108 Rev. of The Vagrant of Time, by Charles G. D. Roberts, Acta Victoriana, 52 (Jan. 1928), 33-34.

109 "Have We a National Literature?" p. 9.


111 "Fresh View," p. 479.


"Fresh View," p. 479.

Rev. of *The Vagrant of Time*, p. 34.


*Miscellaneous Clippings, Edgar Papers*.

Miscellaneous Clippings, Edgar Papers.

"Have We a National Literature?" p. 9.

Rev. of *The Vagrant of Time*, p. 33.


Rev. of *The Vagrant of Time*, p. 34.


"Fresh View," p. 483.

"Fresh View," p. 484.

"Duncan Campbell Scott," *Dalhousie Review*, 7 (April 1927), 43.

"Fresh View," p. 484.


"Fresh View," p. 486.

"Have We a National Literature?" p. 9.

"Fresh View," pp. 484-85.

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Chapter Five


7 Claude T. Bissell, "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century," Canadian Historical Review, 31 (Sept. 1950), 243.

8 Barrie Davies, Introduction, At the Mermaid Inn (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1979), comments: "The notion that a considerable time-lag in news of literary and political developments existed between Canada and the rest of the English-speaking world is made untenable by even a cursory reading of the material" (ix-x).


11 Pierce, Creed, p. 4.


15 J. A. Lindsay, "National Characteristics," Dalhousie Review, 9 (July 1929), 181.


23 John D. Logan to Lorne Pierce, 7 Jan. 1924, Pierce Papers, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.


36 J. D. Robins, A Pocketful of Canada (Toronto: Collins, 1946).


39 E. J. Pratt, "The Relation of Source Material to Poetry," Pratt Papers, E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria College, University of Toronto, Box 9, file 70.3.


42 Pickthall, p. 118.

43 E. K. Brown, "Recent Canadian Literature: First Broadcast," E. K. Brown Papers, University of Toronto Archives, ser., 2, Box 1, fols. 4-5.
44 Archibald MacMechan, Head-Waters of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1924), p. 17; all further references to this work appear in the text.


46 See Thomas O'Hagan, "Is the French Spoken in Quebec a Patois," in Intimacies in Canadian Life and Letters (Ottawa: Graphic, 1927), pp. 45-54; here O'Hagan defends Quebec French from these charges.


48 See Ronald Sutherland, Second Image (Don Mills, Ont.: New, 1971).


51 See Mirialle Servais-Maquoi, Le Roman de la terre au Québec (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974).

52 John D. Logan and Donald G. French, Highways of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1924), p. 6; all further references to this work appear in the text.

53 Lorne Pierce, An Outline of Canadian Literature (Montreal: Louis Carrier, 1927), p. 59; all further references to this work appear in the text.

54 Lorne Pierce, Toward the Bonne Entente (Toronto: Ryerson, 1929).

55 Vernon Rhodenizer, A Handbook of Canadian Literature (Ottawa: Graphic, 1930), p. 269; all further references to this work appear in the text.


60 Edward McCourt, The Canadian West in Fiction (Toronto: Ryerson, 1949), p. v; all further reference to this work appear in the text.


64 Warkentin, p. xii.


66 Lionel Stevenson, Appraisals of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926), p. 37; all further references to this work appear in the text.


70 Frye, p. 225.

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Chapter Six


4 On Canadian Poetry, rev. ed. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1944), p. 27; all further references to this work appear in the text.


8 See N. A. Benson, "Mr. King's New 'Special Assistant,'" Saturday Night, 2 May 1942, p. 14; and, for an example of Brown's federalist writing, his "The Abbé Groulx, Particularist," Canadian Forum, 10 (Oct. 1929), 19-20.


10 "Is a Canadian Critic Possible?" Winnipeg Free Press, 13 Jan. 1951, p. 17.


16 "Immediate Present," pp. 433, 442, resp.

17 "Recent Canadian Literature," E. K. Brown Papers, University of Toronto Archives, Series II, Box 1.


21 "Recent Canadian Literature," fol. 7.


29 "Letters in Canada: 1946," University of Toronto Quarterly, 16 (April 1947), 255.

30 Smith, p. 197.


C. B. Sissons, in A History of Victoria University (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1952) notes that Brown agreed to let some Victoria students into his lectures at University College "with the comment that he welcomed the chance to reciprocate the privilege he had enjoyed when Pelham Edgar was lecturing at Victoria and he was an undergraduate at University College" (220).

Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1950), ix-x.

To say that Brown learned the methods of New Criticism from his Sorbonne professors, as David Staines does in his Introduction to E. K. Brown: Responses and Evaluations (vii and viii) is to confuse explication de texte with New Criticism. For the difference between the two methods, see Edward Lohner, "The Intrinsic Method: Some Reconsiderations," in The Discipline of Criticism, ed. Peter Demetz and others (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), p. 150. For Cazamian's methods and ideas, see his Criticism in the Making (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

Rhythm in the Novel, pp. xi-xii.


"Mr. Eliot and Some Enemies," University of Toronto Quarterly, 8 (Oct. 1938), 68-84.

"Immediate Present," p. 431.
"Letters in Canada: 1940," University of Toronto Quarterly, 10 (April 1941), 287.

Smith, p. 196; and Staines, p. x, resp.


Collin, p. 226.

Smith, p. 197; Smith quotes selectively, ignoring Brown's reference in On Canadian Poetry, to the Canadian Romantics as "the Canadian poets" (p. 41) and his comment on Roberts that he "does look at Canada as a whole" (p. 52).


"Archibald Lampman," p. 15; Duncan Campbell Scott makes much the same claim in his "A Decade of Canadian Poetry," Canadian Magazine, 17 (June 1901): "There are but few of Lampman's poems that do not lead from nature by a very short path to human life" (p. 155).


Collin, p. 222.


In "The Contemporary Situation in Canadian Literature," 1938, he argues: "We are without an eager interest in the life about us; we should have that interest if we were an autonomous nation" (p.14).


George Herbert Clarke, rev. of On Canadian Poetry, by E. K. Brown, Queen's Quarterly, 50 (Winter 1944), 436.

60  Georges Bugnet, "Ou l'on rencontre un canadien," Canada Français, 33 (1946), 327.

61  See "Letters in Canada: 1938," University of Toronto Quarterly, 8 (April 1939), 298.


66  Ross, p. 196.
Notes

Chapter Seven


9 Margaret Atwood, Surfacing (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972) is set in the north woods, and, in part, concerns itself with theories of nationalism; her The Edible Woman (Boston: Little Brown, [1969]) is set in the city, and mainly concerns itself with feminist issues.


18 Pelham Edgar, "Canadian Poetry," The Bookman, 49, No. 5 (July 1919), 623.

19 Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1979), p. 34.


23 Frye, Conclusion, 1976, p. 332.
Notes

Conclusion


3 Saintsbury, III, 107-08.

4 Margaret Atwood, Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 31.

5 Atwood, p. 31.


8 Mandel, p. 46.

9 Mandel, p. 47.

10 Mandel, p. 47.
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North York Public Library, Toronto

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University of Toronto Archives

E. K. Brown Papers
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People Files

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Records of Alexander Lectures

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