

THREE CRITICS IN SEARCH  
OF A MODERN AND NATIONAL POETRY:  
A. J. M. SMITH, JOHN SUTHERLAND, AND LOUIS DUDEK

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### Three Critics in Search of a Modern National Poetry:

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## ABSTRACT

One theme which unites the literary criticism of A. J. M. Smith, John Sutherland, and Louis Dudek is their attempt to balance the claims of modernism and nationalism. Smith tended to emphasize the "modern" and Sutherland to emphasize the "national". Dudek achieves a degree of synthesis of this opposition. This work assesses the motives and accomplishments of each as critics within a larger context and focuses upon their prose writing (to the virtual exclusion of their poetry), their historical and social situations, and their sources.

A. J. M. Smith's criticism, which began in the late twenties, was shaped by the same metaphysical sensibility which produced his poetry. His paradoxical attraction to the poles of the real and the ideal led him to separate Canadian poetry into the "native" and the "cosmopolitan" streams and to identify the latter with the ideal. Although Smith largely escaped this colonial vision in his latest criticism, it was his earlier work which posed many of the questions which the next generation struggled to answer.

John Sutherland's criticism of the forties stands as a check to the modernist vision which Smith represented. Sutherland wanted a modern poetry which would blend with the life of the nation. In its North American context he drew his description of this poetry from the group of poets which contributed to his little magazines. When the poetic climate changed in the fifties, Sutherland gradually lost faith in modernism and narrowed his nationalism.

Louis Dudek's criticism from the fifties onward shared an emphasis on demanding aesthetic standards with Smith, and a commitment to social values with Sutherland. Dudek's attempts to reconcile oppositions between society and art relaxed his sense of the tension between national and aesthetic ideals. The anxiety which had characterized Smith and Sutherland's assessments of Canadian poetry does not appear in Dudek's criticism.

for  
Audrey

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## CHAPTER I

### A. J. M. SMITH

Critics of A. J. M. Smith's poetry often introduce their studies of his work with ritual pronouncements of despair. In the main, the source of their difficulty is Smith's rigorously maintained poetic of impersonality and timelessness.<sup>1</sup> Although Smith has willingly dated his literary essays and even pointed readers to their historicity,<sup>2</sup> students of Smith's criticism face some of the same difficulties which confront the critics of his poetry. Milton Wilson has maintained--following Eliot in an irony doubled upon itself--that Smith was a critic with a mind so fine that no ideas could violate it.<sup>3</sup> The comment is illuminating. A close study of Smith's criticism which takes the essays as a self-defining oeuvre would be incomplete for the criticism is shaped by more than the ideals the essays articulate. What must fill a void the essays would leave at the centre of the critical oeuvre is the sensibility which shaped the impersonal poetry and the taste which was engaged in Smith's influential anthologies.

Development in Smith's criticism appears by way of the addition of new themes and concerns which subtly alter his earlier views, but do not change their basic focus. Smith's singular development by accretion moves almost systematically from inner to outer realms of poetic activity. His early criticism is organized around the formation and definition of a poetic sensibility appropriate to modern conditions. What follows in the forties is Smith's attempt to construct a home for that sensibility within Canadian poetry. In the fifties and sixties, Smith turns to a consideration of

poetry's relation to life.

The importance of sensibility and taste in Smith's criticism must be asserted. At times, Smith's essays show contradictions which resemble the paradoxes which are fundamental to his poetic vision. These contradictions have a place within his poetry and sensibility which the nature of critical discourse does not allow. The decades-long dispute surrounding Smith's use of the terms "native" and "cosmopolitan" is the most important example of a distinction which had its roots in Smith's sensibility and became contradictory when expressed as a principle of literary criticism. The impulse which surfaced in Smith's poetry as paired images of body and spirit appeared in Smith's criticism of the forties as the paired Canadian poetic traditions of "native" and "cosmopolitan" verse.

When Smith made these distinctions he gave a new shape to the question of Canada's dependence on foreign poetic models. The cosmopolitanism which he identified and favoured stood as a challenge to Sutherland and others of the next generation who favoured a native voice instead. The tension between modernism and nationalism present in Smith's criticism, and in Sutherland's as well, is complex. The terms "modern" and "national" can be given no single definition since each critic brings his own vision of Canada's poetic future to their use. There is a sense in which both Smith and Sutherland, for example, are fighting against colonialism for a national and a modern Canadian poetry. Yet what Smith understands to be modern Sutherland accuses of colonialism and what Sutherland proposes as native would incur Smith's suspicion for its lack of modernity. This thesis argues that the most stable description of this conflict views it as a tension between a modernism which emphasizes aesthetic values and one which emphasizes social values. The special character of the conflict in early

Canadian modernism is its combination with issues of nationalism and colonialism. Smith and Sutherland are both nationalist critics in the sense that nationality arises as a problem in their criticism. In that special sense Dudek's criticism is evidence of a maturity which has superseded narrower nationalist approaches. Nationality is assumed in Dudek's writing. It no longer appears as one of the first difficulties a Canadian critic must confront.

### The Twenties

The legend of Smith's severe classical rigour and exactingly formal sensibility is such that the fact that Smith entered his apprenticeship in Canadian and international modernism as an aesthete with a decidedly fin de siècle taste both surprises and illuminates. Smith's later and more influential work must be understood from a context which includes his first published literary essay, "Symbolism in Poetry"<sup>4</sup> and his master's thesis on the poetry of W. B. Yeats.

"Symbolism in Poetry" was published in The McGill Fortnightly Review in December 1925 after Smith had begun work on his thesis, but well before its completion. The extent to which the essay relies on the earlier sections of the thesis suggests that it must be taken as Smith's considered evaluation of the importance of Yeats to his own critical development and to that of his contemporaries. The use that the essay makes of the Introduction to Symons's The Symbolist Movement in Literature helps to define the sensibility characteristic of Smith at this time. Like Symons, Smith began his essay with a general statement and a definition of symbolism and then moved to a more particular application of symbol to a literary movement.

Smith also paraphrased Symons at several points and followed Symons in quoting from Comte Goblet d'Aviella, Carlyle, and Blake. He departed from Symons in substituting a discussion of Yeats for Symons's treatment of the French Symbolist writers. This suggests that Smith approached Yeats as an English language representative of a movement which he viewed through Symons's eyes.

Symons's place in the development of modernism is ambiguous. Eliot's praise for him described Symons's role in introducing English modernists to late nineteenth-century French poets.<sup>5</sup> However, Symons's appreciation for these poets was not free from the fin de siècle quality which had led him to refer to them as decadents in a 1883 essay.<sup>6</sup> This quality--which emphasized both the poets' aestheticism and the mystical and Neo-Platonic intent of their art--had its roots in Pater on the one hand,<sup>7</sup> and the earlier Yeats, on the other.<sup>8</sup> It was also the side of Symons which Eliot criticized in his remarks on perfect and imperfect critics in The Sacred Wood.<sup>9</sup> This conjunction of late nineteenth-century writers and early modernism does have an inner logic. Perkins maintains "the high Modernist mode, when it developed in the 1910's and 1920's, was in some respects a revival of the premises and intentions that had shaped the avant-garde poetry of England in the eighties and nineties."<sup>10</sup> That judgment explains the relevance of The Symbolist Movement in Literature to a developing modernism. It also supports the argument that Symons's influence could lead in two directions--back to the late nineteenth century or forward toward modernism.

"Symbolism in Poetry" suggests that Smith responded to Symons's nineteenth-century cast. One touchstone of judgment on this issue is the link which Smith draws between symbols and meditative rhythm. In making

this connection Smith follows Yeats's early poetic theories and endorses the sensibility which they support. In early Yeats, the will is a busy-body, and the imagination is at home in trance. The goal of Yeats's poetry was the attempt to lull the will to sleep by meditative rhythms so that the imagination might turn from the objective world to a world of trance and dream. A suitable quotation from Yeats on the subject would be the passage which Smith himself cites in the essay:

The purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds no waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols.<sup>11</sup>

Smith, following the structure of Symons's introduction in all other respects, indicates his attachment to this view of poetic rhythm by giving it the pride of last place in his essay. Such placement is all the more notable when compared to the rousing description of Symbolism's revolt against the heritage of Positivism with which Symons had closed his introduction. Clearly, Smith's preoccupation is with "...the wisdom that waits upon loneliness, reverie, and solitude."<sup>12</sup>

Smith discusses two poems as an illustration of the effect which Symbolism evokes. The poems, Emily Dickinson's "There is a solitude of space," and George Herbert's sonnet on prayer, can hardly be taken as examples of Symbolist poetry. Nevertheless, Smith attaches singular importance to them. He presents linked discussions of the pair not only in this essay, but also in the master's thesis and in his dissertation on the poets of the seventeenth century. Apparently, the sensibility evoked by this strangely assorted pair describes Smith's own sense of what is central to poetic experience.

The two poems are entirely divergent in literary technique and general

ambiance. The common element between the two is that both strip away a world of phenomenal reality in order--not to describe--but to suggest experience of a transcendent world irradiated with incomprehensible but intense subjectivity. Herbert's sonnet moves through a list of witty conceits grouped in three quatrains. These quatrains organize the metaphors for prayer, first, around a general description of the "Christian plummet," next in figures of violence ("Engine against th' Almighty"), and finally in states of luxuriance ("softnesse, and peace, and joy, and love, and bless"). The couplet both recapitulates the bravura of the quatrains and, in an act of religious devotion, lays them before the altar in an admission of their inadequacy:

Church-bells beyond the starres heard, the souls bloud,  
The land of spices; something understood.

Symbol, Smith suggests, is the ritual of a mystery, and unconsciously wrenching Herbert's sense just enough to indicate his divergence from the Anglican, proclaimed, "It is something 'almost' understood; yet in that one word 'almost' lurks all the added beauty of a loveliness partially hidden."<sup>13</sup>

Emily Dickinson's "There is a solitude of space," presents a secular version of the inexplicable experience Smith felt he had identified in Herbert. In his comment on the poem Smith moves beyond Dickinson, however, to identify her intense subjectivity with a reality larger than spare solitude:

It is of this intense subjectivity, this inner solitude,  
that Symbolism is the interpreter. It is somewhat like  
prayer in being a communion of the microcosm with the  
macrocosm, the ego with the Infinite, the individual  
soul with God."<sup>14</sup>

While the most outstanding feature of "Symbolism in Poetry" is Smith's presentation of the sensibility described here, the essay does present a

more social context within which to locate this sensibility. The positive side of this context is an early version of what Smith would later find in T. S. Eliot's "tradition." Smith presents this with a quotation from Symonds: ✓

Though a symbol may at first have been arbitrarily chosen, long association has created a hidden correspondence, and traditional usage has endowed it with a mystical significance, changing what was once approximate expression to reflection of the unseen reality for which it stands.<sup>15</sup>

The existence of traditional bonds of conventional symbolic meaning, then, gives the poet a freedom of symbolic expression which can be obtained in no other way.

This happy effect of social custom upon the poet surely has roots in Yeats's vision of a mythical Celtic culture endowed with a Unity of Being which no longer existed in more prosaic societies. Smith, like Yeats, is aware of a threat which the negative side of poetry's social context poses to the use of symbols. In this essay he refers to the significance of Yeats to modern social conditions.

In Mr. Yeats, symbolism is a definite repudiation of the spirit of his age, a rejection of the scientific materialism, the bleak morality and the easy objectivity of much of the literature of the later nineteenth century. "The scientific movement," he writes, "brought with it a literature which was always tending to lose itself in externalities of all kinds, in opinion, in declamation, in picturesque writing, in word-painting...." a reaction was inevitable, however, "and now," he continues, "writers have begun to dwell upon the element of evocation, of suggestion, upon what we call the symbolism of great writers."<sup>16</sup>

Smith is ever reticent about ultimate questions. Nevertheless, Yeats's repudiation of modern social reality is a stance for which Smith clearly felt sympathy. The paragraph quoted above, for instance, appeared word for word in both the master's thesis and "Symbolism in Poetry."

His essay on symbolism strongly suggests that the first task in what might be called Smith's literary apprenticeship was the identification of a poetic state and sensibility closely aligned with the literary movement of Symbolism. However, his use of early Yeatsian theory, of Symons, his interest in a fin de siècle aesthetic, his reverence for solitude, and his spiritualizing sensibility give Smith's Symbolism a distinctly late nineteenth-century cast. The essence of poetry appears to lie in a private experience, isolated from ordinary reality, but open to an undefined world of intense spirituality. Although Smith, like Symons, finds that social reality presents certain aids to the poet--particularly through its development of symbols for poetic use--his most basic attitude toward social reality resembles the stance of repudiation he admires in Yeats. That stance is implied by the spiritualizing sensibility which he endorses. Given the late nineteenth-century aura which surrounds this stance, it is not surprising to find Smith closing his 1926 article on contemporary poetry with an appeal to aestheticism. ✓

But what, then, are we to say when the beauty of a poem appeals to us, while its meaning is somehow hidden? Simply that our faculty of aesthetic appreciation is more fully developed than our understanding--that we are become, God help us!--by natural right, a member of that despised sect--the Aesthetes.<sup>17</sup>

Some attempt should be made to judge the appropriateness and significance of this stance within Canadian literary history before proceeding with a description of Smith's development. A circumstance vital to the understanding of the early A. J. M. Smith, and in fact, of the McGill Movement of which he was a part, is the fact that what might be called the Victorian Compact--the identification of the intelligentsia with the basic



values of the middle class--survived intact in Canada until after the First World War. At that point Canadian literati had still before them the task, seemingly obligatory to the establishment of modernism, of attacking the bourgeoisie. As Munro Beattie describes it:

By 1920 the Romantic-Victorian tradition was at its last gasp. Yet, during the 1920's, its conventions persisted in thousands of mediocre lines published annually in Canadian magazines, on the home-makers and book-editors pages of Canadian newspapers, and in the flimsy volumes issued by Briggs or Musson or other Toronto presses.

And F. W. Watt's examination of periodicals of the twenties and thirties describes a reading and writing public whose tastes and attitudes justify the existence of the poetry to which Beattie referred:

[Willison's Monthly] ... carried on many of the late Victorian Canadian attitudes as they had found form in The Week (in the 1880's) and more especially, in the Canadian Magazine, which had joined forces with the "new" to the extent of enthusiastically supporting the advance of free enterprise business and commerce in the early twentieth century. Willison's Monthly was a patriotic journal (devoted, as one contributor put it, to "the upbuilding of Canada"), and it spoke on behalf of the main features of John A. Macdonald's National Policy of 1879 as it was interpreted in the twentieth century: encouragement of immigration, tariff protection, provincial unity, Buy Canadian Goods, and lower taxes on capital. At the same time the magazine displays the well-developed Canadian Victorian capacity for conservative compromise by becoming in the realm of culture virtually the epitome of the "genteel" tradition.

It is instructive to view Arnold Hauser's comments on differences between the Decadents of English poetry and the Impressionists of France as a model for an explanation of layers of literary time which became intertwined in the McGill Movement of the twenties. Hauser says of the late nineteenth century in England:

In England the whole movement of modernism is dominated by this hatred for the philistine which, incidentally, becomes a new mechanical convention. Most of the changes which impressionism undergoes in this country are also conditioned by it. In France, impressionist art and literature was not expressly anti-bourgeois in character; the French had already finished with their fight against philistinism and the symbolists even felt a certain sympathy for the conservative middle class. The literature of decadence in England has on the other hand, to undertake the work of undermining which had been carried out in France partly by the Romantics, partly by the naturalists.<sup>20</sup>

Hauser's observations illustrate the extent to which characteristics of literary influences can be altered so that layers of literary time appear to be superimposed one on the other when these influences are received into literary cultures where the circumstances differ. The Canadian literary culture of the twenties is different from that of Britain in the same period in a measure similar to the differences between France and Britain in the late nineteenth century.

Viewed in this context, Smith's aestheticism has an appropriateness within Canadian surroundings which it might not have had in another context. Its very existence is a challenge to a world of prosaic values. Nevertheless, this appropriateness also implicates it in a curious complicity with the Genteel culture which it attacks. That complicity is best illustrated by David Perkins's descriptions of the origins of the Genteel Sensibility in the United States:

Americans after the Civil War felt that they had broken with their own past. ... The United States seemed a newer, rawer land than it had seemed before the Civil War, less stable, less homogeneous, less endowed with traditional values and ways of life. Poetry was an attempt to compensate. In this raw, materialistic land, it was a refuge. ... The role of poetry was to maintain the "spiritual" side of life. If it was out of touch with American realities, it was in touch, poetry-lovers felt, with what America needed.<sup>21</sup>

To the degree to which this describes, in an exaggerated form, some aspects of Smith's sensibility--especially its dissatisfaction with crass social reality, its attempt to replace material reality with spirituality, and its anxiety for connection with international aesthetic values--it can be seen as a parody of the Genteel Tradition. To the degree which Smith's early sensibility moves beyond the complacency which is characteristic of the Genteel Tradition, it can be described as an example of how gentility may be renewed by repudiation of the Victorian Compact. In this renewal, the sensibility suffers a sea change. The renewal opens the comfortable aspects of the Victorian ethos--ideals of respectability, authoritarian social structures, high-mindedness, and settled belief--to the products of the progressive side of Victorianism--industrialism, scientific advance, and Positivism. The issue of such encounters is always doubtful. In Smith, it produced a bitterness and despair which he struggled to temper by locating a spiritual reality where he would have a home. Smith's bitterness and despair--the components in his spiritual outlook which modernized a poetic which in other respects demonstrated an affinity for late nineteenth-century aesthetic values--can be viewed in early poems such as "Cavalcade."<sup>22</sup>

"Cavalcade," published in the Canadian Forum in August 1928 and uncollected until The Classic Shade in 1978, calls for a song

Something a horse could prance to,  
Something a heart could beat to,

an heroic lay to give heart to a weary procession in the "shadowy valley" and "the sandy plain." The old songs, Smith fears, do not convince. His father's lusty song, "sounds hollow enough nowadays;" his "...mother's voice singing on Sunday / Trails away in the dust." Even more devastating, perhaps,

is the collapse of the songs of Smith's contemporaries, the Rupert Brookes of his life:

There was a young cavalier  
Who rode with us to the wars:  
He knew a good song, he knew a brave song.  
But they stopped his mouth with the mud in Flanders.

The poem closes bitterly, with the recognition that the songs have passed into the hands of the forces of death and decay.

Ah well! The locusts are singing.  
The vultures are wheeling overhead

And they too are singing a kind of song,  
A kind of grace before meat.

"We had better get on," the poem concludes, but Smith is not satisfied with making do in a world where certainty and vision are given to decay and withheld from poets. An expression more appropriate to his desire appeared in the more sheltered pages of The McGill Fortnightly Review in the same year as "Cavalcade's" publication. It is an early version of "Like an Old Proud King in a Parable." Here a bitter king rejects conventional life to build--if not exactly a palace of art--at least a place for the spirit in the solitude of northern stone.

Smith's Master's thesis is a dramatic record of the advance in poetic taste which Smith underwent during his study of Yeats. "Like an Old Proud King" suggests the character of this change--the turn from a poetic sensibility which embraced many facets of late nineteenth-century taste to a harsher, more ascetic ambience. The thesis is a chronicle of Yeats's development toward a modern voice, but it begins that description without the clear preference for the later poetry which Smith would eventually declare. Quite to the contrary, the first sections are appreciations of the early Yeats which are all too at home with their subject. The

following description of Yeats's personality may serve as an example:

The writing reveals a temperament that is completely and utterly poetic, and is the work of a mind that opens itself, as a flower to the sun, to reverie, dream, and the spell of a Pagan enchantment.<sup>23</sup>

Smith proceeds from this point to note that the early poetry which he had been describing lacked the strict form in imagery characteristic of the later Yeats. Nevertheless, that it was so lacking does not alter Smith's appreciation, neither here nor at other points in the thesis.

Suddenly, as the conclusion to his thesis approached, the tone Smith had adopted toward the later Yeats began to change. In the last pages, after admitting that his treatment of the later poems had been unenthusiastic, Smith proceeds to argue for the "special quality of their beauty."<sup>24</sup> His argument in support of the later poems develops from a description of the later poetry which emphasizes the role of the intellect in the effect the poems evoke.

Much as the rich, sensuous, dream-heavy poetry of the early volumes and the faint rhythms of The Wind Among the Reeds appeal to the senses, the cold, hard, crystal-clear, gemlike flame that is in the later successes appears to me to be a higher type of beauty because beauty is evoked not through the senses alone, but through the intellect as well.<sup>25</sup>

Smith locates this change at the centre of a revolution in modern sensibility and quotes Harriet Monroe's introduction to The New Poetry to support his claim.<sup>26</sup>

This defence of the later Yeats is curious. Smith's allusion to Pater's "hard, gemlike flame" is set in a context which seems to move against Pater's aesthetic of impressionistic hedonism. This may indicate Smith's confusion. However, he does point out Pater's famous description of the desirable life in ways which reflect his own developing sensibility.

The flame is not only "hard" and "gemlike," but also "cold" and "crystal-clear." The addition of the latter two adjectives further guards the dictum against any casually impressionistic or shallowly sentimental reading. They also evoke the pose of regal, aesthetic pride which Smith presented in "Like an Old Proud King in a Parable." Furthermore, in Smith's use, the flame does not describe experiential life, but resides in the poems themselves. If Smith is using Pater consciously, he does so by transforming ecstasy--Pater's term for the flame<sup>27</sup>--from a desirable state in human experience to aesthetic quality in poems themselves.

Smith's reference to Harriet Monroe is also curious. As a matter of fact, Harriet Monroe had praised not only Yeats but also Synge in terms which suggested that the new poetry, "began with these two great Irish masters," but that praise was for their simplicity and clarity and not for their appeal to the intellect. "Compared with these Irishmen," Monroe stated, "the best of their predecessors seem literary."<sup>28</sup> She quoted approvingly from a speech Yeats delivered in Chicago:

We wanted to get rid not only of rhetoric but of poetic diction. We tried to strip away everything that was artificial, to get a style like speech.<sup>29</sup>

There is reason to doubt whether Smith's belief that intellectuality is the outstanding feature of Yeats's later poetry captures Yeats's intent in any more than a fragmentary manner. The revolution in Yeats's aesthetic after the turn of the century did include a new respect for the intellect. Nevertheless, intellectuality does not describe all or even the most important features of the new Yeats. Certainly, as Engelberg describes, Yeats's rejection of the Rhymers' Club's anti-intellectualism affected his style and attitudes. And, Yeats's comment that he now had to go through all his poetry after The Wandering of Oisín to alter passages "which are

sentimental through lack of thought,"<sup>30</sup> would lead one to conclude that Yeats's new style was primarily an intellectual style. However, Engelberg also shows Yeats--in 1919--describing his desire for an evocative art which is distinctly not to be understood in disembodied intellectual or mystical terms.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Perkins summarizes the main impulse of Yeats's new style as "... an impulse to create a personal or dramatic utterance that would seem vigorously rooted in actual life."<sup>32</sup> Obviously, Smith's emphasis on the importance of the intellect in Yeats's later work is an interpretation which--if derived from Yeats--could not have been made from anything but a one-sided appropriation of certain Yeatsian themes.

Smith's description of Yeats's new style, whether correct or not, is significant. The terms, "intellect" and "senses," placed in a relationship which can easily become paradoxical, surface in Smith's writing at the point when Smith's own poetic taste changed. They perhaps serve to describe that change more exactly than they describe Yeats's development. This reference to the intellect in poetry is the first of a chain of judgments in Smith's criticism which employ intellectuality as a standard of discrimination.

The source and significance of Smith's use of this term is best pursued by turning to the general ambiance generated by T. S. Eliot, and the metaphysical revival, towards which Smith was now turning his interests. In November 1926, Smith published an essay on The Waste Land entitled "Hamlet in Modern Dress" in The McGill Fortnightly Review. In the main, the essay has the quality of an explanation and an appreciation of the main

features of an unfamiliar poetry for an audience which is interested in but unaware of the issues at stake. Nevertheless, beneath this polished veneer of helpful and distanced explanatory critique, one can sense Smith's attraction to The Waste Land and to Eliot. The reasons for such attraction are not far to seek. They were the reasons for which Smith had appreciated Yeats as well. In both poets there runs a strain of radical rejection of modern Western culture. In both there is a sense of loss of a heroic past and dismay at the substitution of a degraded present for that past. In both as well, the need to refashion the present upon improved and higher models becomes a peculiar task of the poet.

Smith approaches Eliot's poetry with a sensitivity which surprises. His judgment of Eliot's significance demonstrates a newly developed awareness of issues which not only describe Eliot, but reflect upon Smith's sensibility as well. Smith adroitly turns Eliot's famous analysis of the difficulties of Shakespeare's Hamlet back on its creator. Goethe's estimation of Hamlet applies to Eliot, Smith concludes: "... a beautiful, pure and most moral nature without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, sinking beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off."<sup>33</sup> Smith recognizes that the wasteland exists in Eliot's mind. Nevertheless, that frame of mind holds great and almost seductive attractiveness for Smith:

The accent of helplessness, of futility, of despair bordering on hysteria had never been so perfectly expressed as in certain passages of Mr. Eliot's poetry, passages that are a complete expression of a decadence that is fascinated by the analysis of its own falling off. These poems run sniffing from post to post like a dog, and exert a spell to which we succumb for reasons that we hesitate to make clear.<sup>34</sup>



Despite his attraction to such a vision, however, Smith coyly refuses to take so radical or uncompromising a stance toward modern culture. While the two poems, "Cavalcade" and "Like an Old Proud King," show the poet's despair and rejection of social reality as late as 1928, by December 1926, Smith, the critic, had arrived at the position on modern culture which he would continue to hold publicly. In that month, The McGill Fortnightly Review published Smith's "Contemporary Poetry." This essay interprets the modern as the reflection of an age in which science and change have altered daily life and its interpretation at a rate unknown to any other epoch. Smith does not move to condemn this, however. He suggests instead that modernity obliges the arts to readjust themselves in like manner.

Our universe is a different one from that of our grandfathers, nor can our religious beliefs be the same. The whole movement, indeed, is a movement away from an erroneous but comfortable stability, towards a more truthful and sincere but certainly less comfortable state of flux. ... Poetry today must be the result of the impingement of modern conditions upon the personality and temperament of the poet.<sup>35</sup>

To this painful and even heroically conceived sincerity, we shall have to return. What is of interest in this essay at this point is Smith's description of the place of Yeats and Eliot in the development of modern poetry and the bearing this has on Smith's use of the term "intellect."

In Smith's estimation, contemporary poetry could be divided into two epochs, with the war providing the separation between them. The characteristic of the first epoch was an attempt to overthrow the effete and decadent diction of the late nineteenth century and a corresponding attempt to supply subjects of living interest. It is here that Smith places Yeats. The

second epoch is not given a similarly direct characterization, but is described in the essay as a turning back to the seventeenth century--a movement initiated by Rupert Brooke and leading to Eliot.

That emphasis on the metaphysical strain of literary modernism--which even in 1926 must have appeared somewhat misconceived--is explained by "A Note on Metaphysical Poetry," the critical essay which, in Smith's eyes, represents the significance of his dissertation to modern poetry. The essay equated metaphysical and intellectual, suggesting that, "only in one well-defined period--the first two-thirds of the seventeenth century--has the metaphysical element become, incontestably, the dominant one."<sup>36</sup> According to Smith, the intellectual turbulence of the seventeenth century precipitated a passionate intellectuality in which what Yeats had called Unity of Being was preserved by poets through intellectual speculative adroitness.

To the Metaphysical poet, indeed, nature possesses a philosophic unity. But it is a unity which, like that of the scientist and the mystic is not one with the unity of common sense.<sup>37</sup>

The difficulty, both here and at later points in Smith's development, is determining what content Smith wishes to give to the terms "metaphysical" and "intellectual." In this essay Smith expands on his use of "metaphysical" by reference to Romanticism. He suggests that for the metaphysical poet the universe is broken, not into a multitude of sense impressions, but into a multitude of thoughts.<sup>38</sup> In his dissertation on the Anglican metaphysicals, a similar comparison is made.

The metaphysical poet, insofar as he is a poet and not a versifier, is a man of tense and passionate emotion. But he differs from the romantic poet in this, that his emotion is limited, not in intensity, but in its application. It is more sternly disciplined than the expansive rhapsody of the romantic in that its source and goal alike are definite. It is not scattered indiscriminately or even generously, and as a result of its restricted field its energies are not dissipated.<sup>39</sup>

The source and goal which prevent expansive rhapsody are the ideas of the metaphysical poet who is "...one who prefers a life of thought to a life of sensation."<sup>40</sup>

The sources for Smith's use of the term "intellectual" as a standard of critical discrimination are complex. One origin is Grierson, under whom Smith wrote his dissertation. In his introduction to Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, Grierson noted that the metaphysicals had combined two things, "fantastic dialectics of medieval love poetry and the 'simple, senuous' strain which they caught from the classics," and regrets that, "modern love poetry has too often sacrificed both to sentiment."<sup>41</sup>

Grierson points to T. S. Eliot, who would give this influential critical judgment its most permanent shape in his 1921 essay, "The Metaphysical Poets": "In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered."<sup>42</sup> In that essay Eliot also suggests what Smith's essay on metaphysical poetry implies: ✓

We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results.<sup>43</sup>

Eliot concludes this comment by noting that this difficulty often appears as something very like the metaphysical conceit.

From Eliot, too, Smith could have learned the habit of associating praise of intelligence with denigration of romantic style. The general tone of the essays collected in The Sacred Wood (1920), for example, is one of haughty and acerbic intelligence, often exercised at the expense of late romantic writers whose misfortune it was to have left the tails of their arguments flapping in the wind. The effect of this pose is captured by Eliot's comment, "the only cure for Romanticism is to analyse it."<sup>44</sup>

Despite the ease with which documentation of sources for Smith's admiration of the intellect can be accomplished, close study of Smith's use of the term indicates that his usage does not entirely coincide with other usage current at this time--and particularly not with Eliot's. First of all, difficulty, compression, and obscurity are not exactly synonymous with intellectuality, as Smith himself was aware. "Hamlet in Modern Dress" had argued that the difficulty of Eliot's style arose more from subconscious emotional logic than from its overt intellectuality. Therefore, when Eliot urges the appropriateness of difficulty to modern social conditions, that is not necessarily an argument for intellectuality in poetry. Moreover, Eliot argues that the complexity of modern life demands difficult poetry, suggests that this poetry resembles the poetry of the metaphysicals, and attempts to revise the reputation of the metaphysical style by praising its unified sensibility. Eliot's concern is the establishment of a true line of descent from the poetry of the past to that he wished to write. His concern is with tradition. Smith's line of argument may achieve something very similar, but it is essentially different. "A Note on Metaphysical Poetry" implies a substantial identity between the spiritual turmoil of the seventeenth century and that of our own. From there the argument moves to the suggestion that the poets of the seventeenth century met this turmoil with a speculative intellectuality which achieved a "Unity of Being" which might be denied to common sense. The implication which follows is that the poets of our age of shattered belief might profitably attempt the same. Smith's concern is with what he would much later call "epiphany." The poem may exchange chaos for cosmos within the confines of its form and the experience it offers. While the source of this approach is clearly in Grierson's account of the seventeenth century, there is nothing in Grierson and certainly nothing in Eliot

which makes quite this use of the metaphysical intellect.

When he discusses this problem, Eliot's terms are "thought" and "feeling"; Smith's, by contrast, uses "intellect" and "senses." This variation in usage is significant. Feeling is a term with a notable history in the development of Romantic thought.<sup>45</sup> The term implies the reaction to Locke, Hobbes, and Hume which surfaced in Shaftesbury's "Man of Feeling" and in its development came to signify the sort of sentimental sensibility against which modernism launched its sharpest barbs. Sense, although it was a term allied with feeling early in the eighteenth century, does not carry the same history. Smith's tendency to use it rather than feeling evokes not a literary debate on a particular quality of literary style and reader response, but an anthropology or taxonomy of human functions. This perhaps explains the aura of a dutiful catechumen's response which surrounds Smith's description of Yeats's later poetry as "higher Beauty" because its effects are achieved through the intellect and not the senses alone. The thrust of Eliot's early criticism is surely aimed at achieving a unified sensibility. The impression which Smith creates is of a desire to achieve an intellectuality which will leave the senses behind.

As Sandra Djwa has pointed out, Smith's sense of the relation between higher and lower in human functions was influenced by various accounts of the Neo-Platonic doctrine of ecstasy.<sup>46</sup> Grierson has this explanation of the doctrine:

Ecstasy in Neo-Platonic philosophy was the state of mind in which the soul, escaping from the body, attained to the vision of God, the One, the Absolute. Plotinus thus describes it: 'Even the word vision ( $\theta\epsilon\alpha\mu\alpha$ ) does not seem appropriate here. It is rather an ecstasy ( $\epsilon\kappa\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ), a simplification, an abandonment of self, a perfect quietude ( $\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ), a desire of contact, in short a wish to merge oneself in that which one contemplates in the Sanctuary.'<sup>47</sup>

Under such a conception, the highest state of being was attained when the mind rose beyond lower functions to a point where its union with the Absolute induced a raptured stasis. The paradoxical language which must be used to describe this experience--generally, language which links intensity with calm and the most comprehensive of experiences with simplification of personality--echoes the language appropriate to Smith's metaphysical poetry and his use of the term "intellect." Here, in a style which attempted a unity of being denied to science and to common sense, Smith worked to achieve poetry which burned with a gemlike flame.

Djwa has cited considerable evidence of Smith's familiarity with the seventeenth-century tradition of Neo-Platonic ecstasy, including his awareness of Donne's comment, "Sir I make account that his writing of letters . . . is a kind of extasie."<sup>48</sup> A late nineteenth-century or early modern version of this tradition often appears in Smith's sources. For example, Symons's description of the life of religion, passion, or art draws on Neo-Platonic antecedents:

Each is a kind of sublime selfishness, the saint, the lover, and the artist having each an incommunicable ecstasy which he esteems as his ultimate attainment, however, in his lower moments, he may serve God in action, or do the will of his mistress, or minister<sup>49</sup> to men by showing them a little beauty.

Pater identified his flame with ecstasy. Smith would later use Santayana's epigram on ecstasy as an epigram to his books of poetry.

This evidence suggests that Smith was participating in a redefinition of certain features of Neo-Platonism which extended beyond the boundaries of the modernist metaphysical revival. One characteristic Smith shared with others who made use of the concept of ecstasy was an attempt to achieve ideal moments through a simplification of the personality. Such simplification

is best described as an analogue of the soul's climb up the Neo-Platonic ladder. It begins in sense but ends in one or another version of pure Being. In Smith's case, the highest state appeared in poems charged with intellect. Whatever Smith understood by "intellect," the term itself was central to Neo-Platonic doctrines of poetry. Intellect, or mens, described the mental faculty beyond reason which could grasp transcendent truths intuitively.<sup>50</sup>

While this development led Smith to elevate the intellect at the expense of the senses, Djwa cites another Neo-Platonic doctrine which had somewhat the opposite effect: "In Neo-Platonic philosophy, just as the heavenly bodies affect the soul of man through the medium of the air, so soul touches soul through the medium of the body."<sup>51</sup> In this case the emphasis falls upon the necessary role of the body in love. As Grierson explains, "The body has its function also, without which the soul could not fulfil its; and that function is sense."<sup>52</sup> So much is Neo-Platonic orthodoxy. However, when this conception of the role of the body and its powers, the senses, are evoked against the background of more Petrarchan uses of Platonism--as they are in Donne's "The Extasie"--the doctrine becomes a device which asserts the rights of lower human functions against an overweening idealism. Grierson links this strain in Donne with "the sensual, realistic, scornful tone of the Latin lyric and elegaic poets."<sup>53</sup> It was one of Donne's attractions to the modern metaphysical revival. Helen Gardner states,

The conception of Donne as a pioneer in developing "a justification of love as a natural passion in the human heart the meaning and end of which is marriage" and of doing justice "to love as a passion in which body and soul have their part" was very largely accepted. In the Twenties and Thirties Donne came

to be thought of popularly as a kind of early D. H. Lawrence, boldly adumbrating a modern sexual ethic.<sup>54</sup>

At some point, if not within the seventeenth-century metaphysical writing itself, then certainly within its modern reception, such promotion of the passions, of the senses, and of realism disengages them from a subsidiary Neo-Platonic role and asserts them as values in their own right. The modernist impulse may have sought to preach spiritual values to materialists and teach material truths to antiquated idealists, as Eliot's praise for the unified sensibility would indicate. However, these twin impulses were always in danger of becoming divided against themselves. That danger is present in Smith's criticism. While much of it promotes the poetic standard of "intellect," another strain is also present. This strain speaks of sincerity--the sincerity which Smith had suggested was characteristic of modernity in his essay, "Contemporary Poetry."

Possible sources for the principle of sincerity are diverse. The tone and general tenor of much of Eliot's criticism might be examined. But the source in this case perhaps lies in an influence on Smith which was at least partially responsible for leading him to Yeats. Harriet Monroe's introduction to The New Poetry links sincerity with some of the effects Smith suggested the metaphysical intellect achieved by comparison to romanticism:

The new poetry has set before itself an ideal of absolute simplicity and sincerity--an ideal which implies an individual, unstereotyped diction; and an individual unstereotyped rhythm. Thus inspired, it becomes intensive rather than diffuse.<sup>55</sup>

Monroe's argument is on the level of poetics rather than that of social reality, and the taste the passage supports is that of vers libre and



Imagism rather than the metaphysical style, but in other respects it suggests itself as an early source for Smith's life-long dedication to sincerity.

If this passage provides one explanation for the way in which sincerity could have been linked with the effects of the metaphysical intellect in Smith's mind, the general ambiance of Georgian poetry and Bloomsbury provides another. Perkins describes the influence of G. E. Moore upon Brooke and the Bloomsbury set as one which combined "fearless honesty to individual truth" with a search for the "timeless moment."<sup>56</sup> It certainly would be beyond the pale of critical responsibility to suggest an influence upon Smith of G. E. Moore, or perhaps even of the Georgians in this matter. What is significant here is the extent to which Smith could have felt at home within this sensibility and what it would have suggested to him. We have already seen Smith describe the first step of modernism in ways which are related to his principle of sincerity. The second step, in his estimation, is equally related to his principle of metaphysical intellectuality. Smith must have felt that these two phases reflected not only a progression in modernist poetry, but also that they were related one to the other not only by their common antagonism to decadent romanticism, but also by some more basic inner coherence. Monroe stressed sincerity and had led him to Yeats. Under Yeats's influence Smith developed his ideals of intellectuality. He likely found a similar combination in the Georgians. From here he could turn to Eliot.

Without a doubt, Smith's work with the later Yeats and his attraction to Eliot and the metaphysicals had banished the dalliance with wavering rhythms and Celtic half-lights from his sensibility. In its place appeared a poetic of harsher, more rigorous taste which Smith, himself, called

intellectual. Smith's use of that term, however, suggests that intellect is not a cognate for Eliot's "thought." It instead describes a human function which can fix the discordant oppositions Smith felt between social reality and human desire in the amber of poetic wit. It is a style and a sensibility which searches for "a palace of inviolable air" achieved anew in each poem.

The openness of these poetic moments of transcendence to a reality which often appears antagonistic to their very existence is one of the aspects of Smith's sensibility which aligns him with the Georgians and demonstrates his advance beyond a sensibility coloured by late nineteenth-century attitudes. Smith's accent on sincerity and truthfulness resembles the Georgians as well, although his is certainly a more Angst-ridden sincerity than is commonly associated with Rupert Brooke. And it is this timbre of Angst which begins to move the two standards of discrimination for modern poetry into a complicity of opposition. Sincerity and metaphysical intellectuality might be united in their opposition to romantic diffusiveness, but that the attempt to unite faithfulness to modern social reality with Smith's desire for transcendence should ultimately prove to be playing with hot ice and wondrous strange snow is not surprising.

In his laborious reconciliation of such opposites, Smith's poetry turned to irony, satire, and masked personas. "Cavalcade" and "Like an Old Proud King" already suggest this in 1928. In "Cavalcade" the reader meets satire which employs an ironically emasculated transcendent vision of reality as the background against which the present stands condemned. The counter movement of "Like an Old Proud King" was intensified when it was republished in 1932. Smith then added his disclaimer, "O who is that bitter

King? It is not I." In the later publications, the poem details a transcendent poetic world, but, with painful irony, estranges that world with the suggestion that its reality can obtain only within a poem where such desires may momentarily find expression.

This dialectic of the real and the ideal must be taken as a fundamental element in Smith's characteristic approach to life. Smith expresses it initially in his attraction both to an idealizing aestheticism and to a reality-directed poetics of sincerity. He expresses it later in his tendency to treat the senses and the intellect paradoxically. He reveals it throughout his poetry in the paired images of body and spirit and the paired genres of satire and metaphysical lyric. As Sandra Djwa judges, "Smith's strongest poetic and critical impulse works in terms of pairs of opposites." She suggests that this impulse often is the product of "a deeply felt sense of the contrast between a more ideal past and a tawdry present."<sup>57</sup> It can also appear as an ideal moment played against the demands of reality.

It is such an outlook and such a sensibility that Smith brings to his first treatment of Canadian literary issues in "Wanted--Canadian Criticism" (1928). The essay lays the groundwork for Smith's approach to Canadian literature and indicates the way in which he will adapt Eliot's theories of tradition to suit the needs he perceives in Canadian literature. The first statement of this essay is arresting both for the assumptions which it makes and for the lack of defense of them which follows it. "One looks in vain through Canadian books and journals for that critical enquiry into first principles which directs a new literature as tradition guides an old one."<sup>58</sup> The assertion that tradition does guide literature is certainly a point to be argued and not assumed. Nevertheless, Smith does assume it and

also assumes that criticism should take up this role for new literatures such as Canadian literature. What does follow by way of illustration of his assertion is Smith's second point--the confusion of commerce, art, and nationalism in the practice of Canadian criticism. From this discussion flows a pragmatic defense of Smith's first point, the importance of criticism to a new literature:

Without a body of critical opinion to hearten and direct them, Canadian writers are like a leaderless army. They find themselves in an atmosphere of materialism that is only too ready to seduce them from their allegiance to art and with an audience that only wishes to be flattered. It looks as though they will have to give up the attempt to create until they have formulated a critical system and secured its universal acceptance.<sup>59</sup>

Smith goes on not to outline the shape of a probable critical system but to define the types of critics required to do the job. The first type, the critic militant, has a job which by implication is addressed primarily to the audience and to the problems posed by Canadian conditions of readership. He is to aid the writers' "... fight for freedom in the choice and treatment of his subject."<sup>60</sup> His task is to explain that "... any subject is susceptible of artistic treatment and that praise or blame is to be conferred after a consideration, not of its moral, but of its aesthetic harmony."<sup>61</sup>

The second type of critic is the type which interests Smith the most. He is the critic contemplative and his duties are largely those imposed by the lack of a literary tradition in Canada. He is to examine the position of the artist in a new community, examining "the influence upon the Canadian writer of his position in space and time."<sup>62</sup> Here the goal--and hence the difficulty in Smith's eyes--is to transform these two categories to mutuality. The dangers which relate to this enterprise reside in the question of consciousness of influence. "Canadian poetry ... is altogether too self-conscious of

its environment, of its position in space, and scarcely conscious at all of its position in time." 63 The adjustment of consciousness required here is needed to avoid unconsciousness or overconsciousness, both of which, Smith suggests, following Eliot, result in merely conventional art.

Finally, Smith closes the essay with the theme which has distinguished his journey to modernity since his work on Yeats:

Modernity and tradition alike demand that the contemporary artist who survives adolescence shall be intellectual. Sensibility is no longer enough, intelligence is also required. Even in Canada. 64

"Wanted--Canadian Criticism" appears to draw on at least three sources for its ideas. The first two of these are essays by Eliot, specifically, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1917), and "The Function of Criticism" (1923). The later essay, particularly, appears to have been associated in Smith's mind with a series of articles published in The Canadian Forum on the difficulties which the Canadian situation forced on Canadian letters. Douglas Bush's articles, "A Plea for Original Sin," and "Making Literature Hum," in the April 1922 and December 1926 numbers, respectively, may be taken as representative of these. 65

Since Eliot's idea of tradition casts so long a shadow over the work of Smith from this point forward, it would be well to consider the influence of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" first of all. Eliot's essay advances two arguments, both of which are aimed at isolating poetry from influences of the unfettered decadent sensibility. First, the essay suggests that all poetry, including the poetry of the past, forms an ideal order which lives in the present. This transcendental world is composed not of principles for poetic practice but of poems, or, perhaps, of the ideal order which can be intuited from the poems. It is not static, for each new poem alters it; nor does it develop autonomously, for it is the labour of the poet's participation

within it that introduces change. In Eliot's view, it is the duty of the poet to acquire this tradition and even to surrender his own personality to the "mind of Europe." Eliot's plea in the essay is for the development of the "historical sense" and the adoption of an attitude toward tradition and the poetry written under its influence which is respectful and not derogatory. As a result, he argues that

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic not merely historical criticism.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly he says of the poet that what happens

... is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual<sup>67</sup> self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

The essay's second argument runs parallel to the first. Here Eliot argues that the criterion of merit in poetry lies not in the poet's personality, but in his ability to transform feelings and emotions with artistic intensity. As such, the result of the poetic process is not effusions of real feeling, but art, which differs from event absolutely. Again,

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression<sup>68</sup> of personality, but an escape from personality.

And as the poet must take his place not within a temporal fabric of his own making, but one formed for him by the literary past, so the poetic process takes its shape not from the personality but from the process itself, which is itself an aspect of the past within the present.

The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past,

unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.<sup>69</sup>

Eliot's "Function of Criticism" (1923) undertakes an application of these principles to the reception rather than production of literature. The goal of the endeavour is similar. As "Tradition and the Individual Talent" had attempted to remove art-production from the domain of the unfettered sensibility, so the later essay attempts to call critical activity to a dutiful allegiance to the standards of the transcendent tradition. Eliot takes two forms of criticism to task in this essay. The first is represented by Middleton Murry, whose assertion that, at last resort, English poets must rely on an inner voice earns Eliot's scorn.<sup>70</sup> The second is represented by the journalistic critics who rest their impressionistic practices on a notion of English humour and eccentricity.

In certain passages, this essay makes a more pointed statement of the implications of Eliot's view of tradition than the earlier "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Witness, for example, this on the plight of the second-rate artist:

The second-rate artist, of course, cannot afford to surrender himself to any common action; for his chief task is the assertion of all the trifling differences which are his distinction: only the man who has so much to give that he can forget himself in his work can afford to collaborate, to exchange, to contribute.<sup>71</sup>

What such asides indicate is Eliot's identification of essential value and humanity with the transcendent tradition--against which subjective sensibility is identified with lower and disreputable emotions. The inner voice, suggests Eliot, is the voice of vanity, fear, and lust.<sup>72</sup> The pressure to identify humanity with an essential and idealized commonness is very strong.

On the surface, "Wanted--Canadian Criticism" appears to indicate Smith's

adoption of Eliot's idea of tradition for reasons which are similar to those which originally led Eliot to this position. Certainly the essay shows Smith searching for a voice of order which could judge Canadian romantic decadence. He accurately and pointedly reveals the interdependence of art's place in capitalistic society, enervating nationalism, and romantic decadence. Against this symbiotic state of affairs he urges an argument which is entirely in keeping with Eliot's tone of intelligent disdain for weak poetry and weak thought.

Smith's outlook would also suggest that Eliot's tradition could serve him as a refuge from alienation and despair just as it had for Eliot.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the essay indicates clear differences between Smith and Eliot--differences which are decisive--but of which Smith may not have been fully aware. The first of these is superficial at one level and fundamental at another. Eliot had devoted the last pages of "The Function of Criticism" to praise for literary scholarship and criticism which pays sincere heed to fact. The parallel argument in Smith's essay is the one in which he describes the duties of the critic militant. These duties correspond to what Smith had earlier described as the characteristic feature of pre-world-war modernism--the expansion of poetry's subject matter to encompass material of living interest. As Smith expresses it here--in ways which recall Bush's "Plea for Original Sin"--the critic militant's most formidable opponent will be Victorian prudery.

At a superficial level the divergence between Eliot's treatment of the demands of literary factuality upon scholarship and criticism and Smith's treatment of the battle for factuality in the writing of poetry reflects Smith's awareness of literary reality in Canada. At a deeper level, it is possible to see Smith drawing the battle lines around his twin criteria of



sincerity and intellectuality. Lurking behind the critic militant is the side of Smith's sensibility which impels him toward concrete reality.

The description of the critic contemplative and the problems he must address reveals the other pole of Smith's sensibility. Despite the obvious similarity between Eliot's evocation of tradition and Smith's suggestion that the critic contemplative must improve Canadian poetry's consciousness of its place in time, Smith is expressly not evoking tradition for the guidance of Canadian literature. Were that the case, one would expect Smith to emphasize the essential unity of Western Culture and demand, as Eliot does, that the Canadian poet or critic acquire the "mind of Europe." What Smith does instead is suggest an essential disjunction between Canadian and other literatures. Tradition guides established literature, Smith suggests, but critical enquiry into first principles is to guide the new Canadian literature. Rather than moving Canadian literature toward allegiance to some absolute of poems, this pronouncement divides it from both its international and Canadian pasts.

A similar movement of thought surfaces in the significant but easily missed surgery which Smith has performed on Eliot's ideas of maturity and the contemporary in poetic practice. Eliot is quite clear on what it is that makes for maturity in poetic practice:

Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year....<sup>74</sup>

Eliot follows this statement with the suggestion that it is this sense of the past living within the present which assures a contemporary voice.

Smith matches his tone, but not his ideas: "... the contemporary artist who survives adolescence shall be intellectual." The goal of the argument is the same for both critics. A standard is chosen which, on one hand,

ensures that the bankruptcy of a decadent romanticism shall be exposed and poetic maturity will be put in its place and, on the other, that that poetry achieve a clear aptness to its time. The standards, however, are not the same. Eliot's belief in a transcendent and absolute order of poems cannot be reduced to intelligence without suffering a sea change.

Smith's intelligence, it must be granted, does encompass more than clear-headedness. Up until this point, the evidence that in Smith's usage intelligence indicates a human function akin both to metaphysical wit and to romantic imagination has been very strong. On reading this essay, however, the slippery nature of the term stands out clearly. For it is debatable whether Smith's readers--and perhaps even Smith himself--thought of intelligence as much more than clear-headedness when placed side by side with "critical enquiry into first principles." If taken as clear-headedness, the term signifies a state parallel to sincerity. When used in conjunction with sensibility, however ("Sensibility is no longer enough, intelligence is also required."), the term recalls Smith's tendency to oppose intellect and the senses. In that particular opposition, intellect has been aligned with the ideal and the senses with the real. The conclusion which accommodates such difficulties is not necessarily that Smith is being careless. He uses these terms too often and with a variation of meaning and connotation which is far too predictable to justify a simple charge of carelessness. What is more likely is that the terms intellect, intelligence, sense, and sensibility describe a poetic vision which lies beyond the pale of the--largely borrowed--analytic language which Smith could muster. That vision, better expressed by the poetic oeuvre than the criticism, moves between poles of the real and the ideal. The positive terms, intellect and sincerity, although they are

related to the poles of the ideal and the real, respectively, also hold within themselves elements of both sides of the fundamental paradox.

The question remains why it is that Smith--given his poetic vision which appears so amenable to Eliot's tradition--did not make more forthright use of that view. One explanation is that Eliot's view of tradition did not suit Smith's poetic. A striking feature of all of Smith's writing which bears on the criticism and poetic ideals of Yeats and Eliot is his tendency to ignore or denigrate the universalizing side of their arguments. Smith's treatment of Yeats may serve as an example.

A major theme running throughout Yeats's writing from early to late is Yeats's attempt to mediate between subjective and objective states. Postulating a world of oppositions which are encapsulated in the opposition of history and symbol,<sup>75</sup> Yeats struggled for "Unity of Being" through a notion of truth as enacted dynamic rather than an achieved harmony or static configuration. Truth, "Unity of Being," or the universal are glimpsed in a process of interaction between subjective human reality and objective factuality. In early Yeats, Celtic myth played a subjective counterpoint to objective history. In the later poetry, Yeats turned to the intricate and notorious occult apparatus detailed in A Vision for the same purpose.<sup>76</sup>

It is possible to separate the value of Yeats's poetry from both his Celtic nationalism and his occult apparatus. Nevertheless, in a context which includes consciousness of the Irish poet's struggle to address the problem of truth in an age of collapsed ideals, recognition of the seriousness of Yeats's purpose is obligatory. Smith's writing on Yeats pointedly steered away from just that obligation. In his master's thesis, Smith followed Eliot in condemning Yeats's occult apparatus. He suggests that

the value of A Vision lies in the freedom it would give Yeats's poetry. Having once committed the apparatus to prose, Yeats would no longer have to clutter his poetry with shards of occult theory.<sup>77</sup> In his 1939 memorial essay on Yeats's poetry, Smith is more kind to Yeats's use of the occult, but the effect of his judgement is little changed. Here Smith chooses one of Yeats's particularly light-hearted descriptions of his system and uses it to suggest that Yeats's intent was largely playful. And rather than rule on the aptness of Yeats's vision, Smith pragmatically concludes that it had produced good poetry.<sup>78</sup>

Certainly, there is no more obligation on Smith to show sympathy for Yeats's use of the occult than there would be for him to adopt Eliot's notion of tradition. However, there is a pattern of similarity between the uses Smith made of both poets which demands comment. It is his tendency to use those elements of their poetic which function as weapons against decadent romanticism and those which relate to the fashioning of individual poems. Those elements which form the larger and more universalized contexts for what he adopts, such as the philosophical beliefs which led Yeats to develop his occult apparatus or the absolutizing idealism which lay at the root of Eliot's concept of tradition, Smith tends to ignore, or subtly transforms. Smith's vision shares much with that of both Yeats and Eliot, and although that similarity includes a paradoxical attraction to the poles of reality and the ideal, he does not follow them in their search for a description of a universal which obtains beyond the borders of the individual poem. In this he resembles Yeats's notion of a developing truth, forged in the world of contradiction, more than Eliot's much more closed, absolutized literary system.

"Wanted--Canadian Criticism" marks the close of the first stage of Smith's literary career. It completes an apprenticeship begun in international

modernism and fittingly closed with an application to Canadian letters ✓ of what he had learned. Smith's journey into modernism had already been long--even if it encompassed very few years. He began his career with a sensibility attracted to features of late nineteenth-century poetics. This early sensibility was demarcated from poetry of complacency by the repudiation of bourgeois ideals. In its desire to transcend the limitations of the immediate, Smith's fin de siècle turn from reality to a sensuous poetic world resembled the decayed romanticism of his alter ego all too closely.

Smith may be said to have relived Yeats's transformation of his own style into modernism as he worked through the Yeatsian poetic canon. In this he was aided by a quickening interest in Eliot and the modernist metaphysical revival. Under these influences and his memory of the excitement of his discovery of the early modernist poetry anthologized in Monroe's The New Poetry, Smith began to shape his poetic standards around the criteria of intellect and sincerity. In Smith's usage these terms came to signify more than would appear. Their meaning is complicated by Smith's fundamentally paradoxical outlook, which tended to demonstrate contradictory attractions to the poles of reality and the ideal. Within the dynamic of his sensibility, sincerity was closely associated with the demands of reality and intellect with a desire for the ideal. When turning to Canadian literature, Smith's unconscious approach is to ask of it a development which resembled his own. It must move toward sincerity through greater realism and toward intellectuality through less consciousness of its physical surroundings and a more ✓ intelligent awareness of its spiritual community in time. This community, however, does not imply Eliot's tradition. Canadian literature, like each of Smith's poems, is a discrete entity.

### The Thirties

As the twenties and Smith's apprenticeship both came to a close, one senses that he was poised for an industrious plunge into the critical work which "Wanted--Canadian Criticism" outlines. However, if the "Rejected Preface" to New Provinces (1936)--which, after all, was not published until 1964--is excluded, Smith wrote no criticism on Canadian topics from 1929 until 1939. The decade was a difficult period for Smith. The depression forced him to take a variety of teaching positions in the U. S. A. and left him unemployed for some time as well. As discouraging as that was, the decade brought other ill effects. For a young poet and critic who had so recently passed through a struggle to establish and define a modern poetic taste and voice, the transformation which the thirties wrought upon the leading assumptions of modernist verse must have been devastating. There is small comfort in arriving just in time to be out of date. When at the close of the decade, Smith admiringly described Yeats's intellectual toil and painful improvement of character amid "... unusually heavy risks and particularly alarming dangers,"<sup>79</sup> the fervour may well arise from like experience.

In 1932, many of Smith's colleagues were beginning a journey to the political left. In 1932 New Signatures was published in Britain. In 1935 Smith would, himself, publish "Son-and-Heir (1930)." And in 1936 Leo Kennedy would publish "Direction for Canadian Poets" in New Frontier. Nevertheless, Smith's comments on his reading in the thirties in a letter to Sandra Djwa, dated December 5, 1974, indicate that he was open to intellectual currents which were well separated from the poetics of social commitment and open

statement which were developing around him. The works he mentioned included Babbitt's Rousseau and Romanticism and, particularly, Santayana's Interpretations of Poetry and Religion.<sup>80</sup>

Interest in Babbitt does indicate a continuity in Smith's development from his stance in the late twenties. A young critic, well-read in Eliot, would likely find Babbitt familiar territory. In both Eliot and Babbitt the reader meets a sense of moral obligation, of sacrifice, and of the discipline that the past presents. All this is set in a context of modern decay. Babbitt's treatment of pantheistic revery may be the most lasting influence of New Humanism on Smith's criticism. In Babbitt's view, pantheistic revery offers a painless substitute to genuine spiritual effort. It is a symbolization of moods in which--by a radical confusion of values--poets come to feel that, "... to go out and mix one's self up with the landscape is the same as doing one's duty."<sup>81</sup> The "Rejected Preface" indicates the extent to which Smith blamed the flabbiness of Canadian poetry on pantheistic revery. With understated scorn, Smith comments that in Canadian poetry, "The most popular experience is to be pained, hurt, stabbed or seared by beauty--preferably by the yellow flame of a crocus in the spring or the red flame of a maple leaf in autumn."<sup>82</sup> Such poets, if their poetry justly reflects their state of mind, must be "... half-baked, hyper-sensitive, poorly adjusted, and frequently neurotic."<sup>83</sup>

Sanatayana's concerns and his stance on issues complement those of Eliot and Babbitt. Nevertheless, Santayana was able to hold these concerns and take his positions without a loss of composure. One could think as he did without the despair of early Eliot or the need to follow the later Eliot into the Anglican church. One could uphold high and classical stand-

ards for art as he did without becoming a reactionary crank as Babbitt surely was. While each of these men present ways of being in the (modern) world without being of it, Santayana offered Smith the gift of equanimity to replace anxiety and a lighthearted grace to replace the bitter grimace. Santayana's comment, "Every animal has his festive and ceremonious moments, when he poses or plumes himself or thinks; sometimes he even sings and flies aloft in a sort of ecstasy," would serve Smith's books of poetry as an opening epigram of apology and challenge. Encapsulated in that sentence lies all the use Smith could make of Santayana. Primarily, that use would be of an exemplary attitude toward life which could speak of culture in a sentence beginning with "every animal" and ending with "ecstasy."

Santayana's composure is of a piece with this disinterested nature of the highest good. The aesthetic attitude does not take sides in the disagreements implicit between the differing manifestations of the spirit. It sees both, celebrates both, and "... loves the different forms that the good and the beautiful wear to different creatures."<sup>84</sup> This is the fruit of being born poet or cleric, says Santayana, in a statement characteristic of the ease with which he accommodated religious faith into his system.

Santayana's philosophical writings are often divided into an earlier mechanism and a later Platonism. In fact, Irving Singer argues, Santayana's youthful works have as much Platonism as his later have naturalism.<sup>85</sup> Santayana presents the spirit or ideal as the perfection of what is implicit in material existence, that is, as entelechy. Within this process of material unfolding, imagination serves as a great redemptive power. By it, man transfigures existence into the ideal as he walks



in the light of common day.<sup>86</sup> The highest value in the process is given to the aesthetic, the state of freedom in which all good is received as good in itself rather than good for some interested purpose.<sup>87</sup>

However, disinterestedness apparently only applies when art achieves the ideals set for it by the type of classicism which Santayana holds in common with Babbitt. The rest--particularly the poetry of the nineteenth century--is barbarism:

The barbarian is the man who regards his passions as their own excuse for being; who does not domesticate them either by understanding their cause or by conceiving their ideal goal. He is the man who does not know his derivations nor perceive his tendencies, but who merely feels and acts, valuing in his life its force and its filling, but being careless of its purpose and its form. His delight is in abundance and vehemence; his art, like his life, shows an exclusive respect for quantity and splendour of materials. His scorn for what is poorer or weaker than himself is only surpassed by his ignorance of what is higher.<sup>88</sup>

Santayana's most serious charge against this type of poetry is not its lack of restraint, but its failure to pursue the highest value available to man. It does not pass beyond subjective states to reason:

The best things that come into a man's consciousness are the things that take him out of it--the rational things that are independent of his personal perception and of his personal existence.<sup>89</sup>

Santayana's platonizing materialism suited Smith's equally paradoxical interest in concrete reality and transcendence. Santayana's belief that the aesthetic provided the highest value available to man and his tendency to identify transport beyond subjectivity with this ideal state matched Smith's aestheticism and his Neo-Platonic tendencies as well. Although Babbitt's arguments supported Smith in his battle against late romanticism in Canadian verse, New Humanism's reactionary taste would have

limited Babbitt's appeal to Smith. Eliot's criticism and poetry provided a better model for production of new poetry than either Babbitt or Santayana could offer. Eliot's highest value, however, was an Absolute defined by tradition and not an aesthetic moment aimed at transport or ecstasy.

Despite the significant differences between Eliot, Babbitt, and Santayana all three are similar in their revaluation of romanticism which leads to an identification of the romantic world view with failure of intelligence, progression of decay, and growth of barbarism. The classical alternative all propose tends to carry two sides: a call for discipline and sacrifice and a move beyond subjective states to some form of transcendent or ideal world. These main features appear to define Smith's position as well. While many of his contemporaries moved to a more socially engaged poetry, and while Smith himself was making certain motions in that direction, his deepest critical interest perservered in a development which flowed directly from his interest in Eliot during the twenties.

That Smith should move in both directions is not as incongruous as it might first appear. He retained, after all, his standard of sincerity with the impetus toward concrete reality which his use of that term signifies. Therefore, while the new poetry of the thirties would have moved him toward a certain reorganization of that part of his sensibility from which "Cavalcade" arose, it would not have required a catastrophic change. The differences of sensibility which obtain between "Cavalcade" and "Son and Heir (1930)" are certainly not as great as those between "Like an Old Proud King" and "Son and Heir." The fear Smith likely felt was that the social realistic impetus of the thirties would submerge the idealizing pole of his

interest--that which produced the poetry of detachment which he regretfully puts behind himself in "A Rejected Preface."

### The Forties

Smith begins the decade of his work which is arguably of greatest historical importance within Canadian literature with an article prompted by E. J. Pratt's review of Canadian poetry in the University of Toronto Quarterly.<sup>90</sup> Smith--who had reason to settle accounts with Pratt for Pratt's rejection of Smith's preface to New Provinces--takes exception to Pratt's boosterism and to the common belief that

... our "great poets" have given us a national poetic literature comparable in power and fidelity to that of England or the United States.<sup>91</sup>

Canadian poetry, Smith suggests, is in brute fact, ignored beyond Canadian borders and any attempt to pretend otherwise is both hypocritical and pernicious.

Smith details three reasons for that uncomfortable fact. First, Canadian poetry is represented by poor anthologies; second, Canadian poets do not attempt to surpass low Canadian standards; and finally, the Canadian public is willing to accept what is inferior so long as it is noticeably Canadian. In effect, the three reasons for which Canadian poetry attracts little attention in international circles are at root one reason: colonialism. Colonialism has led a public which is "... self-reliant and self-assertive in the field of material conquest," to a state in cultural and intellectual realms which is "... timid, eager to please, and stupid."<sup>92</sup> Anxious, lacking in self-confidence, the Canadian public has looked for cultural products

which bolster a deficient sense of identity. Thus anthologies are formulated not on poetic but on colonial or nationalist principles. Poems are written to meet the same criteria and the public and critics conspire to accept and praise the inferior for ulterior colonial motives. Says Smith:

The most pernicious influence upon Canadian poetry is, and for a long time has been the optimistic spirit engendered by our adoption of special standards. We have stealthily acquired an enervating habit of making allowances, which in turn has cajoled us into accepting the mediocre as the first rate--for us. And it has meant in the long run (and, of course, with some exceptions) the condemnation of our poetry to a lonely exile within our borders.<sup>93</sup>

The close of this article reveals a great deal about Smith's motivation. He ties the threads of his argument together with a treatment of the authentic Canadian literature which Canadian conditions have conspired to obscure. That poetry is the poetry of Canadian modernism represented at most length in this article by two poets paired in a typically Smithian opposition: Robert Finch the intellectual poet and W. W. E. Ross, the poet of naked simplicity and directness. It is to these and to standards which obtain in England and the U. S. that Smith points young poets beginning their careers. Clearly, Smith feels cloistered by the confines of Canadian poetic conditions. The bounds of colonial nationalism must be broken if Smith and the poetry he supports is to find itself the space to develop.

With certain of the issues of "Wanted--Canadian Criticism" stated in more pointed terms, and with a Guggenheim in hand, Smith set out with renewed zeal to take up the task which needed doing. That task would produce an influential anthology and several essays--all of which undertake to delineate the authentic tradition of Canadian literature, the Canadian literary canon defined by modernist principles.

Smith's writing in the forties is of a piece. Each of the essays can be viewed as a gloss on The Book of Canadian Poetry. The essays cover

basically the same ground--sometimes even reprinting the same material. Since this is the case, discussion of Smith's criticism in the forties may be organized around the most formally presented of these essays, Smith's Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry. Smith apparently began his task with a preliminary survey of the significant anthologies of Canadian poetry already in existence. His 1942 article, "Canadian Anthologies New and Old," discusses six anthologies ranging from Dewart's 1864 publication to the then recent collection edited by Gustafson. The fruit of that exercise, as illustrated by Smith's repetition of parts of the discussion in the 1944 essay, "Colonialism and Nationalism in Canadian Poetry Before Confederation," was a deepened insight into the connections between the failures of earlier anthologists to select the best materials and their colonialism.

Smith discovered, perhaps to his surprise, that the problems of colonialism which troubled him were already noted by Dewart in 1864. Quoting passages from Dewart on Canadian subservience to the mother country's intellectual traditions, on the Canadian public's obliviousness to poetry, and the Canadian critic's tendency to over-praise, Smith noted how little has changed since that time.<sup>94</sup> The development from that point until Gustafson's anthology, Smith discovered, was one in which colonialism achieved an increasingly explicit expression, while consciousness of its problems declined. Lighthall's 1889 anthology was filled with a hearty nationalist fervour born on the confidence inspired by the anthology's timing--it could include the poets of Canada's Golden Age. By contrast, Rand in 1901 indicates the tendency of colonialism to submerge itself in an apparent parody of disorders in the human psyche. Rand's anthology intends to free itself from nationalism, but, as Smith judges, represents it entirely. Campbell's Oxford Book of Canadian Poetry (1913) was intended to move in the opposite direction toward an affirmation of the Anglo-centric Imperialist theme. Its basic problem, Smith finds,

is a lack of taste. Garvin's 1916 Canadian Poets shows rank boosterism.

Thus supplied with evidence to support his contention that colonialism had vitiated previous attempts to weigh Canada's poetry, Smith began to apply his sensibility to the same material. He was well aware of the dangers of his enterprise:

The ideal anthologist is a paragon of tact and learning. In him an impeccable taste is combined with a completeness and accuracy of information that is colossal. To an understanding of historical development and social upheavals he adds a sensitiveness to the finest nuances of poetic feeling. He is unprejudiced, impersonal, humble, self-confident, catholic, fastidious, original, traditional, adventurous, sympathetic, and ruthless. He has no special axe to grind. He is afraid of mediocrity and the verses of his friends. He does not exist.<sup>95</sup>

Undoubtedly, Smith's intention to grind no axes and avoid all nepotism was sincere. Nevertheless, the charges laid against his introduction and anthology by John Sutherland are not without some justification. Examination will show that Smith's treatment of Canadian poetry was led by more party politics than Smith supposed. On the other hand, when one enters the maze of argument and counter-argument in which colonialism becomes nationalism and cosmopolitanism becomes colonialism in a dizzying turn from one point of view to another, the issues become very confused. In such a situation it is crucial to identify the motives which are leading Smith to make the distinctions which he does and identify the range of meaning which his terms indicate.

The distinction for which the Introduction is notorious is that between native and cosmopolitan traditions. However, an earlier and related distinction proves to be a better point from which to unravel the problems Smith poses. In a context which examines what standards should be used in judging poetry, Smith states:

The significant tests are sincerity and vitality rather than loftiness of aim or solemnity of treatment. After we have made sure that we know what the poet is saying, we must ask: Does the poet mean what he says? Is his poem alive? We must impose, that is, a standard determined by the pressure under which experience has been realized, not by a preconception in favour of the kind of experience we are accustomed to label "poetic".<sup>96</sup>

Smith goes on to suggest that such a standard opens the way for appreciation both of new poetry of high technical accomplishments and of the more crude but vigorous verse from Canada's earliest period. Then follows a qualification:

Yet it is, in the long run, as excellent poetry that the greater part of the sequence of verses here presented must justify its claim to serious attention. <sup>97</sup>

Here is an apparently dual set of criteria balancing precariously on the equivocal "yet." The term "pressure" is taken from Eliot, but Smith is not using it as Eliot does. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" Eliot uses it this way:

For it is not the "greatness," the intensity of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. <sup>98</sup>

It is the case that the context in which Eliot is working is similar to Smith's concern here. Both are attempting to formulate a standard of judgment which can separate authentic poetry from commonly received notions of high discourse. In Eliot, pressure is pressure of the artistic process. Smith, on the other hand, uses the term to describe those occasions when sincerity and vitality enliven otherwise stale conventions. Examples of pressure's effect in Smith's Introduction include the successful poetry of Joseph Howe <sup>99</sup> and of Isabella Valancy Crawford. <sup>100</sup> This use of the term, rather than focusing the sources of poetry's excellence more narrowly within the artistic process itself, suggests that Smith understood pressure to indicate those occasions when intensity from outside the process transformed it. Smith attributes Howe's successes to experience and Crawford's to emotion.

To the other side of the qualifying "yet" stands an apparently different standard which, although left undefined, is described as excellence as

poetry. While it is clear that such excellence is not necessarily opposed to "pressure," it also is clear the "pressure" is not entirely identified with poetic excellence either--as it would be for Eliot. The distinction, then, appears to be the one which is suggested by the parallel questions, "Does the poem have life? and "Does the poem show form?" As signalled by Smith's use of the term "sincerity" in describing pressure, this curious distinction appears to express Smith's habitual and paradoxical attractions to reality on the one hand and to that which transcends the real on the other.

This problem is significant, for it lurks beneath the surface of all Smith's work in the forties. Despite its importance, however, Smith does not explore it, perhaps because he does not recognize it. One satisfactory approach to the questions posed by Smith's dual standards of pressure and excellence is by way of a comparison of Eliot's treatment of Blake to Smith's interest in untutored vigour. Blake presented a special problem for Eliot. His brilliance could not be denied. Nevertheless, his poetic stood opposed to what Eliot valued most in poetry. Eliot's attempt to address that problem brings him much closer to Smith's bifurcated poetic standards than otherwise would be usual for Eliot.

Blake's greatness, Eliot suggests, is his painful honesty.<sup>101</sup> It is an honesty developed by a special set of conditions which allowed Blake a highly individual and uncorrupted development. Eliot, of course, would not promote development in a vacuum if it could be avoided. Nevertheless, it has a virtue which carries it beyond the pale of the usual in our society: it releases the poet from the hypocrisy of received social opinion.

It is important that the artist should be highly educated in his own art; but his education is one that is hindered rather than helped by the ordinary processes of society which constitute education for the ordinary man. For



these processes consist largely in the acquisition of impersonal ideas which obscure what we really feel, what we really want, and what really excites our interest.<sup>102</sup>

What produces greatness in Blake also defines his limitations for Eliot:

What his genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention upon the problems of the poet.<sup>103</sup>

Three levels of accomplishment are being outlined here. The least valuable, in Eliot's estimation, is the poetry which is bound entirely by social convention. Above it stands that poetry which has broken with convention and has its honesty to recommend it. Still beyond that lies the poetry which has been informed and kept to its course by a transcendental framework of ideas. In this fashion, Eliot is able to explain Blake's excellence without sacrificing his own ideals. Distinctions very like the ones which Eliot used to judge Blake operate in Smith's treatment of Canadian literature. They appear somewhat ambiguously in the distinction between pressure in poetry composition and excellence as poetry; they inform Smith's use of the terms native, colonial, and cosmopolitan; and they operate throughout the anthology as a principle of judgment and selection.

That the passage which introduces Smith's distinctions between native and cosmopolitan expresses that distinction somewhat confusedly has not improved the quality of argument which it has provoked.

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 effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing culture of ideas.<sup>104</sup>

The distinctions the passage appears to make are between colonialism and cosmopolitanism. That certainly was Sutherland's understanding when he took Smith to task on the issue. Nevertheless, careful examination of the remainder of the introduction and of the group of essays which treat the same subject reveals that matters are not quite that simple. The best expression of Smith's distinction runs along these lines: true native poetry stands opposed to true cosmopolitan poetry; both are opposed to their conventionalized forms which are colonial. Or to put the matter differently, the Canadian poet may escape colonialism in two ways. Either he may move toward true native poetry or toward true cosmopolitan poetry. He may transcend it with intellect or sink below it with sincerity, honesty, pressure. The distinctions are Eliot's on Blake: poetry bound entirely by social convention (colonial), poetry which has broken with convention (true native), and poetry which has been informed by a transcendental framework of ideas (true cosmopolitan).

Smith's attempts to explain why it is that colonial elements have always been mistaken for native elements confirm that this is, in fact, Smith's intention. Smith often complained that Canadian criticism had "... mistaken for national what is local or universal, and overemphasized the value of what it has chosen to see as national."<sup>105</sup> The mechanics of that process are discussed in "Nationalism and Canadian Poetry" (1945/46).

In the early days before Confederation English-Canadian poetry was seeking to exploit the quaint and unusual aspects of the scenery of the wilderness; but this impulse was mainly felt as a literary emotion, and to present not so much what the poet actually saw as what he was expected to see in terms of the current romanticism. The eyes through which the poet looked were usually those of an English poet who was at the height of his fame when the Canadian poet was young.<sup>106</sup>

Certain entirely conventional forms, then, have been employed with nationalist

intention or have been used to capture typically nationalist content. While that process did not at all depart from conventionalized poetry in other places, Canadians have taken it to be native and have erected a myth which enshrined the limitations of the conventional in a national poetic ideal.

Smith insists that this conventionality is the product of colonialism. "Colonialism is a spirit that gratefully accepts a place of subordination, that looks elsewhere for its standards of excellence and is content to imitate with a modest and timid conservatism the products of a parent tradition."<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, colonialism encourages a romanticism of dangerous morality. We have already seen Smith argue the existence of a symbiosis between conventional uses of romantic nature poetry and Canadian nationalism. Using E. K. Brown's analysis of the colonial mind and memories of Babbitt, Smith moves beyond description to judgment.

The colonial attitude of mind, as Professor E. K. Brown has well said, "sets the great good place not in its present, nor in its past nor in its future, but somewhere outside its own borders, somewhere beyond its possibilities." Thus a direct result of colonialism may be a turning away from the despised local present not towards the mother country but towards an exotic idealized crystallization of impossible hopes and "noble" dreams. The romantic spirit, indeed, is encouraged by a colonial sense of inferiority.<sup>108</sup>

Babbitt had taught Smith how to evaluate all forms of Arcadia. Visions of Arcadia produce moral indolence in the face of real conditions, leading to a tyranny of the Arcadian ideal, and an ultimate collapse of belief into dangerous cynicism.

Smith receives his first opportunity in the introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry to test his notions of colonialism in his treatment of Sangster. Sangster is an ideal test, for he is remembered largely for the poems which succeeded in expressing the conventional romantic nationalism which Smith deplored. After examination, Smith's conclusion is that, "Sangster

was not--though perhaps he wanted to be--a Canadian poet of this type."<sup>109</sup>

When Sangster succeeds, he does so in literary ways which are entirely within the English convention. For a true success of the native type, Smith turns our attention toward Isabella Valancy Crawford. Miss Crawford, Smith admits, was largely conventional in a particularly awful Victorian manner. Nevertheless, there are passages which are an exception:

But where her imagination catches fire, as it does in her poems of the Canadian wilderness, she writes cleanly and vigorously, with a rushing sweep of energy and with a boldness of imagery.... If there is a Canadian poetry that exists as something distinct from English poetry, this--and this almost alone--is it.<sup>110</sup>

While Sangster and Crawford represent, **colonialism** and true nationalism respectively, Smith chooses Charles Heavysege to carry the banner of true cosmopolitanism. Of this remarkable cabinetmaker he affirms:

The universality of his themes is made a reproach that they are not "Canadian," and the originality of their conception and execution is remarked upon only to explain that he had little influence on the development of Canadian poetry.<sup>111</sup>

So it is that Smith moves through the history of Canadian poetry assigning the categories of colonial, native, and cosmopolitan as he sees fit. Mair is colonial; Crawford is native; Cameron is cosmopolitan. Roberts's successes are native; D. C. Scott's are cosmopolitan. And in all cases, failures are colonial.

Soon, the intent becomes clear. This treatment is the formulation of a new poetic canon in which former luminaries will now have to retire to the background and wallflowers take stage-centre, so that a tradition of new shape may be claimed as the rightful heritage of the moderns. In that process of sifting, the enemy is colonialism, or in other terms, a convention-ridden nationalism, the hold of which Smith felt he had to break to win the

poetry of modernism its place in Canadian life. In that sifting, it is the least recognized poetry of cosmopolitanism that Smith wants most to rescue. If its representatives, such as D. C. Scott and Heavysege, have been unjustly ignored, Smith will now give them full attention. This, Smith implies, is the poetry which stands to lose the most at the hands of colonialism. The taxonomy works surprisingly well until Smith reaches the poets of Canada's Golden Age, where the undeniable accomplishments of the Nineties Group begin to fracture the categories.

Smith begins his consideration of these poets by separating better from poorer in both the work of the group and the individual poetic oeuvres. Lampman presents the most satisfying body of work;<sup>112</sup> Carman has been the most over-rated;<sup>113</sup> D. C. Scott was the poet of the group most unjustly ignored.<sup>114</sup>

As Smith moves through the individual oeuvres, his general tack is to restrict the poets' claim to intellectuality and to locate these poets' métier in nature poetry. Of Lampman he says,

But the truth is that the greatness of Lampman lies in the purity and sweetness of his response to nature and in his fine painter's eye for the details of landscape.<sup>115</sup>

Carman was

... the victim of his own glibness--a glibness of feeling as well as of language. He invited his soul in a spasm of perpetual vagrancy to travel hopefully toward a spiritual goal that was attractive mainly because it was unattainable. Thus he affords an excellent, if minor, example of Mr. Santayana's class of "Barbarian poets."<sup>116</sup>

Roberts "... has been the most genuine in his simpler, less ambitious pieces."<sup>117</sup>

Having accomplished that restriction of accomplishments and range to more minor and lyrical genres, Smith proceeds to assess the work of the group

as a whole. Their demonstrated dependence on foreign conventions and ignorance of local conditions suggests to Smith that these poets are not so native as they are thought to be.

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.<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, their narrow range denies them a claim to universal and cosmopolitan status as well:

... the concentration upon personal emotion and upon nature, while it made for an easier success, meant a serious narrowing of range and sometimes a thinning of substance.<sup>119</sup>

Since Smith can grant these poets neither native nor cosmopolitan status, it must follow, according to the taxonomy Smith has been following, that they are colonial. This, Smith hints, is indeed the case. However, the technical abilities and power of the group would seem to make that judgment over-harsh. Therefore, Smith begins to move in the opposite direction. He revives Eliot's notion of tradition in a fashion somewhat outside of Eliot's intention to assure the group some cosmopolitan status, and grants them a limited, but authentic, native voice as well.

In one respect their dependence upon literary tradition is not a defect, for it was more fundamental than any mere surface imitation. It arose out of a belief in the continuity of culture, and in their best work it was a preserving and civilizing force. They have, it is true, except in their second-rate work, no message and no philosophy; but if their theme was narrow, it was an important one, and they presented it with great variety, charm and precision. In general terms, it was nothing less than the impingement of nature in Canada upon the human spirit.<sup>120</sup>

Smith's Founder's Day address at the University of New Brunswick in 1946 shows him doing something very similar. The address assesses the poetry of Roberts and Carman, judiciously pointing out the failings which Smith had earlier noted in his Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry. Here he

indicates that Roberts, particularly, drew from the practical experience of farming and fishing and that Carman, particularly, benefited from the classical security of Fredericton.

This is a timeless poetry, but it is so because the time and place where Carman spent his youth was so safe and sure that he did not have to think about it. The stability and traditionalism of the society in which he grew to maturity set him free to write a pure and universal poetry in which man and the self and the unknown were isolated from the immediate here and now with its pressing needs and turmoils ....<sup>121</sup>

Whether he realized it or not, Smith is coming dangerously close to undermining his entire position with this sort of argument. His goal is entirely just. He wishes to make a re-evaluation of the poets of the nineties which will put their accomplishments in proper perspective without denying that theirs were indeed accomplishments. Unfortunately, like Leacock's knight errant, he has climbed his critical mount to dash off wildly in all directions. These poets are not to be valued as they have been, he suggests, because they are neither so native nor so cosmopolitan as has been supposed. Nevertheless, they have value because they are, on the one hand, truly native and, on the other, truly cosmopolitan. The solution to such contradictions--that these poets are to be valued to the extent that they achieve truly native or truly cosmopolitan poetry--may be superimposed on Smith's essays by informed readers, and may have taken a rudimentary shape in Smith's mind as he wrote the essays of the forties, but nowhere does he give that solution concrete and forceful expression. Indeed, an unsympathetic reading of these essays could quite justifiably conclude that Smith is practicing a form of double-talk, if not double-think.

Apparently Smith found himself committed to too many causes to achieve

clarity on this issue. There is, first and most obviously, the contradictory need to question the literary status of the poets of the Golden Age, and to suggest that the moderns are the rightful inheritors of the Canadian tradition of which, until now, the nineties poets were the best exemplars. Furthermore, although Smith had identified the content of their nativism with "the impingement of nature in Canada upon the human spirit," as Sandra Djwa points out, it would require Northrop Frye's review of The Book of Canadian Poetry to give that theme full respectability from a modernist point of view.<sup>122</sup> Smith, himself, was not predisposed to such a theme even in his more reality-inclined moments. Elements of Yeats could certainly have led Smith to an affinity with this theme, and "Like an Old Proud King in a Parable" seems to suggest that Smith was aware of possibilities which combined a Yeatsian stance with "northern stone" and "barren rock." Nevertheless, the example of Yeats had been the example of a master who had forsaken his Celtic nationalism in order to perfect his modernism.

Finally, when Smith began to suggest that the cosmopolitanism of the nineties poets was the fruit of an authentic tradition preserved in the confines of Fredericton or Ottawa, he found himself veering dangerously close to identifying tradition with the stale atmosphere toward which Modernism had taken umbrage. Smith's danger here is desperate, for if "tradition" in Canada was to mean anything Canadian it would have to refer to Canadian versions of late Romantic and Victorian conventions. These, it hardly bears repeating, were the conventions against which Eliot had originally formulated the entire notion of tradition in literature.

Smith's attempt to save himself from such disaster operates at two levels. He suggests that Roberts and Carman were not merely imitating the surfaces of British poetics, but were absorbing its inner significance. Nevertheless,



his most pointed defense of the reliance on tradition as captured in Fredericton relates to tradition as a high level of technical excellence:

... I would say that this kind of writing could not have been achieved by one who had not had the kind of classical training that Carman ... had received from Parkin.<sup>123</sup>

The other defense has already been mentioned. Smith suggests that the traditionalist security of Fredericton had set the poets free from immediate concerns.

The tendency to confused expression of often conflicting intents which marked Smith's treatment of the poets of the Nineties is not alleviated once Smith arrives at a consideration of his contemporaries. He divides them into two groups. The historically prior is characterized by simplification of technique. It includes Dorothy Livesay, Raymond Knister, Charles Bruce, W. W. E. Ross, and Anne Marriott.<sup>124</sup> The second group, informed by what I. A. Richards called the "neutralization of nature," turned from native concerns to a poetry of intellectual subtlety. Its poets are Smith's near of poetic kin, largely those gathered around The Canadian Mercury, New Provinces, and at the time of writing, Preview. It is clearly the second group which, in Smith's opinion, has the most to offer in an escape from maple sugar.<sup>125</sup>

As many of the Introduction's critics have pointed out, any classification of Canadian Modernist poets which identifies Livesay with native elements and F. R. Scott with cosmopolitan, is surely ignoring much that is characteristic of both poets' work. Obviously, Smith's identification of native and cosmopolitan with the two poles of his own outlook, the real and sincere as opposed to the ideal and intellectual, has led him to a judgment which is perverse. Smith is asking from Canadian literature a development which will match his own. Having achieved sincerity, it must move on to intellectuality and leave the contradictions of nation quite behind.

Smith was to soften considerably his categories upon receipt of uniformly negative reactions to them. Throughout the forties, however, he continues to argue for cosmopolitan--or in less inflammatory terms--universal, poetry. His Northern Review article of 1945/46 suggests that if he could not defend his distinction between native and cosmopolitan, he would rather relax his rigour to include the better of the opposition within his own camp than abandon the project entirely.

When it is recognized that the claims of nationalism are less important than those of universality and that a cosmopolitan culture is more valuable than an isolated one, then our criticism will be prepared to approach the new poetry of A. M. Klein, Earle Birney, and Dorothy Livesay, or of the younger writers to be found in Ronald Hambleton's anthology, Unit of Five or in the Montreal little magazines Preview and First Statement.<sup>126</sup>

The Smith of the forties is the Smith whose criticism wielded the greatest historical influence in the development of Canadian poetry. This Smith, rather than the Smith of the twenties or the fifties and sixties, is the critic of whom others think when they consider Smith's importance in Canadian criticism. Therefore it is important to make some judgment about the effect of A. J. M. Smith's work during this crucial decade. It is not difficult to uncover the strengths of this decade of Smith's criticism--many of them strengths appropriate to his moment. His high critical standards were instrumental in shaking Canadian writing loose from an easy lethargy. He certainly was correct to link shoddy nationalism in verse with decadent romanticism and certainly was instrumental in replacing both with modernist technique. His surveys of Canadian poetry and his anthology did much to uncover a "useable past" and discard a decaying one.<sup>127</sup>

The problems of this criticism are those which arose from a sincere attempt to open a new way for Canadian poetry. The doors Smith wished to

force open were those out of which his own poetry could most easily issue. And that forcing at times became a forcing of the Canadian tradition into distinctions which served the polemics of his own sensibility best. Smith appears to have viewed most matters through eyes conditioned to see a paradoxical tension between the real and the ideal. He found this tension dramatized within his own poetic development and expected Canadian literature to dramatize it as well. Furthermore, his tendency was to identify this tension with a tension between native and cosmopolitan elements in Canadian poetry. The critical tools he forged from that confusion operated best on the earliest and least satisfying of Canada's poets. They became contradictory when applied to the Golden Age and perverse when applied to his contemporaries. And finally, they introduced into discussions of Canadian poetry a strong sense of tension between modernism and nationalism. To Smith's readers it must have appeared that if one wished to commit oneself to Smith's high poetic standards, one would have to take a nationalist stance by repudiating the nation's poetry. The danger that Smith's work in the forties contained was that Smith's attempt to rejuvenate Canadian poetry might well be prejudicial to the formulation of a specific Canadian voice in modern poetry. At least this would be Sutherland's view, and it has been revived more recently by Germaine Warkentin in her review of Towards a View of Canadian Letters.<sup>128</sup>

There is a sense in which Smith's stance could work as a poetic sensibility but not as a criticism. Within his poetry, Smith's paradoxical outlook was productive of much moving work. In poems, irony and satire may mitigate the extremes of idealism, just as idealism can reclaim a cynical realism. M. L. Rosenthal is certainly correct to suggest that, "... Smith tends to vote Classical on principle while his poems throw the balance of feeling and

imagination a little the other way."<sup>129</sup> However, as admirable as this may be in poetry, in criticism--at least in the reasonable sort Smith aimed to write--irony, satire, and idealizing cannot be used to synthesize polar oppositions. The real and the ideal, the sincere and the intellectual, the native and the cosmopolitan--once conceived in isolation--refuse to accommodate themselves each to the existence of the other. To achieve such a feat, Smith should have had to conceive of criticism as poetry. For that notion, he was born too early.

### The Fifties and Sixties

Although Smith's criticism from the fifties and sixties is less known, it is a criticism in which he achieved an adjustment and synthesis of many of the outstanding contradictions present in his more influential work from the forties. This adjustment and synthesis seems to have proceeded as Smith was also readjusting his choice of spiritual and poetic models. According to Sandra Djwa, Smith's recoil from Eliot became clear as early as 1940 in his publication of "A Portrait and a Prophecy," a poem which included parts of the even earlier "Arp's Randy Rant in the Comfy Confession Box" (1935).<sup>130</sup> In "A Portrait and a Prophecy," a figure, who like Eliot has determined to undertake a conversion, is undercut as Shakespeare undercuts Jaques in As You Like It. All the righteousness of the public stance is dissolved into a vision of its origins in corruption.

Djwa also sees Smith's rejection of Eliot in a less hysterical, and perhaps more just, criticism of Eliot which appeared in 1943 as "The Christian Doctors." In this sonnet, the Christian moralists, including one must suppose the Anglican Eliot, are reproved for their false advice:

Send not the innocent heart to find  
 In civil tears denials of the blood  
 Or in humility feign kinglyhood.

In Santayanesque formulation, Smith argues that human sensations and passions --though like brute animality in force--are born on wind (spirit), "whose end it is to burn sensation's lode,/ With animal intensity, to Mind."

From the late date of 1967, Smith looked back on a persona whose history was analogous to his own. The persona, placed in the familiar context of Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady," is satirized rather than implicitly pitied. Smith is determined to undermine the pose of fastidiousness taken "from Eliot's elegant shelf." The persona, however, is not Prufrock, but rather a twenties version, now turned professorial, whose sheltered sensibility has absorbed the high modernism of Eliot and Edith Sitwell without severing himself ~~from~~ his roots in Westmount or dislocating himself in a world defined by the adoring mothers of female students.

This revulsion from one version of the ideal in modernist poetry was accompanied, as is typical in Smith, by a renewed attempt to fasten his poetics to reality. One product of that attempt was his publication of two anthologies of satirical verse, The Worldly Muse; An Anthology of Serious Light Verse (1951) and, with F. R. Scott, The Blasted Pine: An Anthology of Satire, Invective, and Disrespectful Verse (1957). Forever dispelling shades of Babbitt, Smith declared in the introduction to the latter that investigation proves that critics, objectors and nay-sayers are those who are most in advance of their time. Satire is, upon evidence, high morality.<sup>131</sup>

The most fruitful advance Smith made in this period was to turn toward critics and aestheticians whose treatment of poetry and art could root that activity in social reality while maintaining its inner coherence and ideal

nature. As we shall see, writers such as Collingwood spoke directly to poetry's social use without denying Smith access to Paul Valéry's theory of pure poetry.

Smith developed his renewed poetic in a series of three essays: "Refining Fire: The Meaning and Use of Poetry" (1954), "Poet" (1956), and "The Poet and the Nuclear Crisis" (1965). The first notable product of the renewal is Smith's success in synthesizing his combatant poetic standards of sincerity and metaphysical intellectuality. Poetry still finds its feet in intense faithfulness to reality:

It is the integrity, the clarity, and the completeness with which an experience is met, whether it is trivial, harsh, ugly, magnificent, or delightful, that counts in the evaluation not only of a poem's goodness but also of its usefulness.<sup>132</sup>

Nevertheless, the poem rises beyond mere re-creation of reality to achieve "... a transfiguration of experience, or in Joycean terms, an epiphany."<sup>133</sup> One might add, in Smithian terms, ecstasy. The real and the ideal remain, but in a realignment which allows that which had been implicit all along in Smith's criticism to express itself, Smith affirms that the ideal is the capstone of poetic experience. With the lesson from Santayana finally learned, Smith can allow reality full scope and still hold that it will issue forth in the ideal.

Another position implicit within Smith's earlier conception finally receives expression as well. Smith redefines the distinctions he has made between types of modernist poetry. Now he finds,

... two sharply contrasted types of poetry: the positive, traditional poetry which we easily recognize as universal and optimistic; and the negative, unorthodox poetry that tells unpleasant truths.<sup>134</sup>

Both types are genuine, but the unorthodox, which is "... the uncoverer of the hidden secrets of the human consciousness and acts as the conscience of

society,"<sup>135</sup> now has Smith's first allegiance.

This separation between the poetry of tradition and unorthodox poetry is not quite the last of Smith's list of distinctions drawn between types of modern poetry, but from one point of view it is the most significant of his later ones. It demonstrates his final departure from views which unite transcendence and the ideal with Eliot's tradition. We have noted Smith's tendency to find the ideal expressed in individual poems rather than in an intuited poetic tradition from as early as 1928. Smith wavered toward Eliot in the forties, but even then, when he discussed tradition in its Fredericton displacement, it was more nearly identified with a heritage of technical accomplishments than with Eliot's mind of Europe. At one point, Eliot's tendency was to refer to all who could not find a place in his tradition as cranks. "Refining Fire" shows Smith throwing in his lot with the cranks and discarding any attempt to restrict aesthetic value to poetry standing within a defined tradition.

Smith's renewed interest in the social usefulness of poetry has its roots in his criticism as far back as "Symbolism in Literature." It certainly found expression in "Wanted--Canadian Criticism." Like these earlier critical writings, Smith's essays of the fifties and sixties place a poetry of purity in the hostile environment of a morally bankrupt and capitalized society. Poetry's usefulness is the training it offers the stifled imagination and the corrupted sensibility.

In "Refining Fire" Smith quotes Eric Bentley as a confirmation of such beliefs.

We have destroyed the old aristocratic culture, which for all its faults had a place for the arts, and have created a culture of commodities, which to be sure, has a place for everything--upon one condition: that everything become a commodity.<sup>136</sup>

Smith entirely agrees. In "Poet" he suggests that the pressures to compromise represent a serious temptation to the poet. He has unpleasant truths from beneath the surface of our social and personal lives to tell; he may well

be forced not to look beneath the surface if he wishes to eat.<sup>137</sup>

The danger of that situation is best expressed in "Poet and the Nuclear Crisis." There Smith describes our age as one which tries men's souls. The pun is intended, for Smith feels that nuclear capability not only vexes man but puts his Faustian soul on moral trial as well.<sup>138</sup> The horror of the situation is that we seem incapable of imagining the monstrosity of what we have contrived.

A moral shudder ought to be sweeping the world; but there has been a failure of the imagination: we seem powerless to fear enough what may be done to us or to abhor enough what we contemplate doing to others.<sup>139</sup>

Smith chooses Collingwood as the best expression of what poetry can offer us in our perilous state. He quotes at length from the treatment of The Waste Land which brings Collingwood's The Principles of Art to its close. For Collingwood, the poet is the spokesman of a community:

The secrets he must utter are theirs. The reason why they need him is that no community altogether knows its own heart; and by failing in this knowledge a community deceives itself on the one subject concerning which ignorance means death. For the evils which come from that ignorance the poet suggests no remedy, because he has already given one. The remedy is the poem itself. Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness.<sup>140</sup>

Smith is calling for an absolute dedication to precision of sight and insight. The poet must go about his most sacred calling of seeing what others dare not see and of offering that to society in a form which--organized as art--may lead them to view life through an activity which raises consciousness to its highest pitch--that is, through ecstasy.

Such poetry has not social realism's public voice. Smith's poet speaks to an audience of one. Its usefulness to that one lies more nearly in the very activity of poetry, whether that be in writing or in reading it, than in any content, moral, or theme which the poetry may offer. In an



interesting passage, which suggests both how far Smith has travelled from "Symbolism in Literature" and to what extent his journey has returned him to his beginnings, Smith describes literary modernism as a "... rejection of objective realism as a literary method and of social amelioration as an end." <sup>141</sup> In "Symbolism in Literature" Smith desired a poetry which would save man from an evil world. In "Refining Fire" he wants one which will save him for that world.

The wisdom to be derived in the final analysis from modern imaginative literature is that responsibility must be accepted once more as a spiritual reality before the individual <sup>142</sup> can be restored to grace or society to civilization.

It is a measure of the effectiveness of Smith's synthesis of his internal paradox that, while he renewed his attachment to poetry's social role, he also renewed his dedication to an ideal poetry of isolated purity. For inspiration in the latter, Smith turned to that master of pure poetry, Paul Valéry. Smith says very little of Valéry in his criticism. The French poet apparently touched his sensibility at quite private levels of the art of poetry making. In his lecture on the poetic process, Smith acknowledges his indebtedness to Valéry and quotes passages from him which considerably illuminates Smith's own intentions. The following paragraph captures the essence of Smith's affinity to Valéry:

The poetic state or emotion seems to me to consist in a dawning perception, a tendency toward perceiving a world, or complete system of relations, in which beings, things, events, and acts, although they may resemble, each to each, those which fill and form the tangible world--the immediate world from which they are borrowed--stand, however, in an indefinable, but wonderfully accurate relationship to the modes and laws of our general sensibility. So the value of these well-known objects and beings is in some way altered. They respond to each other and combine quite otherwise than in ordinary conditions. They become--if you will allow the expression--musicalized,

somehow commensurable, echoing each other. The poetic universe defined in this way bears a strong analogy to the universe of dream.<sup>143</sup>

The reference to the universe of dream is a red herring, for neither Valéry nor Smith is particularly interested in viewing poems as embodied dreams. Music is the best analogy to express what both intend. That intention is to view poems as discrete constructions, entirely severed from material reality as it concretely exists. That which appears in a poem, whether object or emotion, is not what it would be in lived experience. What appears in a poem takes its being from that poetic world within which it appears.

That this conception of poetry is relayed with so little sense of the heroic effort it demands, suggests how thoroughly Smith is at ease within it. It is, after all, a conception which demands that the poet struggle with material which is obdurate before an aesthetic ideal which music achieves easily--which it must, in fact, equally struggle to avoid. It reveals, as well, that Smith's interest in the social uses of poetry must be understood almost entirely as an interest in the usefulness of poetic activity.

Smith's dedication to that vision of poetry runs very deep--as a survey of his treatment of Canadian poetry and poets in the fifties and sixties reveals. A list of his treatments of individual Canadian poets suggests the essential unity of intent which lies behind all of them. During these two decades, Smith wrote to promote the fortunes of those Canadian poets whose poetry achieved what he believed poetry should achieve. Or, alternately, he promotes those sides of certain poets which approach what he desires. He commends Irving Layton for the new sophistication of his poetry in In the Midst of My Fever and The Cold Green Element.<sup>144</sup> Pratt receives praise for his improbable popularity which does not sacrifice

authenticity.<sup>145</sup> Pleas for the recognition of D. C. Scott's accomplishments argue that Scott's intensity--arising from his accuracy of vision--places him first among the poets of his generation.<sup>146</sup> Margaret Avison receives high praise for "her compactly and richly indentified sensation and thought."<sup>147</sup> The attitude of responsibility and the sincerity present in F. R. Scott's lyrical verse are commended.<sup>148</sup> Birney's range and experimentation are praised while his more ephemeral revisions are rebuked.<sup>149</sup> The visionary qualities of Anne Wilkinson's<sup>150</sup> and P. K. Page's<sup>151</sup> poetries are examined with warm sensitivity.

Smith's essay on Anne Wilkinson is representative of his method and intent. He enters immediately into an attempt to set forth the contours of Wilkinson's sensibility. Smith does not proceed by detailed analysis in the style of New Criticism or explication de texte. There is, of course, much analysis--or perhaps, more accurately, empathetic recounting arising from intricate reading. The aim, however, is not elucidation of technique, but elucidation of a pattern of vision. Smith's opening comment on Wilkinson's poetry is typical. This poetry is "... saturated, as it were, with light, a radiance of the mind, cast often on small, familiar things, or things overlooked before, and reflected back into the mind and heart."<sup>152</sup> This criticism by sensitive identification with the poet is often highly revelatory. It allows Smith to bring forward those aspects of the poet which correspond most closely to his own sensibility. In this essay, for example, Smith lovingly details the evidence of Wilkinson's heightened senses. His concluding comment on this matter does justice to the poet, but it also links her to Smith's perception of the social usefulness of poetry: "She has helped us to be a little more aware and hence a little more civilized."<sup>153</sup>

There can be little but praise for Smith's judicious and sensitive essays on individual poets. They are reliable, sensitive guides to some inner world within each of the poets which shapes and controls the poetry of

each. They are also modernist in taste and conclusions. They are not modernist--at least not like Eliot--in their method. They proceed, instead, by the sort of identification of critic and text which the early Eliot deplored in his examples of imperfect critics cited in The Sacred Wood.

It is fitting to close this examination of the criticism of A. J. M. Smith with a discussion of Smith's treatment of the history of Canadian poetry during the fifties and sixties. Clearly, the achieved coherence of Smith's sensibility considerably disentangled the contradictions into which his work in the forties had plunged him. Most notably, freedom from the weight of Eliot's tradition allowed Smith to describe Canada's relation to European and North American cultural traditions as eclectic detachment. This formulation grants Canadian poets the freedom to emulate the best from whatever national tradition they wish. It begins by assuming and using just that which Smith, following Eliot, had earlier most wanted to transcend: personality and national identity. Says Smith, "For the person living in Canada, there are two things he cannot be detached from--his personality and his Canadianism."<sup>154</sup> Taking these two attachments as a bedrock, Smith encourages their expression in a culture which he feels enjoys an openness denied more firmly established literatures.

Despite his assumption of such openness, Smith found it hard to relinquish his categories of colonial, native, and cosmopolitan. They appeared again in his Introduction to The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse--in conjunction with a discussion of eclectic detachment.<sup>155</sup> It was only in 1968, in a pair of articles retracing the progress of Canadian poetry that Smith finally was able to clarify his position. There he left behind the colonialism of his own make-up which had identified cosmopolitanism with universality. With a single concluding phrase noting that the art the new poets "... must aim

at is neither native nor cosmopolitan but universal,"<sup>156</sup> Smith announced his new freedom from the entangling loyalties which did so much to obscure discussions of nationalism in Canadian literature. Once free of these entanglements, Smith realized that the question of native or cosmopolitan voice is a problem which is related to but fundamentally different from the question of universal poetry. In this essay Smith follows Frye to suggest that the native and the cosmopolitan are aspects of each poet's sensibility.<sup>157</sup>

Agreement with Frye does not imply that Smith is willing to sacrifice his commitment to universal poetry, however. In the same passage as the one in which he renounces his cherished distinctions, Smith proposes a new one between traditional academic poetry and the new primitivism. His gingerly circumspect treatment of the new primitives cannot disguise his doubts about them. Clearly, Smith does not expect that the primitives will achieve universality. Whether he realizes that what he is proposing is merely a new version of his old distinction between tradition and naïveté is doubtful.

There are many senses in which Smith's criticism ends where it had begun. Where it had begun was with a sensibility turning scornfully away from the chaos of debased and valueless modern life. Smith painfully built from this a more modern sensibility modelled upon Eliot and the metaphysicals. The extremes of the real and the ideal remained, however, a paradoxical outlook which established and corrected itself in interaction with Babbitt and Santayana in the thirties. The fruit of this struggle appeared in the forties. Smith undertook a revaluation of the tradition of Canadian poetry. The aim of that endeavour was the enhancement of poetry which matched Smith's sensibility. Consequently, Smith's criticism from that period became embroiled in contradictions which mimicked the paradoxes inherent in his poetry, but without the advantages of poetic techniques to

reconcile them. From these Smith was somewhat freed in the fifties when he reaffirmed his attachment to reality with a positive formulation of poetry's social usefulness and a reformulation of his understanding of the ideal in poetry. That reformulation left behind Eliot's notions of tradition to turn toward Valéry's pure poetry.

Smith's value was undoubtedly lodged in his high standards which demanded from Canadian poetry what it may have otherwise been less inclined to give. His most serious fault proceeds from the manner in which his poetic outlook confused issues of colonialism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and universality. While Smith, himself, moved considerably beyond such confusions, the heritage of the forties is what took most firm root in the literary consciousness of Smith's immediate juniors.

## CHAPTER TWO

## JOHN SUTHERLAND

A questionable interpretation of John Sutherland's life and literary criticism has grown up around the memory of his magazines and his self-sacrificing efforts on the behalf of Canadian poetry. This view casts Sutherland in the role of a young socialist Turk and stands dismayed before his later embarrassing regression into the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. The facts of the case suggest quite another view of Sutherland's achievement. It is more accurate to describe this achievement as a corrective to a Modernism which had chosen to fight its battle for an authentic poetry in Canada by promoting idealizing notions of poetry on British and Continental European models.

Wynne Francis's essay, "Montreal Poets of the Forties," is indicative of the pattern which over-estimates the depth of Sutherland's early radicalism. In her cinematic description, the setting for Sutherland's first little magazine, First Statement is Stanley Street, which "... notorious location lent atmosphere to the public image of these writers as 'Montreal's Bohemians'."<sup>1</sup> The scene for the (rival) Preview magazine is "... a view of McGill gates, the campus and stately buildings, with a shot of swank Sherbrooke Street, perhaps, and then one of the spacious lawns and lovely homes of Westmount."<sup>2</sup> While Wynne Francis's intention is to demonstrate that differences, such as the above, produced a beneficial rivalry--at least from the point of view of the First Statement group--her manner of approaching her material casts the First Statement group in a heroically radical role.

She pays scant attention to the one sentence in her essay which considerably weakens the contrasting images she wishes to establish of the rival literary groups: "To get closer to the truth, there would be a shot, also, of rooms over a garage on a squalid side street below St. Catherine where Preview was conceived."<sup>3</sup>

Poets and critics whose relationship to the First Statement critical legacy are closer than that of Wynne Francis exhibit even less balance. Here, an evaluation of the significance of First Statement by Gnarowski may be taken as symptomatic of a position also held by Dudek,<sup>4</sup> and Neil Fisher:<sup>5</sup>

Of these two little magazines [Preview and First Statement], and of the two literary groups which had formed behind them, the poets who were associated with First Statement, young, gauche, and raw as they were, were obviously destined for greater achievement. ... [Preview] had its roots in that tradition of the thirties which had seen Canadian poetry as part of a universal content of ideas .... [First Statement] believed in a coarser and more militant approach to poetry. Leaning heavily on a leftist interpretation of society, this group, which gathered its strength in Other Canadians, carried the social theme to greater extremes and larger significance in its poetry.<sup>6</sup>

These evaluations of the significance of First Statement tend to praise the magazine, its ideals and contributors on three counts. Using such terms as "protest," "militant," and "direction," they indicate their approval of a socially engaged poetic. On the question of the Canadian identity of Canadian verse, the magazine's "native expression" is taken as an antidote to the "esoteric" and "derivative" poetics of rival magazines. Finally, the magazine's poetic voice is praised for a coarseness which has character and variety.

This picture of a militantly socialist First Statement, fighting to establish a true Canadian poetry, is, however, not precisely the impression that an impartial reading of the little magazine gives. While Sutherland's editorials and reviews frequently call for a Canadian poetry, Dudek's "Poets of



Revolt . . . or Reaction"<sup>7</sup> makes clear that, while Canadian might mean other than British to the First Statement poets, it did not necessarily mean other than American. Again, while Layton's First Statement poetry includes examples, which, both in subject and voice, do seem typically social realist, only five of the twenty poems he published in the magazine are fully in that mode.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, after careful examination of Dudek's First Statement poetry, Hornsey concludes that much of it does not achieve the social realism Dudek professed.<sup>9</sup> Of the major contributors, only Souster is writing uniformly in a social realist style. Souster, however, contributed nine poems, scarcely one quarter of the number contributed by Layton and Dudek. Finally--and most significantly for purposes of this investigation--the magazine's editor, John Sutherland, was hardly the ardent socialist he is often assumed to have been. Wynne Francis notes that even as late as the introduction to Other Canadians, Sutherland's socialism was more of a guise than a fact.<sup>10</sup> And, in her introduction to John Sutherland: Essays, Controversies, and Poems, Miriam Waddington reveals Sutherland's diffidence toward politics by commenting that he "... was trying half-heartedly to become a Marxist,"<sup>11</sup> when she met him in 1943.

The critics who over-estimate the depth of Sutherland's radicalism in the forties also tend to over-estimate the depth of his change when he turned away from the poetry of Canadian modernism toward writers of international Roman Catholicism in the fifties. As Wynne Francis expresses it,

About 1948, a certain souring had begun, in John Sutherland's views, which was to spread like a stain through all his thinking during the next few years, transforming his hopes for the future of Canadian letters into a complete and bitter disillusionment....These changes in the editor's thinking are expressed, issue by issue, in Northern Review. In Vol. 4, No. 2, which appeared in January '51, Sutherland has an article entitled "The Past Decade in Canadian Poetry." It is perhaps the best of his critical essays; but the early Sutherland is barely recognizable in it.<sup>12</sup>

That Sutherland alienated his friends and lost faith in Canadian poetry is undeniable. But to suggest that Sutherland had so altered his stance as to render his writing barely recognizable is to pay heed to surfaces at the expense of essentials. It will be the point of view of this study that Sutherland's failure to meet the newest Canadian poetry on its own terms at the end of his life was implicit in his criticism from the beginning. There was always an untutored air about Sutherland's thought. One of the unfortunate results of that intellectual simplicity was the failure to recognize the real difficulties which produced the refinements and nihilism which Sutherland could only see as evil. Sutherland demanded that Canadian poetry develop a voice and vision of common wholesomeness. When Canadian poetry failed him in this, that failure trapped Sutherland in a pattern of rejection.

### The Forties: First Statement

When critics think of First Statement and the "First Statement group" they usually mean the First Statement of Vol. I, No. 12 through Vol. III, and the contributors of which Sutherland, Irving Layton, Louis Dudek, and Raymond Souster formed the core. First Statement I, 12, the issue which introduced Dudek and Layton to the readership, is a clear landmark in the magazine's development. With the introduction of his two Montreal poets, Sutherland's magazine grew quickly in excitement and interest. Not the least of that excitement was generated by Sutherland's attacks on sundry foes, ranging from Professor Rhodenizer<sup>13</sup> to Patrick Anderson.<sup>14</sup> These attacks, together with the announcements of the formation of First Statement groups<sup>15</sup> and the intention to buy a printing press<sup>16</sup> argue that the addition of Dudek and Layton to the First Statement editorial board kindled energy and purpose, born

out of a happy cross-fertilization of ideas and interests.

Only charity could award First Statement Vol. I, Nos. 1-11 anything more than apprentice and undergraduate magazine status. Northrop Frye noted the adolescent character of the early First Statement in his Canadian Forum review of the magazine in 1942. He kindly puts it this way:

No reviewer has any right to be patronizing, but there is something rather quaint and old-fashioned about this first statement, with its accent on youth, its earnest and rather pompous statement of ideals, its acute sense of the contrast of art and vulgarity, its opening plunge into a story without a single capital or punctuation.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, whatever their limitations might be, these initial First Statement issues are an early indication of the critical stance which Sutherland would develop more coherently later.

The Sutherland of First Statement I, 1-11 is already plainly disconcerted by the direction of modern Canadian poetry. However, his ability to organize his uneasiness into a coherent critical stance is not yet apparent. Instead he approaches the issue from several directions. Whether he realized it or not, Sutherland's difficulty was to distinguish his reaction to Preview poetics from a mere unthinking and conservative rejection of the new. An early objection to Preview appears as a somewhat naive insistence on the sanctity of words.<sup>18</sup> However, it is clear that the true objection the article raises is not so much for the misuse of words as for the misuse of art to socialist ends. A corresponding eulogy of words, "On Certain Obscure Poets"<sup>19</sup> is more uniformly devoted to the sanctity of words in a mass culture which degrades their power, but as the title of the essay and its opening, "in these days when the pointer hovers east to socialism . . ." indicate, the real concern behind the essay is uneasiness with modern verse of socialism and metaphor.

Sutherland's review of P. K. Page's poetry, "P. K. Page and Preview," demonstrates how uncertain Sutherland was when faced by Preview's form of high modernity. Sutherland captures the central thrust of the magazine

correctly, but with a touch of irony:

They [Preview contributors] have two general aims. They wish to deal with subjects of importance: secondly they want to preserve a lyrical beauty. They mean, by "a subject of importance," to write on people in general and their way of living in society. Their belief is that people are unhappy, that society is diseased, and that the one way to cure both is by some form of socialism. When they talk of lyrical beauty they generally mean a beauty that has an element of strangeness about it.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the tone which handles the essence of the Preview poetic so negligently, Sutherland treats the question of Preview's influence on Page quite objectively. He finds improvement, but with qualification:

Both in subject matter and style Preview provided Page with a necessary cue. She had been developing in the general direction of Auden and Spender and under Preview's influence she took a considerable step forward. She gained assurance, and she writes now with greater fluency and more power to create an abundance of images. But as one feels that the emotion is overwrought and becomes subjective, so one feels that the phrasing is too overwhelming to be entirely true. There is lack of complete ease in the style and there is some emotional discomfort with the subject-matter.<sup>21</sup>

It is often cited as a point in Sutherland's favour that, despite a strong dislike for Preview poetics, he could treat individual poets and poems fairly --as he seems to do in this case with Page. One factor encouraging such impartiality in this essay may well have been Sutherland's sense of inadequacy. He finds Page is uncomfortable with the subject-matter which the Preview-style obliged her to use. Some of that discomfort may well be his own; the Preview group displayed an ease and urbanity to which Sutherland had to pay tribute. He certainly had no poem, poet, or poetic at his disposal to offer as an adequate example of another route to modern poetic expression. What Sutherland required if his attitude toward Preview was to crystalize was the formation of some alternative poetic.

With Sutherland's review of Earle Birney's David and Other Poems one senses a step forward in Sutherland's articulation of his discomfort. This

step appears not so much in improved coherence of critical stance as in the certainty with which Sutherland can declare that with Birney's verse, "space and air are admitted into our contracted modernist poetry."<sup>22</sup> Obviously, David has encouraged Sutherland to hope for a viable modern alternative to Preview verse style. Without such an alternative tradition, a role soon to be carried by Dudek and Layton, Sutherland's reactions to Preview could not solidify.

It is significant that, although Sutherland correctly located Birney's source in Pratt's narrative tradition, the alternative which he finds in Birney is not narrative, but the fact that "all the best work of this volume --David and Other Poems--makes use of the Canadian environment. This concern with landscape in poetry will appear again in Sutherland's criticism. Although this review does not openly express it, as the introduction to Layton and Dudek in I, 12 will, the landscape theme is related to a second haltingly articulated concern in First Statement I, 1-11, the Canadian identity of Canadian poetry. Considering the importance Canadian nationality would have in later First Statement policy, Sutherland's first direct treatment of the problem is astoundingly naive. The substance of his argument is, "if what we have is not a Canadian literature it is hard to imagine where else it exists."<sup>23</sup>

Whatever such a statement contains in theoretical naivete is redeemed by the practical goals which Sutherland had set for his magazine. Three articles establish the extent to which Sutherland identified First Statement with the growth of a Canadian literature. These are a broadside delivered at both Canadian Poetry Magazine and Preview in I, 8, a statement of First Statement's editorial policy in I, 5, and Sutherland's opening statement in the magazine's first number. In the attack on Preview and Canadian Poetry Magazine policy, Sutherland's objection to Preview is its status as a poet's

newsletter rather than a magazine. He calls on Preview to harness its considerable energies to producing a magazine for readers and not for writers alone. In making this criticism, Sutherland approaches the articulation of what was later to become a significant First Statement concern: the repair of the breach which had opened between the modern poet and his potential readership. Not yet aware of the theoretical and poetic difficulties such a position entails, Sutherland restricted his criticism to a criticism of magazine policy. By implication, however, a modern poetry movement must think not only of the development of poets, but also of the development of an audience.

Related to this concern is Sutherland's dismay upon realizing that most of the poetry printed in his magazine had been of one type. He reminds his readers that First Statement is open to all types of Canadian poetry and explains that its lack of variety reflected, not the editorial stance, but the submissions the magazine had received.<sup>24</sup> Very little has been made of this early First Statement "open door" policy. It is of course true that the door hardly remained so fully open after Layton and Dudek joined the editorial board. The significance of this early eclectic stance probably lies not in the stance itself, but in what it implies, given the magazine's historical context. John Sutherland had two contemporary models upon which to base his own endeavors: Preview, a magazine committed to a type of modern poetry, and Contemporary Verse, a magazine open to all types of modern poetry. In choosing to follow Alan Crawley's lead, Sutherland likely felt he was placing his magazine in the service of modern Canadian poetry rather than the poetics of one type of modernism.

In relation to these two articles, Sutherland's introductory comments in the magazine's first issue gather more meaning. Here Sutherland described First Statement as a gesture of ritual significance: "a display of activity

may symbolize a future, and plant a suggestion in someone's mind."<sup>25</sup> The imagery of the article suggests that Sutherland saw the magazine as a belligerent self-immolation, performed before an audience too indifferent to realize that the sacrifice was made for them. Whatever such heroic self-pity might suggest about Sutherland's psyche, it does suggest heroic commitment to some cause. In the light of the articles discussed above, it is possible to see that that cause, from its beginning, was a modern poetry movement in Canada, composed not only of poets, but also of readers.

The editorial introduction to Layton, Dudek, and Kay Smith in First Statement I, 12 is a summary and restatement of Sutherland's early critical stance. The major themes of his early criticism are repeated, while those concerns which proved peripheral--such as the sanctity of words--are dropped. The critical values he sees in the three poets are Canadian identity, use of landscape, directness, and, a new concern, wholesomeness.

The major interest is in use of landscape. Sutherland notes the peculiarities of this theme in each of the poets and emphasizes his own interest in it. The importance of Sutherland's interest in landscape lies in his first complete statement of this theme's relationship to Canadian identity.

. . . Since Canada is an agricultural country it is hardly possible for the poet to avoid contact with nature. Nature not only rules great sections of our country, but it also invades a metropolis. It enters the heart of Montreal and sits down in the form of Mount Royal.<sup>26</sup>

This expression of the relationship of nature and the Canadian identity has its own most significant context in a discussion of the Canadian poetic tradition.

The attention shown by our older poets to the romantic school has a special significance. The style of this school is one that is produced by familiarity with nature. It is full of lights, colours, and vivid images. That seems to me precisely the kind of style that would be formed in Canada, and what one should expect from a great number of our poets.<sup>27</sup>

Sutherland's intention is to place Kay Smith, Layton, and Dudek within the

Canadian poetic tradition by demonstrating that their writing bears an organic relationship to the Canadian Romantic poets. Significantly, the three young poets are not presented as revivers of a neglected tradition. Nor is the tradition shown as working itself out in modern terms in three young poets. The mechanism at work is not literary, that is to say, does not proceed from either a literary tradition or from poets. The true hero of the piece is Canadian geography expressed in Canadian society. Nevertheless, the effect is to discredit the Canadian identity of those modern poets who were not writing of nature in their verse.

The context for use of landscape was Canadian identity, and the effect of this identity, the award of the true line of descent in Canadian poetry to the three First Statement poets. Both arguments are related to another assertion in Sutherland's editorial. This appears, for example, when Sutherland suggests that Layton, Dudek, and Kay Smith bridge the gap which appeared in Gustafson's anthology of Canadian poetry between the traditional and modern Canadian poets.

Here we have the answer to our present problem: Dudek, Layton, and Miss Smith somehow contrive to bridge the gap; they represent a fusion of modern and traditional elements.<sup>28</sup>

Despite its importance, the use of nature does not carry enough weight in Sutherland's poetics to justify a link between the First Statement poets to both the moderns and the traditionalists. If it had, one would expect Sutherland to revive the outlines of the northern myth which suggested that rugged environment made for a peculiar people. Therefore, when Sutherland suggests that his poets are a link between the modern and the traditional, he means more than that Layton, Dudek, and Kay Smith are modern poets using nature. What more he means than he is expressing is hinted at in several places in the article. For example:



Layton, Smith and Livesay employ forms that are full of rhythmic breadth and scope: the basis of their poetry is simple, and what they produce is intrinsically readable.<sup>29</sup>

Sutherland speaks of Dudek's poetry in much the same manner: "Then he has written love poems of the same direct and simple quality." Finally, Sutherland insists that the three poets have produced work ". . . that is much more honest and wholesome than that of our modernist school." What Sutherland is groping to express is not only that the three poets are using nature, but that their attitude toward their subject and the voice employed in their verse is simpler, more direct, and therefore, somehow more moral than that of other Canadian moderns. The possibility of an alternative modern tradition, already suggested in Sutherland's review of Earle Birney's David and Other Poems, was now concrete in Sutherland's mind.

Having established for himself the possibility of another modern poetry, Sutherland turns to an apology for the major thrust of that new poetry as he conceives of it. This gives rise to the most basic critical tenet he was to hold for the remainder of First Statement. Most simply stated, this tenet is a desire for rapprochement between the poet's self and his environment, and correspondingly, between the poet and his public.

Sutherland's notorious review, "The Writing of Patrick Anderson," is an early treatment of the relationship between the poetic self and the environment. Sutherland attacks Anderson's poetry from two directions: ". . . confusion of the self with outer reality," and ". . . falsity of the poet's medium and his habitual distortion of content."<sup>30</sup> In support of the first allegation, Sutherland quotes from several Anderson poems which use confusion of self and outer reality as a poetic technique. Sutherland comments that this way of proceeding reveals a limited conception of people. Sutherland's charge of falsification--specifically, that Patrick Anderson's poetry presents abnormal sexuality in ". . . the false aspect of some universal fact"--rests

on Sutherland's psychological interpretation of Patrick Anderson's tendency to alternate between use of the self as an aspect of the environment and the use of the environment as an aspect of the self. The review closes with an attempt to link both charges to a common source:

After a deep dive into introspection, the poet has a contrary mood, in which he tries to correlate his "private circus" with some general trend or feeling. This struggle mirrors exactly the conflict created by his failure to distinguish between the self and reality, and illustrates again his physical and mental uncertainty. It is personal incapacity that accounts for the flickering shutters of his metaphors and his wavering line of sense.<sup>31</sup>

"A Note on Metaphor"<sup>32</sup> is a much more successful treatment of the same concern. In this article, Sutherland attempts to outline the objections First Statement has raised against ". . . modern poetry in its extreme form." The two main objections are, first, that such poetry lacks unity and second, that it is out of contact with reality. Sutherland uses an example from Dylan Thomas, "Altar-wise by Owl-light," to demonstrate that, in such poetry, ". . . the metaphor is being employed as a poetic standard rather than a poetic technique." The weight of Sutherland's charge of mannerism is that the Thomas style makes ". . . an attempt to substitute a unity of metaphors for the unity that develops from the mind's reaction to the subject." Noting that the meaning of surrealist poetry most often rests on a conflict of reality and the artist's transformation of reality into a pattern of words, Sutherland presents his second objection as follows:

Reading Dylan Thomas' poetry one concludes that he not only accepts the metaphor as a poetic standard, but employs it as an instrument to condemn his environment. Finally, he is less concerned with the style than with using the metaphor to obscure realities that he finds unpleasant. His poetry shields him from his environment and provides him with consolation in the form of a dream-world. It guards him from the light like a set of blinkers. Not making the endeavor, as the poet has always done, to infuse reality with imagination, he has tried to set a private world in conflict with it. He has found metaphor his best method of defense.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, Sutherland's objections to surrealist poetry revolve about the question of the poet's relation to his environment. This article implies two central concerns: the unity of the poem should be created in the mind rather than in language and the poet's reaction to his environment should be accepting rather than rejecting. Although questions of morality are never clarified in Sutherland's First Statement writing, his objections to Dylan Thomas's poetry provide some suggestion of what he meant by his claim that Dudek, Layton, and Kay Smith were more wholesome poets than other modern Canadian writers. What is striking about these objections is that they amount to a crude rejection of nihilism. Sutherland (possibly made aware of the importance of language in poetry by Origin) rejects any negation of the human thinking subject in favour of language, and any suggestion that man's environment is less than at least potentially fitted to his meaningful existence. As such, the remarks are those classical humanism might well urge against much twentieth-century philosophy and culture.

Corroboration for the suggestion that Sutherland's objection to much modern poetry involves a morally sanctioned disagreement with nihilism appears in an article, "Prufrock: Mystification Misunderstood." In this article Sutherland locates the source of Eliot's obscurity in the limitations of his persona, Prufrock. Eliot's de-humanized modern man, Sutherland suggests, is caught between his honest appraisal of his inadequacy and his romantic visions of his glory. The result is deceit: "he [Prufrock] is involved with Eliot in a charlatanism that can be described but not corrected."<sup>34</sup>

In order to support this view of Preview-styled modernism and draw a connection between it and a concern for the relation between the poetic self and the environment, Sutherland turned to a writer outside the First Statement editorial board. Sutherland published a series of articles by John B. Squire which examined morality in the modern novel. Although Squire has a familiar-

ity with modern fiction and a breadth of background in social philosophy which were not at Sutherland's command, the concerns of the two men are strikingly similar.

The article most in question is "Enigma," which followed two others, "Joyce and Mann," and "The Later Mann." In "Enigma" Squire explores the problem of private artistic worlds and their relation to morality or lack of it.

To summarize: our greatest modern novels are the most significant contribution to this age of disrupted values. An old culture's disintegration, and the subsequent confused groping toward the future, has forced upon the artist (for whom cultural harmony, not revolution, is the natural climate) a lonely isolation and the necessity to use "silence, exile and cunning" in the creation of his personal literary world.<sup>35</sup>

Here, as in "A Note on Metaphor," the modern writer creates in defiance of his environment. Furthermore, Squire suggests, the modern artist avoids taking sides in ideological battles in an attempt to achieve permanence and thereby also cunningly absolves himself of the responsibility of morality.

While Squire, more aware of the real difficulties of European thought and culture, is also more accepting of this position than is Sutherland, both tend to see bad ethics in modern artistic obscurity. Significantly, Squire sees another problem which is also Sutherland's concern: ". . . a lost generation of readers."

It is Dudek who illustrates another side of Sutherland's preoccupation with the relation between the poet and his readers. In "Poets of Revolt . . . or Reaction?" Dudek discusses the influence of Carl Sandburg on the style of Canadian poets. In Dudek's opinion, Sandburg is preferable to many modern poets because "Sandburg accepts the universe, just as Walt Whitman, his ancestor, did. But our leading modern poets do not accept the universe: the universe of the contemporary social scene."<sup>36</sup>

Again the question of acceptance of the universe is presented as an

ethical imperative. Significantly, however, Dudek does present a means to arrive at the desired moral purity. In the simplistic politics of the far left, he suggests that those who cannot accept the universe are in fact members of an effete bourgeoisie who, no matter how hard they may attempt a leftist revolt, "betray that they do not belong." On the other hand, poets who are true members of the people accept the dirt of life. In an article, "On Academic Literature," Dudek suggests that Canadian poets who have worked in the "real world" write poetry of more vitality than those who are professors. He compares, by way of example, the poetry of such as the practising lawyer, A. M. Klein, and the law professor, F. R. Scott.

Whatever effect Dudek may have had on Sutherland, in First Statement, Sutherland does not adopt Dudek's call for a poetry of the masses as a final answer to the enigma. Dudek's argument is important in relation to Sutherland's thinking, instead, because it provides an analogy for what Sutherland actually does do. Dudek solves the issue of acceptance of life--and by implication the issue of re-uniting the poet and his audience--by locating a culture within which the poet can speak honestly: the culture of the masses. Sutherland achieves the same by locating a culture as well. His concern is not the masses--except in so far as they figure in his true interest, the culture of Canada.

There are several First Statement articles which show Sutherland busily thinking his way toward such a position. An early and significant editorial seems unimportant until its relation to this side of Sutherland's thought is elucidated. In First Statement I, 13--couched in an announcement of the formation of First Statement groups--Sutherland writes:

The average person develops his intellectual powers by dealing with life in terms of his own country. If a Canadian focuses his attention on the history, literature and politics of Canada, he achieves a fusion of the theoretical and practical sides of his mind. He not only develops a new consciousness--a Canadian one--but he

informs abstract concepts with the right measure of reality. That is true of the critic: it is also true of the creative artist. The writer need not be patriotic, but before he is identified with a national consciousness he cannot achieve his ideals, and his best productions seem to be no better than chamber pieces.<sup>37</sup>

The solution, then, to the split between the thinking, poetic "I" and the practical environment is informing the "I" of the right measure of practicality through the development of a Canadian consciousness.

This goal is all the more striking if one realizes that Sutherland is modelling his First Statement groups on the literary groups associated with such thirties' little magazines as New Frontiers. The raison d'être of the earlier groups was largely leftist politics; the goal of First Statement groups was to be, instead, Canadian consciousness.

In an editorial consideration of the implications of Gustafson's Penguin anthology of Canadian poetry and A. J. M. Smith's The Book of Canadian Poetry,<sup>38</sup> Sutherland extends the effects of Canadian consciousness beyond healing the breach between the Canadian poet and his environment into the area of healing the similar breach between the Canadian poet and his readers. Noting that both anthologies reflect violent swings in Canadian poetry from the traditional to the modern, Sutherland infers that, "it is a lack of a vital tradition that explains how, in Canada, a die-hard conservatism acts as the counterpart of a desire to ape the latest fashion."<sup>39</sup> The result of such aping, Sutherland implies, is divorce from the Canadian reader:

While editors and critics have set the seal of their approval on modern poetry, no visible impression has been made on a national audience. Some notice has been gained for Canadian poetry in the United States, but this is only a matter for satisfaction if one fails to realize its implications.<sup>40</sup>

Such glum tidings throw additional light on Sutherland's earlier insistence that Layton, Dudek, and Kay Smith provided a bridge between modern and

traditional Canadian poetry. It is just such "rootedness" in a genuine Canadian tradition which would strike Sutherland not only as an argument for mere superiority, but as an ethical necessity. Such is the assumption which guides Sutherland's compliment to Pratt for evoking direct and enthusiastic response from his readers<sup>41</sup> and his editorial attack on A. J. M. Smith's introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry. The latter article took exception to Smith's respect for the "cosmopolitan" tradition in Canadian poetry.

Can Mr. Smith ignore the colonialism that stamps the work of Canadian poets, particularly the writers of the cosmopolitan group? . . . He fails to understand that a poet preaching politics in the guise of Auden may be just as colonial as a member of the C. A. A. praising Britain in the meters of Tennyson.<sup>42</sup>

The hope for the future, Sutherland suggests, lies with poets of objective simplicity and vitality. Here Sutherland mentions Knister, Ross, Pratt, Livesay, and Marriott; Other Canadians would cast the First Statement poets in the same role.

The major outlines of Sutherland's most basic critical stance in First Statement are by now clear. The impetus from the beginning of the magazine until its end is away from the obscurity of Preview's modernism toward a poetic voice characterized by objective simplicity and vitality. It is some time before Sutherland can express any coherent poetic as an apology for such an impetus. He is able to do so when he begins to oppose not only obscure style, but the vision of life which he identifies as its source. Sutherland cannot accept the twentieth-century, and often European, description of a diminished humanity in a diminished world. It is his tendency to suggest that such a vision of life results in deceit or at least unwholesomeness. It violates the favoured role of the human intellect in poetry by moving the organizing factor out of the mind and into language. It violates the human environment by covering it with a shield of metaphors and rejecting

it.

While this move beyond poetics into more general objections to a cultural climate was able to give Sutherland a more coherent aesthetic, it did oblige him to speak to this cultural climate with something more general than a poetic. In order to do this, Sutherland devoted increasing attention to the concern which lay at the root of his efforts in First Statement since their beginnings: the Canadian identity of Canadian poetry. Interpreted more broadly as Canadian consciousness, this concern serves as a shore against alienation and nihilism in twentieth-century life. Exactly how it does so is not yet clear. Sutherland does not develop the possibility that Canadian consciousness is alien to despair simply because the Canadian geography does not allow Canadians time or energy for such effete rationalizing. He does suggest that one result of a Canadian consciousness is a mind at home in its environment, happy in playing its rightful role in practical concerns. The nature of such "at-homeness" and Sutherland's personal stake in its establishment will become clearer in his later criticism.

Sutherland did feel that alienation and despair are foreign to the Canadian tradition. This accounts for his re-evaluation of the importance of the Canadian traditional poets, his attempts to link First Statement poetry to them, his championing of what might be called pre-McGill Modernism, and his delight in the transitional figure, E. J. Pratt. It is this earlier Canadian poetry, much closer to Sutherland in spirit than the poetry of Preview, with which he wishes to make a viable modern contact. Sutherland was convinced that the resulting poetry would speak to Canadians as the poetry of Preview could not.



The Forties: Northern Review

With a kind of symmetry which life often denies its historians, John Sutherland's career took a decided turning at the mid-point of the forties. When the December 1945-January 1946 issue of his magazine appeared, it was no longer First Statement but the first number of a new and larger magazine, Northern Review. In its first years, Northern Review represented an amalgamation of the old rivals, Preview and First Statement. Until this uneasy alliance dissolved in September 1947, John Sutherland had under his editorial control the best of Montreal's wartime avant garde. His confidence--if measured by the number of essays which he supplied to the magazine--rose throughout 1946 and 1947, and culminated in his attack on Robert Finch in Northern Review I, 6 and his fighting introduction to the First Statement Press poetry anthology, Other Canadians (1947). His treatment of Finch split Northern Review's editorial board. The Preview faction resigned and left Sutherland undisputed control of the magazine. Apparently, Sutherland's victory was complete.

On the surface, therefore, Sutherland's silence in 1948 would appear puzzling. Only one issue of Northern Review appeared in 1948 and in that issue (II, 2) Sutherland's sole prose contribution is a review of Layton's Now is the Place. It is his poetic contribution to that number which provides a clue to what a hollow triumph his victory had been. The poem is titled "Guide to Canadian Poets" and its vitriol surpasses anything which Sutherland's pen had yet produced. The poem is a catalogue of types of Canadian poets which captures the essence of each type in a description of its moral inadequacy. What must be taken as Sutherland's estimation of Robert Finch is perhaps the most outrageous in the poem, but it is not unlike the others in spirit:

It's the application that palls;  
 He wears a kid glove, whether  
 He fiddles around with his own  
 Or somebody else's balls.

Quite obviously, Sutherland felt alone, betrayed, and vindictive. What had seemed a victory he should have realized was the end of the halcyon days of wartime Montreal. Preview was not absorbed and vanquished, but finished.

Other Canadians was not the initiation of a new age, but the summary of an old one. The times had changed and old issues were being submerged to make way for new. As Sutherland was able to put it with much more equanimity in 1950:

How suddenly it all changed! The First Statement Press had no sooner published Other Canadians, "An Anthology of the New Poetry in Canada; 1940-1946," which I furnished with a bristling, defiant introduction, than the whole purpose and driving spirit of the "new movement" were in a state of decay. We had barely rushed to the side of this challenger of tradition, holding up his right--or rather his left--hand in the stance of victory, when the challenger laid his head upon the block and willingly submitted to having it removed.<sup>43</sup>

Sutherland, in a situation like A. J. M. Smith in the thirties, had now to make his way in a poetic world which--just as he had found himself adequate to bear an important role within it--had suddenly changed. Sutherland's adjustment proceeded from 1949 until his early death in 1956; the period from 1949 until 1950, however, is of a piece with the earlier, more confident work from 1946 until 1948. In it Sutherland still devoted most of his time and interest to the poetry of his contemporaries. It seemed his special concern to examine and evaluate the significance and meaning of poets who carried the banner of Montreal's wartime avant garde. After 1950, Sutherland withdrew from discussion of contemporary poetry entirely.

If viewed thematically, Sutherland's work from 1946 until 1950 is stretched between the two extreme statements which indicate not only the

change, but also the continuity of his thinking in those five years: the Introduction to Other Canadians in 1947 and his review of the Canadian poetry of the forties published as "The Past Decade in Canadian Poetry" in Northern Review IV, 2 (December 1950-January 1951). Both the publication of Other Canadians and the tack Sutherland took in its introduction were provoked by Smith's introduction and publication of The Book of Canadian Poetry. Sutherland wished to be irreverent and apparently was under the impression that nothing could nettle Smith quite so readily as would socialist poetry and criticism. Sutherland had, for example, taken Smith to task for slighting the socialist tenor of P. K. Page's and Patrick Anderson's poetry in the April 1947 issue of Canadian Forum.

Sutherland's introduction attacks Smith on three points. These are Smith's identification of colonialism and the native tradition of Canadian verse, his view of tradition, and Smith's supposed religiosity. A summary of Smith's distinction between native and cosmopolitan traditions in Canada opens the discussion. Smith's distinctions--especially as they were expressed in the introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry--were open to misrepresentation, and Sutherland makes full use of that ambiguity:

Mr. Smith argues that Canadian poetry has been the product of two schools--the native and the cosmopolitan: "One group has attempted to describe whatever is essentially and distinctively Canadian. . . the other, from the very beginning has made a heroic effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal civilizing culture of ideas."<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps it was not entirely unfair for Sutherland to assume that Smith wished to make so unambiguous an identification between the national and the colonial, since Smith's own lack of clarity on the issue gave plenty of opportunity for readers to come to that conclusion. Nevertheless, Sutherland--whether intentionally or not--chose to create from the introduction a position which did not correspond to the complexity implicit in Smith's view.

In contrast to the straightforward position he assigns to Smith, Sutherland argues that the question of nationalism is not simple. It often has a double character, he suggests, which transforms the avowedly nationalist into the colonial.<sup>45</sup> This would hardly be a novel notion to Smith who had observed just such processes at work in his surveys of Canadian poetry anthologies. What is novel in Sutherland's presentation is the suggestion that the colonializing nationalism which needs addressing in 1947 is not the obvious absurdities of the C. A. A., "which have been dead in the creative sense ever since the beginning of the century and are no doubt dead for good,"<sup>46</sup> but the colonialism of Smith's criticism and the poetry it represents.

Sutherland develops this position somewhat paradoxically by beginning with an attack on Smith's native tradition. The nationalism of the Pre-Confederation poets whom Smith felt had been moved by the Canadian environment to native expression is dismissed with a sarcastic depreciation:

That gentleman who, in a fit of poetic frenzy aroused by the national scenery, walked over a cliff in some wild and inaccessible region of the land, must have been a tourist at heart, whether he was in Canada on a visit or had come to stay.<sup>47</sup>

The possibility of a native strain in the poets of the Golden Age is also rejected:

What is significant about the nature poets is their isolation in the midst of an alien environment, and their inability to express the environment except with borrowed instruments and from a colonial point of view.<sup>48</sup>

Sutherland's conclusion is that no such thing as native or national poetry has existed in Canada. If that conclusion is granted, Smith's attempt to attach the blame for colonial attitudes in Canadian poetry to the native tradition becomes ridiculous.

Smith's supposed propensity to blame that which does not exist provides the occasion for Sutherland's attack on Smith's notions of cosmopolitanism.

Smith's strange behavior must have some explanation, Sutherland feels, and suggests the following:

. . . a Bad must be invented over which the Good can duly triumph. If cosmopolitan Good is to be victorious in the accepted manner, then a devil--i.e. the native tradition --must be conjured up to challenge it: the hoax must be perpetrated, even though Mr. Smith knows it is utter nonsense to talk about a "tradition" of Canadian poetry.<sup>49</sup>

For his part, Sutherland is as unconvinced of "tradition" in Canadian poetry as he is of native expression. Smith's arguments for it, he suggests, break down when Smith attempts to link the nineties poets to modernism through the poetry of E. J. Pratt.<sup>50</sup> Sutherland will accept the notion of tradition in poetry on one condition alone.

We could only use the word tradition if we believed that the poetry was so blended with the life of the country that it was able to reach into the present and influence its course.<sup>51</sup>

No such tradition exists in Canada, and therefore, Sutherland finds that Smith's examples of it in various isolated figures verge on the ridiculous. Eliot might succeed in such a (comical) venture in international poetry,<sup>52</sup> but (and Sutherland is modulating his metaphors to direct an attack on Smith's religiosity)

Bishop Smith, operating in the Canadian diocese, is faced with what are still frontier conditions. There are so many diverse, recalcitrant elements, that no matter how one tars and feathers them they cannot all be made to look the same.<sup>53</sup>

And finally, Sutherland calls the authenticity of the entire cosmopolitan project into question by holding its ideals up for comparison with typical C. A. A. rhetoric.

"To Human Flesh," by Elsie Fry Laurence, contains in cruder form everything that Mr. Smith's cosmopolitanism contains. Ingredient No. 1 is expressed as "a tendency to copy the literal bluntness of certain American types rather than the delicate subtlety of the better European masters." Ingredient No. 2--Mr. Smith's pure and unsullied aestheticism--pops up everywhere like the spots on a leopard: we are told that Mr. MacLennan is "chiefly inartistic;"

that "his aesthetic sense is undeveloped," etc., etc. Ingredient No. 3 is summed up in this manner: "If they (our novelists) would read Professor Brown's chapter on our literary problems in his On Canadian Poetry, and then explore the recesses of the human spirit..." (Italics are mine; dots are hers.) Must we not wonder at this spectacle of the noisy organ of "nationalism" turning out cosmopolitanism with such a homey, familiar air? Must we not ask, if cosmopolitanism has made such inroads on parochialism, whether the opposite process has not also taken place?<sup>54</sup>

Sutherland's goal is achieved. With an adroitness as entertaining as it is unfair, he has turned the tables on Smith. Whereas Smith had appeared to link native poetry with colonialism, Sutherland has demonstrated affinities between cosmopolitanism and the worst of literary colonialism, C. A. A. prudery.

Sutherland reserves his full attack on Smith's religiosity for the second part of the introduction. Its context there is the presentation of its opposite, the socialist poetry of the younger poets of the forties. This new voice in Canadian writing is awarded a role antagonistic not only to Smith but to all previous Canadian poetry. The grounds for such singular status are by implication the new poetry's rejection of that principle according to which art is the handmaiden of religion.

If we sought an explanation of the extra-ordinary narrowness of Canadian poetry--the deadening singleness of aim which persists in the face of every change--would not the first cause be this general acceptance of the art--religion hypothesis? If we wanted to explain the close air and the literary smell of our poetry--our sensation of being on the inside of a jar of preserves--would not the same reason come to mind? The idea has done more than anything else to intimidate the Canadian poet, and prevent him from relating his poetry to his environment.<sup>55</sup>

Sutherland's poets, on the other hand, ally their poetry with Marx, Freud, and the socialist state, emphases which Sutherland feels move these poets toward a healthy preoccupation with poetry's environment. Even among these poets, however, Sutherland draws a distinction like Smith's native and cosmopolitan traditions. The new poets more or less associated with Preview--James Wreford, Ronald Hambleton, P. K. Page, and Patrick Anderson--are

reproved for unavoidably producing a colonial poetry.

Our poetry is colonial because it is the product of a cultured English group who are out of touch with a people who long ago began adjusting themselves to life on this continent. The lack of all rapport between the poetry and the environment is one of the factors accounting for the incredibly unreal and ethereal quality of some of the new poetry.<sup>56</sup>

These poets, Sutherland concludes, exist in some half-way house between imported and native attitudes. They are divided between their Brooklyn-bum and traditional selves, although the Brooklyn-bum is never given the opportunity to achieve ascendancy.<sup>57</sup>

By contrast, the young poets associated with First Statement, Louis Dudek, Irving Layton, and Raymond Souster, have turned to American sources for models more appropriate to the North American context. This Sutherland concludes, is a step on the way to a genuine native literature.

No amount of gabbling about "European Masters" can remove that pressure which focuses Canada's attention on her North American future, and which must draw Canadian literature willy-nilly in its train.<sup>58</sup>

Canadian poetry is coming home to itself in the wake of young poets whose birth and interests bind them to their nation more organically than had ever before been the case in Canadian letters.

Judgment of the significance, appropriateness, and accuracy of this introduction is a singularly hazardous task. This is so for several reasons. First, Sutherland's calculated irreverence and sarcastic high humour are such that, in themselves, they win leniency toward any discrepancies and misrepresentations which the text contains. In fact, the tone tends to restrain criticism by casting the essay's critics in a role of pursed-lipped prissiness. Secondly, the position taken in the introduction does not represent that which Sutherland actually held. Careful detective work is required if Sutherland's point of view is to be disentangled from the socialist

rhetoric which the introduction affects. Finally, the issues which a consideration of Sutherland raises are issues which even at this distance of time are not settled among Canada's practising poets. If Eli Mandel's criticism of A. J. M. Smith's work as an anthologist for its support of high standards is symptomatic of an attitude still under development within Canadian literature, then criticism in Canada is not yet ready to face the question of high modernism's "morality" without a certain ruffling of feathers.<sup>59</sup>

There is a sense in which evaluation of Sutherland's introduction yields the most insight if the essay is read--as it were--from back to front. The last paragraphs of the second part present Sutherland's position most clearly and provide a point of reference from which earlier sections may be understood. That position is very little changed from the critical stance Sutherland held during his First Statement years. Its first goal is the development of what Sutherland understands as a genuinely native Canadian poetic tradition: a blending of poetry with the life of the country. As he had maintained in First Statement, Sutherland argues here that the development of such a tradition requires Canadian poets to abandon foreign sophistication and to adopt a voice that can convince readers that their poetry is about ordinary Canadian realities.

"Common" and "ordinary" are significant terms in Sutherland's criticism. They suggest the impetus--characteristic of all his criticism until 1953--toward a poetry which refuses to embroider upon the plain facts of existence. In this effort--which has its roots as firmly in the heritage of Romanticism's secular theology of the commonplace as Smith's metaphysical intellect has its origins in Romanticism's more idealizing character--Sutherland was willing to accept allied ideologies as aids to a development which had goals beyond what those ideologies might offer. It is in this sense that Sutherland enthusiastically endorses the First Statement group's attachment to



American modernism and an associated continentalist nationalism. Sutherland did not mean to suggest that Canadian poetry should mimic American developments; his treatment of Lampman's reliance on Poe shows that he felt that poets are as much to be judged for imitation of the Americans as of the British.<sup>60</sup> Rather, the fact that certain aspects of American modernism conformed more closely to Sutherland's poetry of the commonplace than did British modernism confirmed in his mind the view that there was a proper correspondence between his standards for Canadian poetry and the North American context. In that sense, a colonialism under American masters was at least an improvement upon colonialism under British sophistication.

Sutherland's socialist rhetoric may be explained in much the same manner. The ambiguity of his commitment to socialism may be deduced from the fact that in the same year as the publication of Other Canadians, he also published an essay on P. K. Page in Northern Review which exposed the sentimentalism inherent in much socialist modernism and sought out the roots of Page's socialist poetry in her subjective vision.<sup>61</sup> The side of socialism which appealed to Sutherland was not its utopian dreams or even its defense of society's victims, but its elevation of the common to a heroic role. For this reason, Sutherland would be far more likely to endorse classical Marxism's elevation of the proletariat than any version of socialism which allowed a significant role to the intelligentsia. Among the socialist poets of Montreal, it is the First Statement "proletarian" poets who escape Sutherland's charge of contradictory interests and attachments.

Sutherland had suggested that Smith invented the native tradition in Canadian literature quite simply because he required a bogey-man over whom cosmopolitanism could triumph. As examination of Smith has demonstrated, that charge is not justified. Smith's attachment to the native, though contradictory, was genuine. Curiously, however, the notion of creating strawmen

is appropriate in the essay, but only if taken as its opposite; it may be read as an unconscious confession of the distortion implicit in Sutherland's treatment of Smith's religiosity.

Sutherland's objections to Smith were three. He rejected the identification of colonialism and the native tradition, Smith's idealizing notion of literary tradition, and Smith's religiosity. However, examination of the essay shows that, despite its robust style, it is, in fact, creaking at its joints in an attempt to subsume all three charges under the charge of stuffy belief. The slanted choice of metaphor, the lacunae in the development of arguments, and the inexact terminology all point to an almost desperate attempt to make this point.

Sutherland says of Eliot's tendencies as a critic, for example:

So many changes are rung upon the same old theme, sometimes in the name of history and tradition, and sometimes in the name of pure aestheticism which, properly understood, is nothing less than the history and tradition of the human spirit wrapped in a papal bunny hug.<sup>62</sup>

Such a description of Eliot has a humorous aptness, of course, but it is doubtful whether its assertion that aestheticism is "the history and tradition of the human spirit wrapped in a papal bunny hug" is at all accurate--unless in some context which would require expansion and defense. Sutherland does not explain himself, however. Similarly, Sutherland unfairly seizes upon Smith's quotation from an old review of Heavysege's Saul, "Seldom has art so well performed the office of handmaiden to religion . . . ,"<sup>63</sup> in order to suggest that Smith uses the quotation as a statement of his own position rather than merely as an elucidation of Saul.<sup>64</sup> And Sutherland's use of the word "catholic" deserves the censure he delivers on Eliot's use of "metaphysical":

Able to use the word in either the literary or the religious-philosophic sense, or able to use it in both ways at once, they have the happy choice of meaning sometimes less and

sometimes more than they say.<sup>65</sup>

Even if Sutherland's treatment of Smith did not provide the model, it would be difficult to avoid the conclusion that Sutherland's Introduction creates a strawman, the religious poet and critic, for the sole purpose of his demolition. Evidence exists, however, to suggest that Sutherland felt this strawman had a very real existence. His 1947 review of books by Rodman and Wheelwright mentions that their work is characteristic of a recent revival of moral and religious values.<sup>66</sup> That view would culminate in 1950-51 in the essay, "The Past Decade in Canadian Poetry." Sutherland was undoubtedly right in his observation of a fundamental change in poetic climate. He was probably also right to note that this change appeared to be a return to more conservative values and that, in the case of certain poets, the Christian faith was beginning to receive renewed attention. He, of course, was also correct to note a metaphysical cast to Smith. However, the attempt to contain all the Post-War developments under the rubric of a return to religion is surely more confusing than clarifying. Sutherland obviously has a specialized point of view which leads him to make such simplifications.

That specialized point of view is explained in the Introduction. After his discussion of the pervasiveness of the "art-religion hypothesis" in Canada, Sutherland summarizes that discussion as follows:

Our critics have spent all their energies emphasizing the distinction between poetry and reality, arguing as if the half-truth were infallible when it was only quite true of poetry in Canada.<sup>67</sup>

Within Sutherland's thought, it is quite clear that he draws a distinction between materialisms and all other approaches to life. Those approaches which are not in some measure materialist he labels religious. Such approaches are connected in his mind with tradition, aestheticism, and European culture. North American culture, on the other hand, should be materialist,

common, and anti-traditional.

Such a point of view has a certain generalized validity. In the end, however, it blurs important distinctions that can and should be drawn between types of transcendental and idealized visions and assumes that European and American cultures, alike, have a monolithic character which even rudimentary observation would deny them. Sutherland's categories have all the finesse--and effectiveness--of a mallet applied to the head of a pin.

Nevertheless, Sutherland's Introduction does have a certain appropriateness. Sutherland is never more shrewd than when he senses a pompous hypocrisy on parade. True to this native ability, he catches several embarrassments in Smith's Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry. He is entirely right to accuse Smith's contorted attempts to dismember the nineties poets' achievement and claim it for modernism at one and the same time of ridiculous contradictions. His comparison of Smithian cosmopolitanism and C. A. A. prudery is unfair, but not entirely wrong. Smith did have a side--from which he had struggled to release himself--which was not that distant from the tradition of American Gentility. Furthermore, at the core of Smith's conception resided a genuine colonialism from which he was not released until he realized that the criterion of universality was equally achieved by excellent native and excellent cosmopolitan poetry.

Moreover, Sutherland's attack on Smith had an appropriateness which is unchanged by whether the introduction is fair or unfair, correct or quite wrong in its conclusions. It is not necessary to hold that high modernism was a life-denying and anti-terrestrial movement in order to suggest that it was important that its grasp on Canadian criticism should not become monolithic. Space for the new must be created--often through unjust accusation and mis-representation. Sutherland's attack undoubtedly played that important role.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, Sutherland's position contains its own colonialism. Apparently Sutherland's confidence after the demise of the Preview faction in his editorial board seduced him to an extreme formulation of what constitutes the authentically Canadian. While his First Statement criticism shows that Sutherland attempted to link his poetic to that of Canada's nineteenth century, his writing in and after Other Canadians assumes that Canadian verse will begin entirely afresh. There is no native tradition; there are only varieties of colonialism. If C. A. A. boosterism is a colonial mentality, then surely its opposite--the allegation that Canada has no literary tradition at all--is one as well. Such fierce honesty overestimates the power and self-sufficiency of other national traditions to the detriment of the local tradition it so fervently desires.

Sutherland's tendency to adopt a self-destructive nationalism is of a piece with his characteristic critical approach. From the gauche beginnings of First Statement until the last pitiable edition of Northern Review, Sutherland's criticism strives to lay bare the reality which lurks beneath various self-congratulatory facades. Layer upon layer of projected images are peeled away until the truth lies quite naked before Sutherland's readers. And the last truth is neither literary nor sociological, nor entirely national: it is psychological.

That psychology lies at the root of Sutherland's thought is confirmed by his treatment of his alter ego, Patrick Anderson. Sutherland's first attack on Anderson in First Statement collapsed under the weight of Sutherland's attempt to discredit Anderson, the man. His second treatment, in Northern Review, is much more successful. It is his most sustained piece of critical writing until his work on Pratt.

In the "Poetry of Patrick Anderson" Sutherland follows a route quite similar to his first essay. He attempts to search out the source of his

discomfort with Anderson's poetry in contradictions located in the depths of Anderson's personality. His dissatisfaction is described in several ways. Sutherland hints that it is related to Anderson's attempt to fuse the classicism of the early thirties to the romantic reaction toward the end of that decade,<sup>69</sup> that it appears in a conflict between Anderson's expression of loss and violence and his fluid rhythm, silken music, and equable tone,<sup>70</sup> and that it surfaces in false objectivity<sup>71</sup> and in conflicts between ideas and their narcissitic roots.<sup>72</sup>

With a great deal of perspicacity, Sutherland uncovers an essential contradiction between Anderson's political materialism and his private idealism. Anderson's conflict is expressed in the symbol of "the white centre" which contains both images of motion and stillness, or political and ethical content.<sup>73</sup> The inspired guess which makes the essay both interesting and vulnerable is Sutherland's attempt to link this conflict to a similar but repressed conflict within Anderson's psyche. Sutherland finds this second conflict in the more subjective poetry where it expresses itself as a conflict between puritanism and masculinity on one hand and sexuality and femininity on the other. Sutherland concludes:

At bottom he adopts revolutionary politics in obedience to a certain ideal of aggressive action, or of masculinity, which he hopes to beguile with proletarian subterfuges: nevertheless, he cannot discard his Christian inheritance, or change an almost obsessive idealism that springs from something puritanical and feminine in his nature. These leading ideas of the poetry are counters in a psychological game, in which the 'action' and 'sleep' divide ther personality like two separate selves: the intellectual cul-de-sac is simply the expression of this psychological cul-de-sac.<sup>74</sup>

The allegation is interesting--so much so that one speculates on how much more interesting Anderson's poetry would have been had it moved more overtly along such lines. The question which arises, however, is to what extent the conflict Sutherland finds in Anderson is Anderson's and to what extent it expresses Sutherland's own inner turmoil. Certainly, the collation

of Christianity, idealism, puritanism, and femininity to one side of the conflict expresses much of Sutherland's own position. We have already noted the awkward critical categories which Sutherland forged out of an identification of idealism and Christianity. Those points in his career where Sutherland's disgust overcame his native sense suggest that puritanism and insecurity in his own masculinity may have troubled Sutherland as well. The early essay on Anderson, the revolt against the "prissiness" of Preview poetry, and the embarrassing attack on Canadian poets in "Guide to Canadian Poets" all reveal a loathing of homosexuality and male femininity quite in excess of the occasion. Significantly, when Sutherland does turn to Christianity, he seeks out representatives of "muscular Christianity" like Roy Campbell. Furthermore, Miriam Waddington's survey of Sutherland's poetry suggests that the conflict of stillness and motion which Sutherland ascribed to Anderson was his own as well:

Essentially the poems are an attempt to solve the problem of change, of how the self grows and still retains its central core. Put another way, it is the problem of stillness and motion. . . .<sup>75</sup>

While Sutherland's treatment of Anderson reveals both that psychology lay at the root of his approach and that his preoccupation with Anderson was related to his own turmoil, the method and its application suggest that there was a relationship in Sutherland's mind between psychological ease and nationalism. Waddington's introduction to John Sutherland praises Sutherland for initiating psychological criticism well before its time in Canada. That praise is justified, but it must be qualified by reservations occasioned by Sutherland's somewhat "heretical" use of the method. In his studies of Anderson and P. K. Page, Sutherland uses psychological criticism to locate conflicts which limit the artists's success. Traditionally, since the time of Freud, psychological criticism has sought out conflicts as an explanation

of an artist's power. Sutherland's tendency to move in quite the opposite direction highlights the premium he placed upon the integrated personality. Since Sutherland not only excepted his First Statement poets from the psychological probing he directs at members of the Preview group (Layton should certainly have provided fertile soil) but also maintained that First Statement poetics moved toward a more wholesome and integrated aesthetic from which Preview was excluded both by temperament and birth, it must follow that when Sutherland affirmed that Canadian consciousness would result in a mind at home in its environment, he takes mind to mean psyche.

When the Canadian poetry of the forties began to fail him shortly after the war, Sutherland must have indeed felt bereft. He had chosen sides in a personal conflict on the strength of a poetic development which now, it appeared, had betrayed him. His first reaction was anger. His second, a chastened admission that the brilliant days were over and that he may have been wrong after all:

. . . It seems obvious to me that the recent work of the younger poets is inferior to their work in the early forties, but that, nevertheless, the principles behind this recent work are potentially better principles for poetry. It is generally better for the poet to accept than oppose the values inherent in his society; it is better for him to be honestly himself than to disguise himself in a big abstraction--political or religious; it is better for him to aim at simplicity, than to perpetrate the obscurity which is gradually killing off the respect for poetry in the minds of intelligent readers; and it is better for him to use and not oppose the traditions of poetry--and for the Canadian poet not to completely ignore his relation to the tradition of poetry in Canada.<sup>76</sup>

So a contrite Sutherland retrieves from the rubbish of a decade what may be salvageable for the days ahead. Some important critical tenets can stand: simplicity, most importantly. But in a capitulation to that side of himself which Sutherland had felt he must needs overcome, he now suggests that the better poetic principles are those which respect tradition. In Canada that will include the tradition of Canadian poetry and moral and



religious values.

The Fifties: E. J. Pratt

In certain respects, Sutherland took the advice with which he closed the door on the past very seriously. His criticism in the six years of life which remained to him--so far as it shows any organized pattern--centres on a revaluation of the Canadian poetic tradition and a reconsideration of the claims of Christianity. The first of these projects was not a happy one. The severe demands Sutherland continued to place on Canada's poetry led him to ever increasing doubt of its importance and authenticity. The second he found more satisfying. His interest in Christianity uncovered a group of writers whose style and interests matched his own. That side of his life culminated in his confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church in 1953. Both interests were addressed by Sutherland's veneration of Pratt in these last years. Pratt apparently satisfied Sutherland's notions of what Canadian poetry must be and provided a local example of the muscular Christianity he so admired in Roy Campbell as well.

The effects of Sutherland's revaluation of the Canadian poetic tradition can be seen in his essay, "Edgar Allan Poe in Canada." The essay was representative--at least in Louis Dudek's eyes--of the general editorial approach of Northern Review at that time.<sup>77</sup> Considered as a piece of influence and source study, the essay is excellent. Sutherland's eye for the telling detail is very fine and he uses it to good advantage in this uncovering of the influence of Poe on several of Lampman's later verses. Taken as one element of the pattern according to which Sutherland was savaging Canadian literature for its failures to be what he needed it to be, the essay is ominous. In reply to Dudek's protest at his way of proceeding, Sutherland

answered:

We are aware that the determination of the distinctive or individual quality of an art work is not identical with a comprehensive judgement of its value. But we believe that this is the logical critical approach to Canadian art in its present tentative state of development, and that in fact it represents the best practical way of employing and understanding our cosmopolitan background.<sup>78</sup>

It is not hard to see why Dudek had become frustrated with Sutherland. A mechanistic notion of source, influence, and literary value seems to have gained the upper hand in his critical methodology by this point. By his assertion, literary value is to be less observed in Canadian criticism than are influences given and received. The only literary explanation for such a position must be that, despite his deferential bow toward a more rounded approach ("...determination of the distinctive or individual quality of an art work is not identical with a comprehensive judgement of its value"), Sutherland had come to hold that Positivistic notion of literary study according to which influence was equated with literary power, importance, and ultimately, with literary value. When this was combined with Sutherland's almost mystical notion that the authentically Canadian would immediately be perceived as such by the Canadian reading public, the amount of evidence Sutherland could amass to deny Canadian identity to Canadian verse was likely great.

While Sutherland's reading of Canadian literature seemed only to disillusion him, his reading of Christian authors became more and more satisfying. This development culminated in his 1953 article, "The Great Equestrians." The literary models the article holds before the readership of Northern Review are G. K. Chesterton, D. H. Lawrence, Roy Campbell, and C. S. Lewis. The extent to which Sutherland's Christianity was compatible with the revolt against high modernism which characterized his career since its earliest days stands out clearly from this choice. Such a revolt is

more characteristic of this assortment of writers than is Christianity--especially since the list includes Lawrence.

Sutherland devoted the last years of his life to a study of the Canadian author who could answer the demands of his taste: E. J. Pratt. The reasons that Pratt appealed to him were probably not that different from the reasons that Sutherland enjoyed Campbell. The hearty, muscular vision and the breadth of story line and technique likely attracted him in the one as much as in the other. Here were the common and the wholesome--and in Pratt's case, the undeniably Canadian. Nevertheless, the public mission Sutherland accepted for himself ran somewhat in the opposite direction. Sutherland chose to devote the last years of his life to a demonstration of the limitations of the view of Pratt which cast the poet in the role of a heroic bard devoted solely to the celebration of strength.<sup>79</sup> Sutherland argued for the subtlety and complexity of a vision which he appreciated mainly for its simplicity.

Sutherland disagreed with the common understanding of Pratt for at least two reasons. He argued, quite persuasively, that Pratt's notion of power was not simple but paradoxical: he found Pratt both celebrated strength and deplored its destructive implications. Furthermore, Sutherland demonstrated that conflict in Pratt's poetry is not a simple conflict of man against nature conceived according to a vulgarized Darwinianism. Rather, following Frye, Sutherland argued that Pratt viewed the unconscious horror of nature and the subconscious horror of the mind as a single horror. Sutherland's Pratt, therefore, was a psychologizing Darwinian.<sup>80</sup>

Sutherland's second objection to the standard conception of Pratt was that this conception ignored the depth of the poet's compassion. Already in his 1952 essay on Pratt, Sutherland emphasized the mystical and transcendent quality of this compassion.<sup>81</sup> In his book on Pratt, written after his con-

firmation into the Roman Catholic Church, this theme is set within an incarnational view of Pratt's achievement. Sutherland's summary at the close of this treatment of The Cachalot expresses this clearly:

Like The Titanic, the conclusion of The Cachalot arouses the same complex feelings of terror and exaltation. Terror arises from the tragic experience itself, from the seeming bitterness of fate, and from the shadow of a universal death cast by the loss of the hero, with all his multitudinous associations; but the terror is subordinate to a feeling which can only be described as the exaltation of compassion. The climax of the narrative envisages the sacrifice on the cross; and its final impact derives from a vision of Christ victorious, rising from death to stand triumphantly above the shape in the abyss.<sup>82</sup>

Sutherland gives this approach a certain prestige by citing William James' Varieties of Religious Experience. He suggests that some explanation such as James' view of religious happiness is required to account for the mystical experience which he finds at the core of the major narratives. Sutherland's quotation from James is as follows:

. . . in its most characteristic embodiments, religious happiness is no mere feeling of escape. It cares no longer to escape. It consents to the evil outwardly as a form of sacrifice--inwardly it knows it to be permanently overcome. If you ask how religion thus falls on the thorns and faces death, and in the very act annuls annihilation, I cannot explain the matter, for it is religion's secret, and to understand it you must yourself have been a religious man of the extremest type. In our future examples, even of the simplest and healthiest-minded type of religious consciousness, we shall find this complex sacrificial constitution, in which a higher happiness holds a lower unhappiness in check. In the Louvre there is a picture, by Guido Reni, of St. Michael with his foot on Satan's neck. The richness of the picture is in large part due to the fiend's figure being there. The richness of its allegorical meaning also is due to his being there--that is, the world is all the richer for having a devil in it, so long as we keep our foot upon his neck.<sup>83</sup>

Sutherland has changed his allegiance, but other than that decisive alteration, the vision this passage describes and the specifically Roman Catholic Incarnational view with which he approaches Pratt are structurally similar to the vision that controlled his iconoclastic treatment of Smith.

In both earlier and later Sutherland, life is divided between material reality and religious experience. In later Sutherland the character of material reality is not denied but--if anything--coarsened and rendered more bleak. However, Sutherland no longer vilifies mystical visions. Rather, he now affirms that an incarnational vision which sacrifices material well-being in a transcendence of compassion is of life's essence.

Judgment of Sutherland's work on Pratt must be mixed. Without a doubt, Sutherland's criticism advanced insight into Pratt's major narratives. In particular, Sutherland's grasp of the ambiguities within Pratt's Darwinianism and the role of psychology in Pratt's vision were seminal. On the other hand, the limitations of incarnational criticism strain Sutherland's close textual work from its course. In particular, Sutherland's attempts to force Pratt's texts to yield Christ figures and redemptive meaning improperly constrain the conclusions at which he arrives. The end of Sutherland's discussion of The Great Feud is an example:

The Feud is subtitled, "A Dream of A Pleiocene Armageddon," and it is written in the belief that Armageddon is a future possibility. An event of that kind can only have meaning on the assumption that Christ's Mercy is identical with the Justice of God; and such an assumption is clearly implicit in the conclusion of the Feud.<sup>84</sup>

Summary and judgment of Sutherland's achievement should begin with a comment on his courage. The last issue of Northern Review, which appeared shortly before Sutherland's death, returns to the diet of mimeograph with which he had begun First Statement. In it, Sutherland informs his readers of his serious illness and his intentions to continue the magazine, but in much reduced form. By this time, Sutherland was not only ill, but also very much alone. The literary friendships which had been forged around First Statement had all been destroyed; the torch which Northern Review had carried in its early years had long since passed to younger and more vibrant

little magazines. The reader smiles, however, to find that Sutherland's stubborn prickliness has not been submerged by whatever hardship weighed upon him. The last issue contains a series of "Fragments from the Stryker Frame," which reveal Sutherland as he always had been, a determined unmasker of pretention. To that quality he courageously kept himself true until the last.

A courage determined to chart its course according to the plain facts of life is the quality which most unites Sutherland's writing from its beginning until the end. When Sutherland arrived in Montreal and soon set about the business of creating a literary movement, he found that the sophisticated poetry of the city's avant garde did not correspond to the Canadian realities which his sensibility--untutored in the niceties of modern despair--demanded. It was some time before Sutherland could find a foothold from which to attack Preview. When he did, the Archimedian point was not a literary theory but a literary group: the poets who gathered about his publication. For the remainder of First Statement, Sutherland was busily engaged in outlining the parameters of a developing literary movement. It would be Canadian and not foreign. It would not be severed from Canada's literary tradition. It would be a poetry of commonness and wholesomeness. It would be a modernism kept to an honest course by faithfulness to Canadian social realities.

By the time Northern Review began, literary realities had already somewhat escaped Sutherland's attempt to shape them around his original vision of the Canadian. Sutherland's poets were persevering in their socialism and showing interest in American poetics as well. Since Sutherland's loyalties were to his poets and not to a developed literary theory, for a time he attempted to follow them. The battle lines he had drawn between First Statement and Preview were becoming somewhat blurred. And a new enemy had appeared:

A. J. M. Smith, a sophisticate whose The Book of Canadian Poetry cast aspersions on Sutherland's cherished dreams of a native poetry.

At the height of his powers, Sutherland felt able to cut himself free from all ties but those to the group of poets whom he most trusted. Other Canadians is the record of Sutherland's confidence that the group of poets it represents will initiate a poetry which will represent Canada as the nation's earlier poets had not. Even Sutherland's former deference toward nineteenth-century Canadian traditions is left behind. Sutherland's poets will turn away from the imitation of idealizing, precious, and enervating British and European poetics toward a poetry of objectivity and clarity. This new poetry would introduce a wholesomeness born of its firm rootedness in the North American context. It would gather its audience as naturally as leaves come to trees. Sutherland's belief that if the common were given its head within Canadian poetry the nation would reap a harvest of health is boundless.

When that confidence was betrayed by the course of events in the late forties, Sutherland's bitterness was extreme. Why it should have been so became more clear in the early fifties as Sutherland's increasing alienation from the developments in Canadian poetry and his preoccupation with the poets of wartime Montreal served to expose what Sutherland himself would have called the narcissistic roots of his criticism. Indications are that Sutherland's psyche was divided between an idealizing morality which he found feminine and loathed, and a reality-bound aggressiveness which he felt was masculine and wished to encourage. He had apparently projected just that conflict on Canadian letters. Dependence on foreign models, interest in Christianity, idealizing poetics, and shades of nihilism were sickly and feminine. Rootedness in Canadian social reality, materialism, objective and clear poetic voice, and freedom from Angst were healthy and masculine. Were Canadian poets to sacrifice their feminine selves to their masculine--as Sutherland

probably felt he had done in his earlier Northern Review period--a native voice characterized by psychological health and vibrancy would emerge.

When Canadian poets began to move in what Sutherland felt was just the opposite direction, he was abandoned in a position which he found hard to adjust to meet new issues and insights. First he chastised, then capitulated, but throughout continued to judge Canadian poetry by criteria which he would have asked of the poetry which never emerged. Those criteria combined a mechanistic notion of influence with a mystical belief that the truly Canadian would be claimed at once by Canada's readers. According to such notions, Canada had no poetry it could call its own. According to such notions, Sutherland withdrew first from the avant garde to a preoccupation with the forties, then from the forties to the nineteenth century and E. J. Pratt. In certain senses, he finally withdrew from Canadian poetry altogether.

Sutherland's nationalism proved to be so entangled within the contradictions of his psyche that he gradually narrowed its scope toward a provincialism which can hardly be defended. This development was not aided by Sutherland's theoretical naïveté. His suspicion of high modernism's nihilistic side and his assumption that such modernism was outside native Canadian experience reveals an unfortunate superficiality. As Frye observes, Canada cannot be regarded as a primitive nation, for although it is young politically, its mode of life is of the age of Western industrialized culture. Since this is so, an attempt to call up from Canadian peculiarities a habit of mind and a consciousness which will serve proof against the darker motifs attendant on Western Culture is futile.

Furthermore, the attempt to identify high modernist impulses with British and European culture and reserve the varieties of modernism which champion objectivity, clarity, and the commonplace for North America must fail. Whatever generalized validity such an assertion may have can be countered by an



examination of Smith. The origins of Smith's poetic sensibility, and the developments within it can as often be traced to American roots as to British. The extent to which Smith's earliest stance represented a renewed version of the Genteel Sensibility has been argued. Is it simply a curiosity that Eliot, Babbitt, and Santayana all had taught or studied at Harvard? Perhaps Sutherland's conclusions would have been more insightful if he had noticed that Eliot and Smith, both, were North Americans with a hankering for Britain.

Finally, Sutherland's assumption that authentic Canadian poetry would provide an occasion for rapprochement between the Candian poet and his public is too simplistic. Sutherland did not concern himself with the international character of this tragic split--as Dudek would. Whatever special character Canadian colonialism may bring to the strain between public and poet, those differences are added vexations to a problem which is international and would not disappear if colonialism were transformed to national self-confidence.

Nevertheless, whatever its misjudgements, failures, and biases were, Sutherland's criticism and editorial work were of much value in the development of Canadian modernism. Without a doubt, Sutherland's criticism stands as one historically influential check on a premature and locally unrooted absorption of Canadian modernism into international culture. It opened alternate avenues for Canadian modernists. Sutherland's magazines were important forums for Canadian poets when little other publishing was available to them. Sutherland's magazines raised "the colonial question"--once again--forcing others to take thought again in supplying answers to problems which seemed to arise unavoidably when modernism met Canadian nationalism.

## CHAPTER THREE

## LOUIS DUDEK

Louis Dudek's career as a critic began in the pages of First Statement. There he appeared as an ardent socialist whose objections to bourgeoisie and anglophile Montreal extended to the Montreal poets gathered about Preview. His criticism from this period displays several of the concerns which would remain central to his writing throughout his career and an orthodox Marxism which he would soon leave behind. Both appear in his early article, "Academic Literature";<sup>1</sup> the permanent concerns reflected in the article's sociological approach to literary questions, and the Marxism in Dudek's confidence in an approaching proletarian literary utopia.

Study under Lionel Trilling, Emery Neff, and Jacques Barzun, the three Columbia professors who directed Dudek's doctoral research, soon led him to discard his rather simplistic Marxism for a more subtle approach. Trilling, Neff, and Barzun shared several characteristics which were important in shaping Dudek's attitude toward literature. These included a wide ranging approach to literary study--Neff and Barzun, particularly, were comparatists

with strong interests in continental European literature, and, together with Trilling, encouraged literary study which drew on other academic disciplines and other arts--a respect for the achievements of the nineteenth century, and a set of liberal convictions. To the insights which he gathered from these men, and to the concerns of his earliest years as a poet and critic, Dudek added themes garnered from the work of Ezra Pound. Directed by such interests and influences, Dudek's criticism and poetry led a singular course through the issues facing Canadian literature in the fifties

and sixties. He combined, for example, a set of rigorous stylistic principles with a tone which at first may impress the reader as deliberately populist. And in the decades when the luminaries appropriate to Dudek's areas of study were Northrop Frye and Marshall McLuhan, Dudek took strong exception to both.

Dudek's singularity bore its fruit on the issue of tensions between Canadian nationalism and modernism. His later criticism shows him to be capable where Smith and Sutherland were not: he was able to remain both Canadian and modernist without the sense of strain and divided loyalties which characterized much of the work of Smith and Sutherland. That synthesis was largely due to Dudek's literary outlook which endorses high expectations without experiencing a paralyzing consciousness of inadequate Canadian tradition. Such achievement does not indicate that Dudek's criticism is entirely free from contradictions and internal tensions. Examination will show sides of Dudek's work which are limited more or less severely by the outlook which does allow him a healthy degree of national self-confidence.

### Criticism Until 1951

The themes which characterize Dudek's early First Statement criticism have already been suggested. The most significant essay from this period, "Academic Literature," draws a connection between the "style of our latest poetry" and a withdrawal of poets into the university. The essay recognizes that the conditions of authentic literary production are difficult in Canada, but it connects this difficulty with a pattern of life generally apparent throughout Western Culture--"idea-ism". Western literature has been divorced

from its material roots, Dudek says, and has been constructed parasitically at the expense of the lower classes. The ideal which Dudek advocates is a proletarian literature in touch with the comings and goings of daily existence.

As Frank Davey demonstrates, Dudek and others of the First Statement group felt that their situation as non-anglophile, but English-speaking Canadians, and their roots outside of Montreal's Westmount qualified them for a role in this new proletarian literature.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, the myth which surrounds First Statement in Wynne Francis's account and the evidence of Sutherland's introduction to Other Canadians suggest that this was one perception held by members of the magazine's editorial board and promulgated by various of their apologists. Whatever validity this perception had, it overlooked certain features of the First Statement situation and ethos. In Dudek's case, certainly, the elements of his situation and the literary values which would soon alter this point of view stand out. Dudek's example of a poet of the people in the "Academic Literature" article, for instance, is the lawyer poet, A. M. Klein. Surely Klein cannot be taken as a poet of the masses. He is instead an example of the literary values which Dudek could genuinely support: values which move toward direct treatment of life without any sacrifice of literary style.

The themes in "Academic Literature" which lead directly to Dudek's interests after he had begun work at Columbia include his revolt against idealistic verse, his interest in literature's role in society and his intention to take a wide and often antagonistic role in literary affairs. Expressed positively, these themes describe his interest in social realism, his revolt against treatment of literature as a commodity, and his efforts in poetry writing, literary criticism, and small press publishing. The particular adjustment these themes underwent was shaped by the experiences and teachers

Dudek met in New York.

Lionel Trilling undoubtedly played a large role in shaping Dudek's thought at this point and an account of Dudek's development should begin with him. In Denis Donoghue's 1978 essay on Trilling, the critic appears as a fervent liberal bent on bringing society into accord with humanity, or in Trilling's own terms, forming culture. Donoghue describes Trilling as a critic who emphasized literature's role in society at a time when other critics were rejecting any idea of society as a source of value. In fact, Trilling was suspicious of intellectual self-sufficiency; he wished the artist to embody the highest form of the common mind. Not a man to urge on others what he would not himself observe, Trilling attempted to form his own mind not of himself, but from the general mind in his culture.<sup>3</sup>

Trilling published The Liberal Imagination during Dudek's years at Columbia, and it is likely that the concerns which that book reflects are a good indication of the phases of Trilling's thought which touched Dudek most directly. In the preface to The Liberal Imagination, Trilling suggests that the various essays the book contains are united by a desire to strengthen liberalism by supplying it the criticism which the lack of a respectable conservative opposition had denied it.<sup>4</sup> At some years of distance it is possible to see that Trilling was attempting to mediate between various extremes with which American literary and social life had confronted him. Foremost among these were versions of socialism, Marxism, and American liberalism which elevated material and social values above those which are intellectual and aesthetic, and at the other extreme, the versions of highly intellectualized and aestheticized traditions, such as Lovejoy's history of ideas and the American New Critics, which did quite the opposite.

Flowing throughout all of Trilling's attempts at such mitigation is the theme of achieving a proper balance between the anarchy and the organ-

ization of life. That theme first emerges in the preface when Trilling describes liberalism's tendency to simplify life in order to understand, and, presumably, to control it. In liberalism's development this impetus will cause the mind and emotions to wither. Since this regression is inevitable, liberalism must contain within itself a criticism which will recall it to another early and equally fundamental tendency, its elevation of life's variousness to an intellectual principle. This latter and crucial criticism is one which literature can well provide, Trilling feels.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the American liberal premise that reality is wholly material, social, and unorganized receives Trilling's severe disapproval. In the essays, "Reality in America," "Sherwood Anderson," and "The Function of the Little Magazine," he argued that the American liberal literary taste which excused the aesthetic failures of Dreiser for the brute power of his novels, the shallow emotionalism of Anderson for his refusal to intellectualize, and the sentimentality of minor liberal writers for their affirmation of life, demonstrates an assumed tension between mind and reality which harms literary life.

For his part, Trilling wished to maintain the mind in a position which may be problematic but is, nevertheless, prominent. This surfaces in Trilling's treatments of Freud and Henry James, the two figures whose social and aesthetic significance functions as a touchstone in essays throughout the book. Trilling accepts Freud's account of the human psyche and even praises it for making poetry indigenous to the make-up of the mind. He is concerned, however, to emphasize Freud's rational and positivistic intent over against those who would use psychoanalytic theory to plead for an indulgence of the anarchical id.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he insists that art's similarity to manifestations of mental illness is similarity only. The characteristic of the artist is not his pain, but his ability to shape that pain.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, Trilling is not deceived about the sacrifices inherent in his own position. In his essay, "The Princess Casamassima", Trilling not only pleads for a revaluation of James's importance, but also suggests that this particular novel addresses the central issues of art's problematic place in society. Art, Trilling says, has analogies with power and the aristocracy, not with the bourgeoisie. It is a thing of aggression and evil as well as of the highest good. Civilization demands its high price.<sup>8</sup>

Given this position on art and civilization, it is possible to see that Trilling does believe that the tensions between anarchy and control are unavoidable. He accepts the pattern of tension between mind and reality which in the preface he suggested is central to the liberal tradition. His singularity rests in his willingness to adopt this tension rather than resolve it by repudiating either side of the opposition.

When Trilling describes this view of reality in Henry James, he calls it moral realism.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, he suggests that Freud's psychoanalytic theory corresponds to classical tragic realism.<sup>10</sup> If Trilling's own criticism is assigned a place within the many-headed phenomenon of literary realism, it is clear that his is a strain of realism which may fairly claim both "moral" and "tragic" in its self-description. Trilling's criticism is moral in its demand that the intellect serve social well-being. It is tragic in its recognition that the mind and reality present conflicting demands which can and must not be entirely resolved. It is realistic in its refusal to escape from the uncomfortable conclusions toward which these convictions impel it.

One of those uncomfortable conclusions in The Liberal Imagination is that America had undergone a disjunction between its liberal political thought and the best of its modern literature. In "The function of the Little Magazine" Trilling admits that the great writers of his time had not been

liberals.<sup>11</sup> That he makes such an admission without repudiating either the modernist writers or the liberal political tradition illustrates the advantages present to Dudek in Trilling's thought. Sutherland's attempt to characterize the tension fundamental to Patrick Anderson's poetry as a tension between the poetic impulses of the thirties and those of the twenties is one way of characterizing a tension endemic to much modernism. Smith's long labour to construct a bridge between an intellectualizing aestheticism and a more popularizing social commitment is another way to describe this same tension. Dudek received from Trilling what Smith required maturity to learn and Sutherland could never evoke from his vision of the Canadian tradition: a movement toward synthesis of aesthetic and social concerns. This is of all the more import since the question tends to arise in Canada--at least as we have viewed it in Smith and Sutherland--as a division between national and aesthetic commitments.

Dudek also was able to benefit from the relative clarity which distance from the initial formulations of this tension brought to the issues. Not only Trilling, but Neff and Barzun, as well, approach the central questions of modernism's genesis and heritage from the vantage of a critical rethinking of the movement's initial polemical accounts. A telling indicator here is the rehabilitation of romanticism's reputation in which Neff and Barzun, particularly, were engaged. Neff's A Revolution in European Poetry; 1660-1900, his study of Carlyle and Mill, and Barzun's Classic, Romantic, and Modern all begin by assuming that the questions which dominated the nineteenth century were genuine and pressing questions. The heart of this view of romanticism and its relationship to Trilling's liberalism are both suggested by the following description of romantic art drawn from Barzun's Classic, Romantic, and Modern:



Romantic art, then, is not "romantic" in the vulgar sense, but "realistic" in the sense of concrete, full of particulars, and thus congenial to the inquiring spirit of history and science. Romanticism is not simply a synonym for subjectivism, overexpressiveness, or sentimentality, though when strictly understood these terms suggest respectively the philosophy, the technique, and the inherited accident of romantic aesthetics.<sup>12</sup>

By such an account, romanticism becomes the artistic counterpart of the liberal intellectual tradition which Trilling described as originally oriented toward the accomodation of life's variousness. Such emphasis is, of course, set against the respect for the mind and for control which is typical of Trilling and would become typical of Dudek as well.

Trilling's vision is evident in Dudek's dissertation which appeared as Literature and the Press in 1955. The work retains the sociological approach and materialist preconceptions which characterized Dudek's "Academic Literature," but it does not focus its criticism narrowly on one social class. It is, instead, an examination of the ill effects upon literature and readers of advances in technology which are controlled by the profit motive alone. Furthermore, the critique is not made in the name of a particular social class's vision of reality, but--as Dudek was later to say of CIV/n--in the name of a whole range of liberal values. Like Trilling, Dudek now deliberately avoided idealizing approaches while yet promoting high aesthetic standards.

Literature and the Press is a socio-historical study. It assumes that not ideas, but their material base in technique and economic forces, will control the quality of production. Dudek's survey of the development of newspaper and periodical publishing led him to the conclusion that publishing's material base makes standard publishing efforts incompatible with quality. He encapsulates this view in a paradigm which contains in germ the argument of the dissertation:

The correlation of technological history and the growth of printed media introduces a qualitative change into literature. If a printing press, for example, is invented to produce 100,000 copies of a book at the former rate or price of 1,000, it may be found that 100,000 copies of Jane Austen cannot sell on the market, while 100,000 copies of G. P. R. James will do so. If, later, a press can produce one million copies, it may be found that one million copies of neither G. P. R. James nor Henry James will interest that market, but that such quantity of Mickey Spillane will. If the printing machine to produce a million cheap books exists, and the economic motive drives the publisher to sell a million, then the kind of book will be written and manufactured which sells this maximum quantity.<sup>13</sup>

Dudek concludes his historical survey with a comparison of three Victorian writers whose work was marked by unconscious or conscious attempts to manage the problems which the need for mass audiences forced upon them. He finds that Dickens was a writer of honest intent and good talent whose unwavering confidence in the public led him to make the mistake of shaping the surface characteristics of his work to mass taste. In Dudek's view, the temptation to entertain grew so strong within Dickens that it drove the novelist on a frenzied round of public readings which finally led to his exhaustion and contributed to his death.<sup>14</sup> By comparison, Thackeray appears to have been a less divided writer. According to Dudek, Thackeray's motive from the first was to make money. However, his inability to win a large readership after the publication of Vanity Fair drove Thackeray to a concentration on style and to a standard of production beyond his real capacity.<sup>15</sup> Carlyle is Dudek's third writer, and the one whose consciousness of the conflicting forces at work in Victorian literary production wins Dudek's approval. Dudek describes Carlyle's deliberate unpopularity as a tactic which enacts his critique of nineteenth century social life. Carlyle opposed the mechanism, scientific rationalism, and self-interest upon which his age had founded its scientific and industrial advances.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, Dudek finds, Carlyle became the leader of a generation of modern artists since 1890

which has proceeded in reaction to popularity, writing according to a hypothetical standard which has little ground in the present.<sup>17</sup>

Literature and the Press closes with a chapter which applies the conclusions of Dudek's survey to present conditions. The chapter functions largely as a rationale for the literary activity in which Dudek was already engaged: small magazine and small press publishing. It is not as forthright about another implication which might well follow from Dudek's admiration for Carlyle. This is that modern writing must not only oppose mass taste with high standards, but must also engage it with a literary life organized around standards which must be located in something other than the social reality of the present. In one possible account of modernism's development, the variations between versions of modernism can be explained by locating which "something other" has been chosen as an authority to replace and oppose the ground in the present. Eliot's transcendent tradition is one example; Trilling's general mind is another. Another possibility, and one toward which Carlyle's example leads, is that literary life should be organized about a strong personality who will prepare a path for his dedicated followers. As is well known, shades of Übermensch theory cling to Carlyle's writing. For those, like Dudek, who scorn mass attitudes and are impatient for a more utopian social environment, the temptation to find heroes whose charisma can captivate and induce action will always be strong.

Dudek's admiration for Ezra Pound seems to indicate that for a time he followed just such a course. Frank Davey relates how Dudek's interest in Pound began before 1940 and culminated in 1949 in a personal acquaintance with the poet who was then confined to St. Elizabeth's Hospital. As Davey relates, Dudek saw Pound as ". . . a modern-day Carlyle, as a 'fighting artist trying to survive in a materialistic pragmatic society.'"<sup>18</sup>

The significance of Pound for Dudek is best captured by concentrating

on certain themes within Pound's writing which reinforce and redefine ideas Dudek encountered at Columbia. Foremost among these, perhaps, is the combination of a high estimate of aesthetic value with a commitment to social duty. Langbaum notes that Pound accepts the nineteenth century estimation of artistic sensibility and its cult of beauty, but not that period's tendency to excuse the artist from reality. He suggests that, for Pound, aesthetic knowledge obliges the poet to lead the race.<sup>19</sup> This position, which resembles Trilling's sense of the centrality of the question of relations between aesthetic and social values, places more emphasis on individual insight and authenticity than does Trilling's theory of the general mind.

Pound also resembles Trilling in his emphasis on the particularity of life and on the value of particularizing techniques in poetry. Langbaum describes Pound's attempts to mend the breach between object and value or between fact and generalizations. Evil, Pound felt, lies in incorrect adjustments between these two. In a position probably closer to Dudek's youthful Marxism than to Trilling's sense of the complexity of this issue, Pound tends to lay the blame for evil at the feet of idealism.<sup>20</sup> This side of Pound is thrown into sharp relief if it is placed over against Eliot's desire for spiritual renewal as a precondition for cultural renewal. Pound believes that care for intelligence, literature, and art will, if properly undertaken, ensure their improvement; he awaits renewal from a clear-eyed and materially-grounded awareness of aesthetic value.

There is another side to Pound's influence on Dudek which is difficult to document, but which bears on the issue of the man of letters perceived as a socially alienated, cultural hero. At one level, this influence appears in a similarity of voice which strikes the reader who places Pound's pronouncements next to Dudek's essays. The voice proceeds from the creation of a persona who combines sensitive aesthetic perceptions with a matter-of-fact

tone which is quick to dismiss the highfalutin as so much balderdash. Perhaps Pound was looking for an American renaissance which would join Whitman's force and jaggedness to a sensibility and style much opposed to Whitman's populist aesthetic. It is precisely this desire to defend high culture with the low style which emerges as one of Dudek's characteristic essay voices.

Read in the context of Dudek's choice of sources and models from which to develop his own writing, this characteristic style evokes Dudek's recommendation of Whitman in the First Statement years of his criticism and his much later insistence on the union of demanding form and modern energy.<sup>21</sup> At several levels, including his championship of Pound, the similarity of his essay style to that of Pound, and the similarity of his goals for the development of North American poetry to those of Pound, Dudek's close identification with Pound's poetics is clear.

The end product, as it were, of Dudek's stay in New York may be viewed in two essays and a letter to the editors of Northern Review, all of which were published shortly before Dudek's return to Canada. Taken as a group, the three articles bear on questions of Canadian nationalism and on the tension between aesthetic and social values in modern poetry. Dudek's objection to Sutherland's destructive nationalism has already been cited. At the time of his letter to Northern Review, Dudek was clearly reacting against nationalistic chauvinism on the grounds that Western culture must be viewed as a unity. As Dudek admonishes Sutherland, international influences upon national literatures are not only unavoidable but necessary. The decisive question for Dudek is not the fact of influence, but whether the influences upon Canadian writers have been good influences.<sup>22</sup>

A similar consideration of influence is taken up in Dudek's essay on F. R. Scott. Here the problem receives a more complex treatment. This essay also challenges Sutherland's approach to influence study, but this time

by suggesting that the critical technique has more value if its objectives are reversed. Rather than studying international influences upon Canadian writers in order to elucidate Canadian literature, Dudek suggests similar study as a means to judge international literature.

We Canadians suffer the simplifications in a partly isolated culture of patterns and tendencies which exist in a more complicated form outside: single currents of what is happening in the literatures of England, France America. . . . Canada might provide an experimental field in which trends of British and American poetry find a clear and interesting form of expression.<sup>23</sup>

Dudek proceeds to test his theory by way of a comparative examination--against the background of international writing--of the poetries of F. R. Scott and his father, F. G. Scott. One of the conclusions toward which the comparison moves illustrates what lies at the root of Dudek's proposal of this technique: Dudek finds that the social realist poetic embraced by the younger Scott is all the more constricting in Canadian Literature for that placement within a minor literature. He finds a lack of poetic richness in Scott's writing which illuminates the limitations of the literary ideals to which he was attached.<sup>24</sup> Dudek assumes a fundamental tension between poetry's aesthetic richness and its direction--as he would later call poetry's expression of its conditions within social reality and its reactions to those conditions. Aesthetic richness, it appears, may obscure the moral significance of direction. The Canadian literary situation is such that Canada's service to international poetry may be its usefulness in testing the value of the directions of international movements.

Dudek's essay on Klein considers a Canadian poet who stresses aesthetic rather than social values. Dudek is disturbed by Klein's interest in the language of his poems. As he summarizes his lack of ease:

We know that this deliberate interest in language is characteristic of our century; it has something to do with the disrupted nature of private and social experience, with the unfixed and searching character of poetry itself,

with the unreality of the society in which we live.<sup>25</sup>

This lack of social cohesion which focuses the poet's attention on the bedrock of a poem's existence, its language, receives attention in the F. R. Scott essay as well. Commenting on Scott's lines, "Let us cast over this natural event / The drapery of a literary allusion," Dudek says,

In this epigram we have the dilemma of the modern poet, caught in the split between imagination and reality which runs across the Wasteland and other poems of T. S. Eliot. In F. R. Scott, the "natural event" embraces all the optimistic action and policy leading toward a political future, stated in realistic satirical verse; and what is left to the serious poetry is a wish for completeness that is never satisfied.<sup>26</sup>

Dudek is worried by Scott's apparent inability to form serious poetry from concrete reality. He answers this tendency in Scott's poetry with examples of British social realist poets whose politics were embedded in a rich fabric of literary allusions and techniques.

If a summary of Dudek's development during these crucial early years is attempted, it must focus on the tension which is clearly expressed in Dudek's treatment of influence study. Dudek came to follow Trilling closely in wishing to close the distance between mind and reality while still maintaining the necessity of that very distinction. Preoccupation with that particular problem did not begin with Dudek's contact with Trilling. It was already present in Dudek's First Statement criticism. Dudek's Marxism may be understood as an attempt to bring culture into adjustment with social reality. Trilling's contribution to that vision was both to deepen Dudek's vision of social reality and to suggest that social reality may well need adjustment to imaginative needs. *"people to art" - Acc 123*

A second theme of Trilling's criticism, which is closely related to tensions between mind and life, is Trilling's sense of the the tension between personal authenticity and the general mind. In the years before 1958 Dudek does not dwell on this problem. This is perhaps a result of his close

identification with Ezra Pound during this time. While Trilling believed in the necessity of submitting his thinking to what he called the general mind, the example of Pound and Dudek's apparent hero worship of the American poet, led Dudek toward a position which--in practice if not in theory--would have received Trilling's condemnation for its intellectual self-sufficiency. In later years Dudek would make more typically Trilling-like pronouncements against the anarchy of modern artistic creeds.

If Pound stayed Dudek's criticism of modernist radicalism for some years, he also likely helped to shape Dudek's poetic ideals at a level which Trilling did not directly address. Pound encouraged Dudek's interest in the literary tradition represented by Whitman, but redefined that interest in a way analogous to Trilling's redefinition of Dudek's perceptions of relations between art and life. Like Pound, Dudek came to value Whitman's force but qualify that respect with equal emphasis on demanding aesthetic standards.

Pound's aestheticism perhaps also explains Dudek's recasting of Trilling's typical opposition of mind and reality. Certainly Trilling's choice of terms for this problem--mind and reality--do express a perception which is not foreign to Dudek and would come to characterize his position more and more directly as he came to identify poetry with reason. Nevertheless, in his earliest criticism particularly, Dudek opposes imagination and social reality rather than mind and reality. The more aesthetic cast of this formulation certainly resembles Pound's artistic credo.

Whether one traces Dudek's early criticism to roots in Trilling or in Pound, what is clear on both accounts is that the attitudes he formed during these years placed him at some advantage in his treatment of Canadian literature. That advantage is largely the function of two interrelated impulses in Dudek's criticism. The first is that although he is very aware of tensions between poetry and life, the characteristic movement of his criticism



is to overcome that rift. The second is his emphasis on direction in poetry. Direction for Dudek expresses the side of poetry which is most directly related to social values. Both impulses, then, seek to balance the competing claims of art and social situation which separate Smith's high modernist aestheticism and Sutherland's nationalism.

*Conclusion.*

### Contact and CIV/n: Criticism from 1951-1957

Upon his return to Canada and to McGill in 1951, Dudek focused his critical energies on forging contacts with Canadian poets and forming a base from which to influence the direction of Canadian modernism. Concretely, this included writing for Souster's Contact, playing an advisory role to CIV/n, founding Contact Press with Layton and Souster, publishing Cerebus, and editing Canadian Poems, 1850-1952 with Irving Layton. Dudek's role in the magazine ventures placed him somewhat in the background. At this point he was content to write and advise and not to edit.

Nevertheless, Dudek's criticism from this period shows that he immediately embarked on the strenuous promotion of the type of Canadian poetry which he wished to see. That type of poetry espoused

. . . sharp social criticism, but not a criticism based on political or economic grounds alone; it is a cultural attack, a criticism of contemporary life in the name of the whole range of liberal values, and the poetry that we make on this basis is as varied as the personalities of poets can be.<sup>27</sup>

It is poetry which, in Dudek's mind, is the opposite of what passed for the best in then current writing. His article, "The New Laocoon," in Origin argues that ". . . that superlatively 'competent' stuff--is incredibly void of interest or utility for the reader. . . ."<sup>28</sup> The problem, he suggests, is a bankruptcy of working ideas. In the face of unresolved ideological con-

flicts, particularly between religion and science, and between Marxism and capitalism, modern poets have turned away from reality in disgust. They deal instead with an imagined world which is the heritage of symbolism.<sup>29</sup>

While Dudek is opposed to high modernist poetic traditions, he is equally disturbed by poetry and criticism which either purports to turn away from aesthetic values entirely or appears to condone their decay in society. The first of these can be seen in Dudek's objections to Black Mountain poetics. In Dudek's view, the work of Olson and Creeley which in other ways seems so opposed to Symbolist poetics, resembles extreme symbolism in its dependence on "the private-monologue-in-private-shorthand."<sup>30</sup> Not only does this violate Dudek's ideal of socially committed poetry, but the movement's attempt to write poetry without the intervention of shape and control outrages his sense of aesthetic value:

The theory, bluntly, is that poetry is not an art form: it is a lump of coral that grows on to the living substance of life, or personality, and contains the shape and rhythm of reality. The test is authenticity.

But when life itself has lost all shape--as the right flank, directed by Eliot, has long ago made clear--you cannot make art out of the literal record.<sup>31</sup>

The literal record which has lost its shape includes media and communications. Dudek's demand that aesthetic values reach into social life sets him on a collision course with the work of H. A. Innis and, particularly, Innis's pupil, Marshall McLuhan. The first of Dudek's blasts against Innis and McLuhan appears in CIV/n, number three. Dudek objects to the writers' turgid style, to their idealizing approach, and to their failure to incite opposition to modern developments in media. Dudek wants plain sense and style, and a drive to act--both of which appeared in his own treatment of the topic in Literature and the Press.<sup>32</sup>

The Dudek of the Contact and CIV/n period is aware of the profound disagreements which separated him both from modern social reality and from many

of the literary orthodoxies of the day. He is confident of the good sense of his own position and of the value of the battles in which he is engaged. As his publication of "The New Laocoon" in the American poetry magazine, Origin, also suggests, he is confident of the worth of Canadian literary production to international literature. Far from finding himself overwhelmed by the technical brilliance of international modernism, he suggested that such brilliance was, in fact, hollow. What was needed was direction. His F. R. Scott article may be taken as an indication of the special relationship which he felt existed between Canadian literary conditions and direction in poetry. Canada may not by definition induce proper direction, but Canadian literature's status as a minor literature, Dudek claimed, brought the issue of direction to the immediate foreground. Wrong direction reveals itself all the more clearly in less accomplished surroundings.

Nevertheless, what emerges by virtue of hindsight from Dudek's criticism during this period is a threatening impasse which his demand for a socially committed and reality-based poetry faces when coupled with an equally strong desire for control, organization, and aesthetic value. Dudek's claim that poetry, ". . . aims at making the major integration of life" <sup>33</sup> certainly does not contradict his demand that poetry have ". . . relevance to life, not to art museums." <sup>34</sup> It does, however, lead him toward a poetry of denunciation and critique. Dudek's article on Lampman praises the poet for the ground-tone of pessimism and sadness which reveals Lampman's discomfort with conventional romantic formulae. In the same essay--and as if in homiletic application of the insight Lampman's situation offers the present--Dudek urges modern Canadian poets not to escape the actual in an effort to find material for the imagination:

Our life seems barren and maybe in many ways it is; but maybe its very barrenness is subject for poetry (as Flaubert proved in the novel, Eliot in poetry), and we need to look much closer at people and at the idea we have of them

(and of art) before we can go beyond barrenness to discover an unknown country.<sup>35</sup>

When Dudek describes the evocation of barrenness as a halfway house toward another sort of writing, he is not merely presenting an ingenious apology for a gloom he enjoys. The Dudek who wants art to shape and integrate life is not at rest with the conclusion that it must do so by denunciation. If he is to maintain his credo of realistic art and his fundamental desire for sensible and integrated life, it is necessary that he find a path from barrenness to that "unknown country."

#### Delta: 1957-1966

In October, 1957, Dudek began publication of his own little magazine, Delta: A Magazine of Poetry and Criticism. The Greek letter which he chose for the magazine's name claimed the magazine as his own: a space within which his full control would free him to say what needed saying. It also suggested "direction" which, rather than aesthetic values, would form the core of the magazine's area of concern. Finally, the English meaning of the word "delta"--the fertile plain at the mouth of a mighty river--captured Dudek's sense of the position of the social realist verse within modernism.

Delta's initial editorial states the magazine's intent clearly: to win back to poetry ground which had been lost to prose. Translated into other terms, that statement was a declaration of war on several fronts. It implied the usefulness of poetry for purposes which formalist criticism would deny it. Correspondingly, it suggested that certain types of modernism had participated in an incorrect withdrawal of poetry from the real concerns of life. And finally, it criticized a society which was willing to commit to prose, subjects which by their high value and seriousness, demanded treat-

ment in poetry. All of this reflects an extension of the themes which characterized Dudek's criticism during the years of Contact and CIV/n. What is new in Delta is the note of struggle and difficulty with which Dudek expresses these positions. The conflicts which were implicit and unrecognized in Dudek's earlier writing now surface for direct treatment. The result is a criticism which does not significantly change its conclusions, but arrives at them more thoughtfully and tentatively.

Dudek's fullest expression of the difficulty he was facing during the early Delta years is presented as a reading of the development of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canadian poetry from the perspective of his own sense of modernism's impasse. "The Transition in Canadian Poetry," published in Culture in 1959 begins from the premise that modernism had passed into a decadence which drew its twilight from the astounding success of earlier masters.<sup>36</sup> Dudek deplored this retreat from the battle lines for he felt that modernism had passed into a complacent orthodoxy without having resolved the major problems which it raised. These Dudek wished to explore through an examination of the transition toward modernism in Canadian poetry. In order to do so, he makes a distinction between the ideal and the actual history of Canadian poetry:

There is the character we feel is potential or necessary, naturally characteristic, of a given culture or time (though it may be rare); and the quality that is actually produced, in evidence, but may be deficient in regard to this potentiality.<sup>37</sup>

He expresses the same distinction by a comparison of a view of Canadian poetry as so many discrete volumes and a view of it as a single volume.<sup>38</sup> In effect, Dudek is proposing a phenomenological examination of Canadian poetic history. He will define historical value according to the relevance of specific poets and works to the essential questions intuited from the whole of the period's poetry.

Dudek defines his view of the central question as follows:

The impact of science on the poetic imagination is of course the issue. The effect of rational empiricism on belief in poetry has been two-fold: it has damaged belief by denying its ground in reason (medieval man was as confident of the grounds of faith in reason as science is today); and it has cut off morality, aesthetics, and all other questions of judgement from any supposed transcendental source of validity. The result on the first count has been to spread an unpalatable superficiality throughout our religious beliefs, the kind of superficiality and optimism one finds in the nineteenth century poets, or today in neat, modern, gaily-lighted churches. The result on the second count had been to spread a havoc of eclecticism and nihilism in various degrees throughout life and literature, leading some to brilliant leaps of reconstruction, Nietzschean, Lawrencian, Gidean, Poundist, or what not. The transition of poetry from the late nineteenth to the twentieth century can be seen in terms of such a fundamental change in the view of man's destiny.<sup>39</sup>

The problem Dudek intuits from his survey of the development of Canadian poetry toward modernism falls in that area where science, religion, and poetry meet. Its results, superficiality in traditional belief and fragmentation of perspectives outside of traditional belief, are given as the imperatives to which poetry must respond and according to which its historical value may be judged. Dudek moves through Canadian poetry from 1890 with commentary which highlights the dynamics of superficiality and fragmentation. In the reading the article presents, Carman's value lies in his attempt to practice a romantic transcendental poetic consistently. Lampman and D. C. Scott stand opposed to him in their--often reluctant--admission that a transcendental stance is impossible.<sup>40</sup> The efforts of the entire group of poets, however, are maimed by "... the upward looking theistic thought which they were compelled to affirm, and the niggling doubts, which they refused to admit. ...". Theirs was a superficiality protected by a failure to think, a paralysis of intellect. Nevertheless, Dudek finds value in this poetry whenever, almost unconsciously, the shield of mental insipidity drops and thinking and doubt appear.

The poems of doubt, which according to Dudek's intuiting judgment, form the essential poetry of the close of the nineteenth century, point forward to the eruption of modern brutality and negation in Robert Service. Dudek finds Service's poetry narrow and unpredictable, but nevertheless, an important bridge to the more mature and humane struggle which appeared in Pratt, and-- still more dryly and bitterly--in F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith. Ultimately, Dudek believes, now that negation has been firmly established, the challenge for Canadian poetry is

... to break through the zero point of negation (the prickly pear of the Hollow Men) toward some passionate rediscovery of a visionary, or a rational, or a sensuous affirmation of larger life.<sup>41</sup>

Here it is that fragmentation takes its toll, for in Dudek's eyes, no poet either in Canada or in international poetry has succeeded in forging a new metaphysic.

In the absence of such a unifying vision, Dudek examines the alternatives which he finds after 1940. He describes Layton's evolution into a self-proclaimed Nietzschean, transvaluating superman with scorn. The stance had the assurance Dudek desired, but he found it false: "There is simply no heaven for him to enter, and he is no superman."<sup>42</sup> (On the other hand, the attempts of James Reaney and Jay Macpherson to construct mythological structures from which to view chaos strikes Dudek as irrelevant to modern social conditions. He refuses to say that these myths structure reality. Instead, he finds that they seem to provide structure. Dudek requires more than appearances.<sup>43</sup>)

*lead into  
mythic  
structure*

Within what becomes a configuration of three approaches, Souster appears as the consummate modern. Dudek admires his lack of hubris and his affirming stance.

Souster is a much less ambitious poet than Layton. He is anything but intellectual or ideational. For him the

modern formula seems to read: "Let thinking be. If everything is that bad--and it is--let's live!" He demonstrates the emotions of a humane, sympathetic social being, in the midst of social depravity, of political corruption and war, without any search for underlying ideas. . . . the result is poetry of our own time, free of illusion, of self-deception, yet palpitating with life.<sup>44</sup>

What emerges from this treatment of the transition to modernism in Canadian poetry is a typology of modernist poetic directions. These are mythologizing idealism, neo-romantic primitivism, and social realism. While Dudek's attitude toward these three camps is unequivocal in the essay--of the first two he disapproves and of the last he expects much--in a broader context his position is much more complex. Davey notes the seeming contradictions in Dudek's approval of Souster.<sup>45</sup> These contradictions appear, for example, in Dudek's willingness to excuse Souster from the imperative to transform life rather than represent it, and his distrust of one of Souster's important sources, Black Mountain poetics. One thing of which this ambivalence is expressive is a fourth category of modernist poetry which Dudek wishes to write but cannot until the fragmentation of science, religion, and poetry is healed. Since he realizes the difficulty of writing as he feels he should, Dudek is willing to excuse another approach its failure to achieve universal Poesie.

Dudek's sense of paralysis before modern fragmentation dominates the early issues of Delta. The magazine's first issue raises the theme in its review of Beyond Laughter. There Dudek deplores the Freudian shrinking of cosmology to mean and inhuman models.<sup>46</sup> The second number expands the argument with a favourable review of C. P. Martin's Psychology, Evolution, and Sex. What Dudek appreciates about the work is its attempts to render the evolutionary process purposeful. He hopes that from biology a more humane view of the cosmos might arise--one which would include creative will.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Joseph Wood Krutch's The Great Chain of Life: Human Nature and



the Human Condition receives praise for its attempt to render consciousness a purposeful achievement of nature.<sup>48</sup>

In the course of this series of reviews of science publications, Dudek rejects the attempts of various mythopoeic critics and poets to convince him that myth could offer the unity of vision which he sought. In a letter appearing in the April 1958 number, D. G. Jones distinguishes between qualitative and scientific views of life. Myth describes reality qualitatively, Jones suggests and will become irritating if it claims to account for reality scientifically. On the other hand, Jones is convinced that any hope of purpose which can be located in nature will never be expansive enough to give meaning to human life.<sup>49</sup>

Jones describes Dudek's problem exactly, but, in Dudek's eyes, has not solved it. In reply, Dudek details the particulars of the vision which could adequately answer his desire:

What we need is a mean between the positions of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound: a view of civilization, art, life, that is both transcendental and humanist at the same time; a "religion" which is not traditional, but a valid extension of knowledge; and an art that is not anti-quarian, but creative in accord with that comprehension.<sup>50</sup>

Dudek takes mythopoeics to task once again in the next issue. In an attack on Graves, Dudek says, "Old myth is dead fish." For Dudek, myth serves its purpose only when it is, not reverentially patronized as arcane wisdom, but concretely, boldly believed. The example of the Renaissance cannot be urged as a model for modern expropriation of myth, Dudek argues, for the Renaissance could bring myths to life by translating them into Christian and Platonic meaning. Dudek can find no meaning into which to translate myth.<sup>51</sup>

The last assertion must certainly have been ill-received in certain quarters, for argument could be made that modern sense can be made of myth if the psychologies of Freud and particularly of Jung are accepted as the

meaning into which they should be translated. Dudek's choice of biology rather than psychology as the science from which new vision could grow indicates his commitment to a positive and rationalized vision of the world. Dudek is forthright and adamant in his defense of this position. In explanation of his disagreement with the dominant direction of Quebec French language poetry, Dudek indicates his commitment to rational poetry--and, like Trilling, his acknowledgement of a proper role for the subterranean in human life.

But I believe that the recreation of poetry as a great continuing art depends on successful artistic crystallization and heightening of rational experience, not on a tragic submergence in the unconscious. More consciousness, not less, in poetry. But for those who are too conscious --more submission to the inward self.<sup>52</sup>

This sense of the crucial and perilous role of reason in the reconstruction of poetry's fortunes and the conditions of modern life sends Dudek on a gradual elaboration of an international modernist tradition canonized according to a phenomenological intuiting of its essential direction. The origins of this tradition appear in modernism's return to the challenge which science posed for literature in the Seventeenth Century. Romanticism avoided this crucial question, Dudek believed, and acquiesced to a state of affairs according to which poets wrote with the sense that their constructions were not true.<sup>53</sup> According to Dudek, modernism founded a line of development which returned to the questions of the seventeenth century in order to supply them more responsible answers. The central line of development in the renewed tradition which modernism expresses moves not toward eccentricity or anarchy, but toward reintegration, sanity, clear energy, and order. As Dudek puts the matter to Eigner, "We're all nuts under the skin of consciousness, but the objective is to give it control, maganimity, freedom and order (in the German, "Ordnung u. Freiheit" of Goethe)".<sup>54</sup>

Two asides published in Delta indicate progress in Dudek's perceptions of poetry's relation to life. In 1961, in a review of Arthur Miller and an accompanying article, "Vs. the Literature of Pessimism," Dudek calls the dark colours of much of modernist writing to account.<sup>55</sup> Reflecting, perhaps, on his own difficulties of making poetry from "the literal record," Dudek calls this side of modernism a "naive melodrama of dejection" and suggests that it be replaced with laughter and dignity.

Similarly, in a review of five new books of poetry, including Smith's Collected Poems, in 1963, Dudek makes this surprising assessment of Delta poetics:

\* / Looking over the files of Delta, I would say it is all mainly finding a right direction; the job of making lasting beauty out of our realism remains. It is what most of our confessional poets have to learn: the lesson of Smith.<sup>56</sup>

As the difficulties of writing the poetry he wished to write became clearer to Dudek, it seems that his understanding of Smith and his appreciation for Smith's work grew.

Dudek examines these difficulties carefully in "The Fallacy of Literalism and the Failing of Symbolic Interpretation." This essay suggest that symbolism and literalistic realism alike proceed from a misconception about science. Those who conceive of science as a literal discovery of reality are likely either to attempt to avoid reality in poetry or to copy scientific methods. Neither is correct. Dudek wishes to maintain that art is a discrete structure, but yet that it achieves its meaning because it communicates about a reality outside itself:

The fact that art corresponds to life, relates to life in a fundamental way, as the deepest value-giving process in this sense, explains the attractiveness of realism. The fact that art is an autonomous language, in that its parts and its units hang together as a pleasureable structure without any need of external reference, makes for the attractiveness of the opposed theory of pure art. But sterility is the result at both extremes if they are not aware of each

other at least as nodding acquaintances; and a fruitful marriage occurs only in a legitimate bed of criticism.<sup>57</sup>

With this redefinition of poetry's mode of being in the context of modernism's historical development, Dudek stands more prepared to outline the true tradition of modernism according to each poet's success in realizing the wedding of formal and social concerns. The goal of modernism, by this vision, is both the renewal of poetry's fortunes--or its assumption of a vital role in human affairs--and the reassertion of formal demands. The temptations of drawing too directly from reality and ignoring art, or of divorcing poetry from reality and becoming too purely art are alike aberrations and not the main line of development.

When Dudek begins to survey modernism in these terms, it becomes clear that excellence as poetry and importance in modernism's historical development may not coincide within one poet or work. As Dudek describes his own modernist canon:

Numerous book reviews and several articles, as well as the notebooks of my students for the past twenty years, will show that Pound and Williams are the two sources I have always insisted on, as the clearest and most profitable continuation of modernism, even in preference to Eliot, Yeats, Auden, or Dylan Thomas, since each of these latter poets is, as I see it, in one way or another a distraction, a reaction, or a confusion of the main intent of the modern renewal.<sup>58</sup>

These are standards by which Dudek tests not only his own poetry, but the poetry of Canadian modernism as well. At the start of Dudek's Delta years he published the revisionist history of Canada's transition to modernism which emphasized that the essential questions of international modernism were also those of Canadian modernism. Two treatments of Vancouver TISH poetics fall close to the end of the Delta years and perform the same operation somewhat in reverse. The question here is whether TISH poetry does stand in the main line of Canadian modernist development. Decision on that

issue requires an answer to the question of what the mainline until the sixties is. Dudek finds that the mainline is defined by poetries descending from Pound and Williams. Therefore, he concludes:

Thus, in general, Scott is more significant for us in Canada than Smith; Souster is more significant than Layton; Purdy more so than Reaney. These latter may be more gifted--even better poets--but the main line of continuing modern development runs through Scott, Souster, Purdy--and at present centres clearly in the activity in Vancouver.<sup>59</sup>

This manner of proceeding is highly illustrative of the reason for which Dudek does not display the tension between nationalism and modernism which is visible in both Smith and Sutherland. Dudek's sense of modernism is not devoid of tradition, but it conceives of tradition in terms very different from those of Eliot or many high modernists. Rather than thinking of tradition as an ideal order of finished forms, Dudek conceives of it as direction. Forms do not carry absolute value for Dudek. Since direction seems to carry more value than forms, Dudek does not feel at pains to adjust himself to cosmopolitan formal conventions.

On the other hand, Dudek's criticism from the Delta years indicates that Dudek was himself becoming aware of various tensions and difficulties which arose within the position he held. These he ascribed to the tension which existed in society between science, religion, and poetry. Dudek apparently realizes that his stance is not a final position, capable of producing exactly the poetry that he desires. He is willing to undertake a self-criticism on two points especially: modernism's attraction to despair and social realism's failure to make lasting beauty from the literal record.

Recent Criticism: 1966-1978

The period of Dudek's critical writing from the close of Delta's files is marked by the confidence with which Dudek is able to consolidate and express his ideas on poetry and its relation to life. During this period, Dudek reviews most of his earlier themes: mass culture and technology, the tensions between realistic and other modes of modernist verse, Canadian nationalism, and the relations between anarchy and tradition. When doing so, Dudek finds himself in clear disagreement with several of the critics and movements whose authority dominated much writing during this time.

The delineation of the modernist project which Dudek carefully reformulated during his Delta years remains the central standard from which he makes his judgments. In conjunction with this, Dudek issues an irritated and nearly defiant rejection of the premises of Frygian mythopoeics in his 1977, "The Psychology of Literature:"

"They want a 'vision',/ having the sunblasted world before their eyes./ It has been given!" Whatever meaning life has we have to create out of the material given here. I cannot accept that imagination is pre-programmed as 'a structural power, which, left to itself, produces vigorously predictable fictions.'"<sup>60</sup>

The article presents in more vigorous terms the argument which Dudek had been raising against Frye for more than a decade. In his Delta review of The Educated Imagination Dudek had protested against Frye's relegation of content and ideas to the periphery of poetic appreciation.<sup>61</sup> In "Psychology of Literature" Dudek goes further to suggest that this view imposes the tyranny of a pre-rational human function on the civilizing intelligence present in poetry. The article argues that poetry lies in the balance between abstract thought and primitive thinking, but that its value is primarily in

*define*

its civilizing intelligence.<sup>62</sup>

Frye is a slippery case for Dudek, for while Frygian mythopoeics attempts to represent a pre-rational order in control of literary functioning, the content of that order is highly organized and symbolist. Since this is so, Frye represents at once the two extremes which menace Dudek's direct line of modernist tradition. Not only does Dudek dislike the point of view which gives too much place to the pre-rational, he also opposed the replacement of real issues and social realities with symbolized visions. As Dudek makes clear in other contexts, the roots of the Frygian system are too closely linked to Blake and to Blakean mythologized Christianity to suit his ideas of tradition. It represented, to Dudek, a particular symbolical construct which has been misleadingly assigned to the human mind.<sup>63</sup> Dudek continues to maintain that the vision poets require is before them in the shape of concrete and real life.

A new note had entered Dudek's treatment of Frye in 1968 which indicated the extent to which Dudek was beginning to feel that the modernist programme was being dangerously subverted on several fronts. In "The Kant of Criticism" Dudek examined the preconceptions which lie behind Frye's Massey Lectures, The Modern Century. Dudek, who as early as the beginning of Delta was disturbed by the implications of anarchical humanism, now questioned the morality of Frye's "revolutionary realism." Dudek recognized that Frye's championship of revolutionary thought has its proper context in the hope of a final innocence which would transform social life. He finds, however, that this revolutionary idealism has so cut itself off from the concrete manifestation of society that its reunion with social reality is unlikely.

I do not think, as Dr. Frye seems to do, that we can still accept these premises and yet hope to domesticate the violent consequences of our thinking. . . . Man's relation

to his society, that is, the relation between imagination and reality, must be reconstructed. It is the idea of their separation--as in the myth of absolute innocence--which may be the dram of ill.<sup>64</sup>

This criticism of Frye recalls Dudek's insistence on the need for sanity and order and his criticism of modernism's choice of eccentric models.

Dudek pleads for a course which can provide comfort for the imagination and a meaningful and orderly relation to society. The difficulty of that sort of vision is the one which had haunted Dudek's work since his contact with Trilling. As Dudek expresses it in relation to poetry, "This is our continuing problem, to make something permanent and superior out of the degraded images of our common world."<sup>65</sup> The problem can also be expressed in relation to personal life, in which case it describes the difficulty of living according to noble values in the context of modern social reality.

If Frye, and the several points of view which his work can be taken as representing, presented one challenge to Dudek's view of the main development of modernism, a resurgence of mass culture's threat to authentic poetry during the sixties was certainly another. Dudek was uncomfortable with poetry's new audience. He pointed to the cults of personality and stardom which threatened the authenticity of various new poets and questioned the quality of the new readership. He found its tastes a new barbarism.<sup>66</sup>

This rise of mass audiences for poetry probably drove Dudek to a renewed attack on Marshall McLuhan. As always, Dudek's central complaint against McLuhan is clear and simple:

The central point here is that the great artists of this and the last century were fighting the quagmire of commonplace generalized culture--call it what you will, middle-class, mass, or pop--they were fighting it tooth and nail and they made some masterpieces out of this resistant defense of genuine intelligence and precise art. The attempt to subvert their work, and to misread them--that is, 'upset the standards that the "literate" world has built up--is the main charge to be held against Marshall McLuhan. It is really a surrender to the vulgarians, as we have seen



when his influence was at its height.<sup>67</sup>

Davey has argued that this disagreement between Dudek and the Canadian prophet of mass communications lies on two levels. He sides with Dudek's values, but with McLuhan's sense of means.<sup>68</sup> To place the issue in just that manner, however, requires the confidence in micro-technology which Davey exhibits in his introduction to From There to Here. Not everyone can share that confidence nor the sense of euphoria which the existence of many self-contained and exclusive camps of poetry inspires in Davey. Certainly Dudek's sympathies do not lie with anarchical values.

When Dudek makes a hortatory summary of the characteristics of modernism, he also summarizes the impetus which led him in his battle against Frye, McLuhan, and the rise of a poetry of mass appeal.

Modern poetry, as in Eliot and Pound, worked out of a combination and opposition of these two elements, the profoundly traditional obsessions and the new energies of the twentieth century. To separate the two is to destroy the balance and the tension of high acrobatics: to produce barbarism on the one hand, and sterile formalism on the other. This is, to some extent, what we are tending to get, in recent years.<sup>69</sup>

As always in Dudek, the call is for a wedding of demanding form and social relevance.

Dudek's overt treatments of the question of Canadian nationalism increase during this period. In his contribution to The Canadians (1967) Dudek argues that Canadian literature is a sprig of the European poetic tradition transplanted here to grow, develop, and change to meet local conditions. Quite to the opposite extreme of Smith, whose anxiety at Canada's failure to demonstrate adequate versions of European models disturbed his account of Canadian poetry, Dudek claims:

The problem of Canadian literary development has not been one of growth from primitive roots, but one of sloughing off an imported tradition and of discovering the language, the subject matter, and the form natural and true to Canadian needs.<sup>70</sup>

It is noteworthy that the metaphors Dudek chooses to illustrate his understanding of poetic development in Canada are chosen from biology. Growth and adaption to local circumstances serve his purposes well, for with the emphasis the metaphor places both on dynamism and organic rather than formal conceptions of tradition, Dudek avoids the dangers that a respect for tradition can hold for Canadian critics.

If Dudek does feel an anxiety about the historical circumstances surrounding Canada's poetry, that anxiety relates to an unfortunate conjunction of affairs which caused Canada's nationhood and her nationalistic verse to happen separately. Dudek notes that, since nationalism arose in conjunction with European romanticism, nationalistic poetry arose in Canada before there was a nation to celebrate. Reaction against the romantic taste --in Canada as elsewhere--has included a reaction against the excesses of romantic nationalism. As a result, at the point when Canada could turn patriotism to good account, she received, instead, the cynicism of a "nationalism in reverse." Here, as elsewhere, Dudek desires a measure of balance. He feels that the time has come to move beyond the excesses of disparagement.<sup>71</sup>

Dudek's role in Canadian Literature is difficult to assess--if only because it is not yet complete. Without a doubt his sponsorship and publication of younger poets alone earn him accolades. His fervent but reasonable voice in criticism has been beneficial. His irritable one has exposed unclothed emperors. Throughout much of his literary life he championed the second voice--the less popular, less au courant voice of good sense. And if there is a heroism to Dudek as a man of letters, it is a heroism he certainly would admire: firm fidelity to conviction. Dudek refused to act in ways which would place personal interest before the needs of Canadian poetry as he saw them.

Dudek's criticism from his First Statement beginnings onward focused on

the problems of literature's place in social reality. Whereas the early Dudek wished literature to adjust itself to the proletarian reality, the later Dudek saw that the questions of literature and society were far more complex than his youthful enthusiasm had deemed them. Dudek struggled to make lasting realistic verse from a reality robbed of its poetry by the account modern science has given of the universe, and rendered bleak by the modern industrial and technological narrowing of human life. At these times his inclination is to demand that poets expose barrenness, not escape it. But Dudek cannot remain with any pessimistic stance for long; his nature will not allow it. Therefore his writing begins to call for two reactions. For the present: make poetry out of what already has life; for the future: reforge the lines of contact between the self and the world.

A full account of Dudek's intentions, however, reveals that they resemble Trilling's accommodation of society to humanity. The real and the social must be integrated into human ideals, just as these ideals must come to shape what is real and social. Dudek is searching for a universal vision of life which would have more than psychological validity. This myth--which must satisfy science and comfort the imagination--could repair the breach between reality and human aspiration. In early Delta editorials Dudek expresses the hope that biology might take the lead in articulating such a vision.

That modernism must address the problems of science and belief is a premise of critical judgment from which Dudek does not waver. Moreover, his rational and positive bent requires that the universal vision which he desires be rational and positive as well. Since this is so, Dudek strenuously opposes those movements in poetry which seem to him to be retreating from the battlelines into various forms of idealism or irrationalism.

At the close of his Delta years, Dudek's criticism began to show

evidence of another step forward into a full appreciation of the complexity of those issues which he finds central to poetic endeavour. This movement occurs on several fronts. His anxious appraisal of the intellectual and religious problems generated by modern science is somewhat relaxed by the recognition that science operates by interpretation rather than by direct presentation of reality. At the same time, Dudek begins to argue that realism is, at its core, as aesthetic a technique as more overtly formalist poetry. Such recognition allows Dudek to criticize his own work--in Delta particularly--for its tendency to ignore aesthetic values.

By Dudek's own credo, this recognition was necessary. Dudek not only held that modernism must show modern energy, but also that it must answer to high artistic demands. From that premise he had attacked mass culture, Marshall McLuhan, and various forms of primitivist poetry. He does not excuse the type of poetry he espoused from the same claim.

Dudek's tendency to alternate between an emphasis on direction and an emphasis on aesthetic values raises the question of what problems might still plague a literary conception which has undoubtedly undergone great maturation throughout Dudek's busy literary career. Whether the terms used to describe it are Trilling's mind and reality, aesthetic values and social realities, or Dudek's direction and demanding literary form, it is possible to see a fundamental tension operating throughout Dudek's criticism.

Nevertheless, the characteristic movement of Dudek's thought is toward a balance of these oppositions. That alone is instrumental in sparing Dudek the strains between modernism and nationalism which plagued the criticisms of Smith and Sutherland. Dudek recognized the claims of both sides of such oppositions with no sense of apology for either.

Even more significant here is that when Dudek took up his place in Canadian letters, he felt that, as a Canadian, he was certainly at as much advan-

tage as disadvantage. He did not enter his career abashed by the technical brilliance of modernism elsewhere, as did Smith, but instead was convinced that the foreign brilliance was a hollow after-glow. What Dudek believed modernism required was something he was confident of Canada's ability to provide--direction. On the other hand, Dudek's emphasis on direction does not develop toward the provincialism characteristic of Sutherland's later work. Dudek may not have sought to model Canadian writing on international modernism in quite the way that Smith wished; nevertheless, he did not reject the achievements of international poetries, either. Both Dudek's conception of tradition as direction and his distance in time from the early high modernist masters allowed him to accept, re-interpret, and reformulate the characteristics of modernist tradition to his own perception of Canada's needs and abilities.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

Each of the critics considered in this thesis has played a role appropriate to his moment in the development of Canadian modernism. Smith entered the discussions of Canadian poetry when the hold of Victorian taste had severely limited Canada's participation in the early twentieth-century modernist movement. In that context, his pose of aesthetic pride--despite its kinship to late nineteenth-century poetic traditions--challenged philistine complacency. His modernist sensibilities, sharpened by his study of Yeats and the metaphysicals, served as a standard by which the decaying romanticism descending from Canada's own late nineteenth-century could be judged.

The very success of this high modernist sensibility among the poetic avant garde of Montreal provided an occasion for Sutherland's attack. Sutherland came to Montreal without a programme or a poetics. He found the poets and poetics centred in the forties' little magazine, Preview, too precious and too English to suit his sense of the genuinely Canadian. The alternative he proposed was shaped by the orientations of the poets who clustered about his little magazine, First Statement. Sutherland's descriptions of this alternative stressed directness, wholesomeness, and nationality. Sutherland's point of view had value even though these values had their limited success only when viewed through the social realistic filters of Sutherland's First Statement poets. By asserting the importance of the local,

the common, and the unambiguously national, and by questioning the values which directed Preview verse style, Sutherland helped to create a space within which competing versions of modernism could establish their legitimacy.

When Dudek returned to Montreal from Columbia in the early fifties, modernism was established in Canadian poetry. The work of judgment and synthesis of what had gone before could now begin. Dudek was equipped to play such a role. His roots in Sutherland's First Statement predisposed him toward social realistic verse. His study under Lionel Trilling provided Dudek with a more sophisticated perception of the relations between social and aesthetic values than First Statement had evidenced. Dudek's philosophical interests and devotion to demanding artistic values resembled Sutherland's in tone and Smith's in depth. With these assets, Dudek was able to pick his way gingerly toward some resolution of the tensions implicit within and between the criticisms of Smith and Sutherland.

This thesis had argued that these tensions are largely those which have been characteristic of much literary modernism: those between social and aesthetic values. Within the context of the birth of Canadian modernism, such tensions could arise as a split between Canadian perceptions of international artistic expectations and the native impulse. Canadian modernism owes an early expression of this tension to the criticism of A. J. M. Smith. Smith understood progress toward modernism to include two steps--first, simplification of technique, and second, the acquisition of an intellectual style which offered an experience of transcendence analogous to Neo-Platonic ecstasy. Though the poetry emerging from either of these impulses was legitimate in Smith's eyes and though the two impulses were

linked in a paradoxical fashion within Smith's own poetic sensibility, Smith still ranked the poetry of intellect higher than that produced by simplification of technique alone. The former, Smith felt, achieved universality by its participation in a timeless world of ideas. Simplification of technique--and the attention of the senses to reality which Smith linked with it--evidently was bound to the changing patterns of the local and the present and therefore relatively more ephemeral than the poetry of intellect.

In Smith's criticism the implied choice lay between the highest aesthetic path and the native impulse. The native stream, which Smith felt he had identified in his Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry, escaped the shackles of colonial verse conventions whenever sincerity and the evidence of the senses moved the poet to genuine expression. Such expression, however, did not meet the demands of Smith's timeless poetic standards, and, as he thought, the demands of cosmopolitan standards. The high aesthetic road would oblige the Canadian poet to pass beyond the experience of the real.

Sutherland asserted native expression as a counter to Smith's cosmopolitan preferences. Although Preview rather than Smith's criticism was the initial foe against which Sutherland formulated his ideals, it was Smith's Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry which provided him with an extreme formulation of the cosmopolitan position. Sutherland's response rejected both Smith's belief in a genuine native poetry and its cosmopolitan ideals. Nevertheless, it can be read as an inversion of Smith's point of view. Sutherland's goal was a poetic tradition which was blended with the life of the nation. The real, especially the reality of Canadian



society, was the proper source for poetic expression. The intellectual, idealizing, and cosmopolitan characteristics of Smith's vision drew Sutherland's suspicion and scorn. The transcendence which Smith admired was lack of rootedness to Sutherland. Smith and Sutherland shared a dismay at the hold of colonialism on Canada's poetic past. While Smith wished to escape the danger by allegiance to an aesthetic ideal, Sutherland hoped that a genuine native expression of Canadian social reality would arise from allegiance to Canadian consciousness.

In Dudek's criticism, the disagreement which had been implicit between Smith and Sutherland surfaced for direct and general treatment. The point of difference which Smith and Sutherland had expressed in questions of colonialism, native voice, and cosmopolitanism was largely a difference regarding poetry's proper task and the way in which that task meshed with social reality. Exploration of that question formed the core of Dudek's critical thinking. He agreed with Sutherland's demand that poetry be related to social reality. On the other hand, he passionately supported aesthetic values like those which Pound promoted. Pound's "aestheticism," this thesis has argued, did not turn from degraded social reality toward a world of aesthetic values, but wished to transform social reality according to aesthetic values such as harmony, depth, nobility, and beauty. What Smith had expected from a poem--the transformation of chaos to cosmos--Dudek wished from life. Or, in Sutherland's terms, Dudek's preference for the common was qualified by his desire to have the common reveal itself as a vision. The difficulty Dudek experienced was a difficulty expressed in Lionel Trilling's criticism as a tension between the mind and social reality. For Dudek, not only was social life misshapen, but its fragmentation and

superficiality deprived the artist of a vision of life--grounded in reality --which could direct his expression.

That this question arises in the general context of 'poetry's hazardous course in modern social reality rather than in the narrower confines of a national poetic argument is a measure of Dudek's moment in Canadian poetry's development, his confidence, and the depth of his own perception on this issue. Dudek's question is no longer what set of poetic conventions will call forth an authentic Canadian modernist poetry, but which poetic traditions best pursue the authentic goals of the modernist movement.

The weighing of conventions and formation of poetic canons which was characteristic of Dudek's critical approach was also characteristic of Smith, and to a lesser extent, of Sutherland. Comparison of the standards and methods which each of these critics used in their judgments reveals much of their basic poetic ideals. From one point of view, Smith's efforts as an anthologist were largely attempts to define the Canadian poetic past in a fashion which would promote the poetic conventions he wished to see promoted. To do so, he blended his poetic ideals with insights into colonialism, on one hand, and features of Eliot's tradition on the other. The product of this conflation was Smith's three levels of poetic accomplishment: colonial, native, and cosmopolitan verse. He maintained this classification for some ten years despite criticism which revealed the contradictions into which it led him. This particular description of Canada's poetic past allowed him to posit the existence of an unjustly ignored poetic tradition within Canada and to present his own poetic ideals as the culmination of that tradition. If a distinction can be drawn between criticism and poetics, Smith's criticism would have to be described as a criticism led by a poetic.

Sutherland's efforts at canon formation were less sustained. Nevertheless, his early attempts apparently were intended to forge a type of modernism which retained a genuine link to earlier Canadian poetic traditions. His criticism of Smith's "native tradition" was based on Sutherland's conviction that no such line of descent could be traced in Canadian poetry. His distrust of Smith's cosmopolitan ideals grew from his sense of their lack of root in Canadian contexts. In time, Sutherland began to seek a Canadian modernism which arose not from Canada's poetic past but from the country's social present. When that dream too failed, Sutherland's canon narrowed to the works of the one Canadian poet appropriate to his beliefs, E. J. Pratt, and to the works of various international Christian and anti-modernist writers. The sense of continuity which runs through Sutherland's writing arises from the goal of personal and social integration which informs his criticism. Sutherland's concern for modernism's readership, his nationalist stance, and later, his Roman Catholicism have a common root in this desire to shape a social ambience in which personal and national health could be insured. Therefore, while Sutherland's practical criticism demonstrates points of contact with the close textual work of the American New Critics, and with psychological criticism as well, it is a criticism directed toward a social ideal.

Dudek's assessments of the poetic past have been international in their scope. Dudek placed the question of the direct line of descent in Canadian poetry in the context of the direct line of descent in the modernist movement as a whole. Like the apologists of the modern metaphysical revival, he linked modernism to points of origin in the seventeenth century. He described these origins less as issues of poetic form and

sensibility than as direction--specifically, as the intention to meet the challenge posed to poetry by the scientific world view. During the seventeenth century, Dudek felt, poetry had begun to part company with social reality. In his eyes, modernism was an attempt to face the question of the seventeenth century with a poetry which refused to escape into symbolic worlds or sacrifice aesthetic value. He judged the main line of modernism to follow those poets and poetic movements which accepted this challenge. In some cases, this meant that the best modernist poets were not within the central modernist tradition. Dudek found that Canada's poetic past enacted the same basic struggles as poetry elsewhere. His surveys of modernism's development from nineteenth-century Canadian verse found not merely dependence on borrowed poetic conventions, but also a local example of the struggle with the questions which faced poets in other nations as well. The differences between Canadian modernism and modernism elsewhere were largely differences of form to Dudek. He understood Canadian poetry to be a descendant of European poetry. It had altered its formal characteristics to the shape of North American demands in a process of development which Dudek found both inevitable and desirable.

Dudek's criticism is polemical, openly devoted to a particular type of modernist writing, and therefore hardly distanced or unbiased. Nevertheless, it is evidence of increasing maturity both in the Canadian poetic tradition and in Canadian criticism itself. The anxiety which was characteristic of both Smith and Sutherland whenever they considered the value of Canadian writing has been replaced in Dudek with a confidence that makes no apologies for the Canadian product and evokes no special considerations for its appreciation. In addition, Dudek's criticism

is directed largely--in intent at least--by the examination of issues within criticism itself. A reflective distance separates Dudek's discussion of fundamental issues in criticism from his own immediate poetic concerns. When Dudek edited Delta he based his judgments on an interpretation of the development of Western culture which raised fundamental issues about art's relation to society, science's role in directing the imagination, and the imagination's role in shaping society. Although Dudek felt the issues he raised indicated that poetry should develop along the lines he was pursuing, it is not necessary to accept the premises of social realistic verse in order to appreciate the validity of the critical issues which Delta raised. In Dudek's writing criticism has value as an activity which explores issues appropriate to its own field of investigation. In "Wanted--Canadian Criticism" Smith had called for a criticism which would nudge Canadian poetry toward maturity. Dudek's writing is evidence of the maturity which Canadian poetry and criticism have alike achieved.

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<sup>36</sup>Louis Dudek, "Poets of Revolt . . . or Reaction?" pp. 3-5.

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<sup>38</sup>Sutherland, "Cosmopolitanism and Our Literary Provincialism," John Sutherland, pp. 32-33.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Sutherland, "The Poetry of E. J. Pratt," First Statement 2:11 (February-March), 1945.

<sup>42</sup>Sutherland, "Literary Colonialism," John Sutherland, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup>Sutherland, "The Past Decade in Canadian Poetry," John Sutherland, p. 73.

<sup>44</sup>Sutherland, "Mr. Smith and the 'Tradition'," John Sutherland, pp. 55-56.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 61

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>55</sup>Sutherland, "New Necessities," John Sutherland, pp. 48-50.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>59</sup>Eli Mandel, "Masks of Criticism: A. J. M. Smith as Anthologist," Canadian Poetry 4 (Spring-Summer 1979): 17-28.

<sup>60</sup>Sutherland, "Edgar Allen Poe in Canada," John Sutherland, pp. 153-162.

<sup>61</sup>Sutherland, "The Poetry of P. K. Page," John Sutherland, pp. 101-112.

<sup>62</sup>Sutherland, "Mr. Smith and the 'Tradition'," pp. 60-61.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Sutherland, "New Necessities," p. 49.

<sup>65</sup>Sutherland, "Mr. Smith and the 'Tradition'," pp. 60-61.

<sup>66</sup>Sutherland, "Two Attitudes to Modern Poetry," John Sutherland, pp. 35-38.

<sup>67</sup>Sutherland, "New Necessities," p. 50.

<sup>68</sup>See Sandra Djwa, "To Be Here Now," Laurentian University Review 10:2 (February 1978): 21-27.

<sup>69</sup>Sutherland, "The Poetry of Patrick Anderson," Northern Review 2:5 (April-May 1949): 8-9.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>75</sup>Waddington, p. 15.

<sup>76</sup>Sutherland, "The Past Decade In Canadian Poetry," pp. 757-76.

<sup>77</sup>Louis Dudek, Letter to Northern Review, Northern Review 4:4 (April-May 1951): 41-45.

<sup>78</sup>Sutherland, Reply to Dudek, Northern Review 4:4 (April-May 1951): 45-46.

<sup>79</sup>Sutherland, "E. J. Pratt: A Major Contemporary Poet," Northern Review 5:3-4 (February-March and April-May 1952): 37-38.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>82</sup>Sutherland, The Poetry of E. J. Pratt: A New Interpretation (Toronto: Ryerson, 1956), p. 79.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup>Louis Dudek, "Academic Literature," First Statement 2:8 (August 1944): 17-20.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Davey, Louis Dudek and Raymond Souster (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1980), pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup>Denis Donoghue, "Trilling, Mind and Society," Sewanee Review 86 (Spring 1978): 161-186.

<sup>4</sup>Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination (New York: Doubleday, 1950), p. x.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>12</sup>Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic, and Modern, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), p.78.

<sup>13</sup>Louis Dudek, Literature and the Press (Toronto: Ryerson and Contact Press, 1960), p. 74.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 173-182.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>18</sup> Davey, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Woodrow Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience, (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 32-33.

<sup>20</sup> Eva Hesse, ed., New Approaches to Ezra Pound (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 168.

<sup>21</sup> Dudek, "Poetry of the Sixties," Selected Essays and Criticism (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press 1978), p. 278.

<sup>22</sup> Dudek, Letter to Northern Review, Northern Review 4:4 (April-May 1951): 41-45.

<sup>23</sup> Dudek, "F. R. Scott and the Modern Poets," Selected, pp. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 15-18.

<sup>25</sup> Dudek, "A. M. Klein," Selected, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Dudek, "F. R. Scott and the Modern Poets," pp. 20-21.

<sup>27</sup> Dudek, "The State of Canadian Poetry: 1954," Selected, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> Dudek, "The New Laocoon," Selected, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>30</sup> Dudek, Reviews from CIV/n No. 5, Selected, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Dudek, Reviews from CIV/n, No. 3, Selected, pp. 43-44.

<sup>33</sup> Dudek, "Ou sont les Jeunes?" Selected, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Dudek, "Layton Now and Then: Our Critical Assumptions," Selected, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> Dudek, "The Significance of Lampman," Selected, p. 75.

<sup>36</sup>Dudek, "The Transition in Canadian Poetry," Selected, p. 123.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 128-129.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 124-125.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>45</sup>Davey, pp. 99-100.

<sup>46</sup>Dudek, Review of Beyond Laughter, Delta 1 (October 1957): 8.

<sup>47</sup>Dudek, Review of Psychology, Evolution and Sex, Delta 20 (January 1958): 17-19.

<sup>48</sup>Dudek, Review of The Great Chain of Life, Delta 9 (October-December 1959): 17-19.

<sup>49</sup>D. G. Jones, Letter, Delta 3 (April 1958): 17-20.

<sup>50</sup>Dudek, Reply to Jones, Delta 3 (April 1958): 17-20.

<sup>51</sup>Dudek, "Julian Huxley, Robert Graves, and the Mythologies," Delta 4 (July 1958): 8-9.

<sup>52</sup>Dudek, "Those Damned Visionary Poets (Les Poètes Maudits Visionnaires)", Selected, pp. 166-167.

<sup>53</sup>See "Psychology, Evolution, and Sex," Delta 2 (January 1958): 17-19, and "Reply to Cid Corman," Delta 3 (April 1958): 4.

<sup>54</sup>Dudek, Reply to Eigner, Delta 3 (April 1958): 9.

<sup>55</sup>Dudek, "Vs. the Literature of Pessimism," Delta 15 (August 1961): 8-9.

<sup>56</sup>Dudek, Reviews from Delta 20 (February 1963): 27-32.

<sup>57</sup>Dudek, "The Fallacy of Literalism and the Failing of Symbolic Interpretation," Selected, p. 182.

<sup>58</sup>Dudek, "Lunchtime Reflections on Frank Davey's Defense of the Black Mountain Fort," Selected, p. 212.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Dudek, "The Psychology of Literature," Selected, p. 369.

<sup>61</sup>Dudek, "Northrop Frye's Untenable Position," Delta 22 (October 1963): 23-27.

<sup>62</sup>Dudek, "The Psychology of Literature," p. 376.

<sup>63</sup>Dudek, "The Problem of Meaning: the Plays of James Reaney," Selected, p. 332.

<sup>64</sup>Dudek, "The Kant of Criticism," Selected, pp. 256-257.

<sup>65</sup>Dudek, "Educating the Critics " Selected, p. 297.

<sup>66</sup>Dudek, "Poetry of the Sixties," Selected, p. 274.

<sup>67</sup>Dudek, "The Misuses of Imagination: A Rib-Roasting of Some Recent Canadian Critics," Selected, p. 316.

<sup>68</sup>Davey, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup>Dudek, "Poetry of the Sixties," p. 278.

<sup>70</sup>Dudek, "Literature in English," Selected, p. 223.

<sup>71</sup>Dudek, "Nationalism in Canadian Poetry," Selected, p. 268.



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