HISTORICAL FORCES AND SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE NOVELS OF HUGH MACLENNAN

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DECLARATION

I, Mohammed Ismail, K., hereby declare that the thesis entitled 'Historical Forces and Sociological Perspective in the Novels of Hugh MacLennan', submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, is an original record of studies and bonafide research carried out by me during 1997-2003 under the guidance of Dr.T.V. Prakash and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma.

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CERTIFICATE

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Chapter 1

MACLENNAN AND THE CANADIAN LITERARY SCENE

Canada exists today as a confederation of regions, a kind of empire between three oceans and an unnatural border that is larger than most empires found in history. English-French Canada exists politically because of the French-speaking people of Quebec who are still a quarter of its population, its unique pluralistic culture has been shaped by the ethnic variety of its people who have come from different parts of the world, and by its creative artists, primarily written and painted into existence so that the state of Canada is no longer in doubt.

Canadian history, doubtless to say, is a success story – an account of coping with troubles and triumphing over adversities. From 1945 to 1975 the nation enjoyed thirty years of unprecedented economic progress. After the Second World War living standards rose to heights undreamt of. Its cities have grown and changed without turning into hell-holes of poverty, dirt and insecurity. The Canadians have grown more concerned about the preservation and conservation of national resources, both physical and intellectual. Canadians have developed to a well-schooled and fairly thoughtful people. "A nation," said Ernest Renan, "is a people that has done great things together in the past. It is not bound by language or by a common culture but by a shared experience. History, is what Canadians have in common" (Morton, A Short History of Canada 6).

In the formation of a national character a national literature is an essential element. It is the expression of the nation's intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and is considered to be the guide of national energy. It is indeed highly doubtful whether a people can be firmly united politically, without the powerful cement of a patriotic literature. Canadian nationhood has been slow to evolve and Canadians slow to find collective symbols, standards and ideals.

In English Canada there has been a persistent need for cultural affirmation of its political status and a constant appeal to the creative writers to shape its destiny.

Morley Callaghan and Hugh MacLennan were among the major exponents of realistic fiction in Canada in the period under review. Morley Callaghan deliberately set his work in the wider context of American and European fiction and Hugh MacLennan used a regional base but built on it a national structure.

In the development of Canadian fiction worth its name MacLennan's contribution is vital. In the selection of themes, characterization, social awareness, philosophic pre-occupation, political relevance, historical perspective and above all in creating a Canadian sensibility MacLennan's novels stand out. To an Indian the study of Canadian Literature is of special

interest because the sensibilities of both have been influenced and shaped to a large extent, by the colonial experience.

As Edmund Wilson says in his work O Canada, Hugh MacLennan and Parkman are the two writers strongly to be recommended to anyone who wants to understand Canada. MacLennan shares with Parkman the historical and geographical imagination. He is a native of Cape Breton. "He is a Highlander first; a patriotic Nova Scotian second; a spokesman for Canada third; and a scholar of international culture and a man of the great world" (59). After MacLennan's graduation from Dalhousie College in Halifax, he went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, then got Ph.D at the Princeton Graduate School, at both of which places he specialized in classics. He taught in schools and colleges in Canada and visited France and Soviet Union.

Hugh MacLennan was born on 20 March 1907 at Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and he died at his Montreal home on 7 November 1990.

MacLennan enjoys a high reputation in Canada as no writer has ever come so near as he does in his various novels creating a Canadian 'comedie humaine'. The reasons for his reputation and for his undoubted importance as a novelist, are to be found in the original way in which he has interpreted the Canadian sense to his fellow countrymen rather than in any originality of approach to the art of the novel itself. Surely he occupies a position of

uneasy eminence in Canadian letters. According to George Woodcock, MacLennan is probably the most considerable novelist Canada has yet produced. Other novelists - Mazo de la Roche and Morley Callaghan in particular - have received a louder international acclaim; yet others, like Thomas B. Costain and Ralph Connor, have enjoyed a wider popularity and a greater share of the rewards that go to the habitual best-seller. Moreover, during the past generation a fair company of individual novels have appeared that are aesthetically superior to the best MacLennan has written.

Yet because of the nature of the task he has set himself - the fictional delineation of a nation's odyssey - MacLennan assumes a largeness of a kind rivalled in Canada only by Frederick Philip Grove. The odyssey was the product of a people in the process of becoming aware of themselves, the theme which MacLennan uses to illumine is the growth of a Canadian national consciousness. It is the same kind of largeness as characterized by the great Russian novelists, and if MacLennan has not produced a work to compare even distantly with War and Peace he has been touched with the sense of space and history. No novel by MacLennan is, at best, more than a flawed masterpiece. Yet so many grand imperfects add up to a body of work which makes most Canadian critics agree, uneasily and often against their wills, that MacLennan is the most significant of Canadian novelists, and that he is so not because of the originality with which he has handled the art of fiction - for in form he is conservative - but rather in the original way he has

presented his vision of the Canadian condition to his fellow countrymen and to the world at large.

Like Tolstoy MacLennan seeks to teach us social truths through the credible encounters of human beings. MacLennan is unashamedly a didactic writer. MacLennan himself has said some interesting things about the place of his essays in the general pattern of his work. They were almost all written for magazines and they represent MacLennan as the man of letters writing for regular money that would give him the leisure to write novels. The essays provide the material on which we can establish MacLennan's philosophy of life and his view of the place within it of the literary art. Above all, the essays introduce us to that historic vision of the Canadian nation at its time of flowering and crisis which preoccupies MacLennan and which, dominating his novels, gives them both their vitality and their flaws.

His essays can be considered as statements on life, on art and on history. He sets out frankly to teach, and if we can learn before we begin to study his novels the lessons he intends to impart, we shall be all the freer to assess his books for the quality of their fictional craft and art as distinct from the appropriateness of the doctrines they are shaped to project.

MacLennan has described himself as "three-quarters Scotch, and Highland at that" (Scotchman's Return 8) and an eighth loyalist; the remaining fraction he has not chosen publicly to identify. But it is the

Scottish three-quarters that he has always regarded as the most important in determining his nature, in endowing him with Gaelic apprehensions, with a tendency towards foreboding, with a habit of intuitively assessing other people. He was born in Nova Scotia. His father, a doctor in a Cape Breton coal mining community, spoke in Gaelic as easily as in tilting Highland English. Dr. MacLennan was a third generation Nova Scotian, yet his son remembered him as entirely Scottish in his outlook and in his response to life.

Returning at the age of fifty one to the land of his ancestors and to the place of Kintail from which they came, MacLennan realized their historical predicament from the very shape of the land out of which they had wrung their meagre existence. "Often I have said to myself that my grandfathers three times removed lived in a culture as primitive as Homer's, and last summer in the Highlands I knew that they really had", he wrote in 1959 (Scotchman's Return 10). Defeated by the English, dispossessed by their own feudal leaders who chose to become British gentlemen rather than Scottish clan chieftains, the highland crofters and fishermen sailed the Atlantic in the holds of the emigrant ships. By right of endeavour, they became the third of those whom we call, Canada's founding (as distinct from native) peoples; the French Canadians had settled Lower Canada and the Loyalists set the British imprint on the Maritime Provinces and on Lower Canada, but it was the Highland Scots who were hardy enough to dominate the fur trade on the frontiers beyond civilization, and to lead the great journeys to the Pacific that

established a claim over the west by which it was saved to become an eventual part of Canada.

"What Scotland lost", remarked MacLennan for whom the role of his people has become an inspiring myth, "Canada was to gain" (Seven Rivers of Canada 117). With their hardiness and their Gaelic melancholia, the Highlanders brought with them the harsh Presbyterian faith of John Knox and the Calvinist guilt bred of a conviction that men were born in original sin and only the capricious grace of election could save a few of them. MacLennan's father was deeply marked by the gloom of his inherited religion, and it was "his Calvinist way to permit himself to be comfortable only when things were going badly" (Cross Country 29).

In Nova Scotia the Highlanders found a land almost as harsh and rocky as their own, a land that impressed MacLennan even as a child as manifestly intractable. Of his early years in Glace Bay there is little that he records directly, though memories flashing out of that first childhood helped to create the atmospheric background to his novel of Cape Breton life, Each Man's Son. When MacLennan was six his father went away for a year of study; next year the family moved to Halifax and it was this small town which events in 1914 dragged into the path of history that dominated MacLennan's formative years. He did not leave Halifax or travel far away from it until he was twenty-two.

In his essays and in his novel Barometer Rising there are finely evocative passages devoted to the explosion of 1917, which he first encountered with a shock of admiration when he came there in 1914 with his parents and "stood on a corner watching one of those crazy little street cars bucking along Barrington street". (Cross Country 96). "Portrait of a City", in Cross Country, is an eloquent prose ode to the city of his youth, but there is a more intimate appeal, which skilfully skirts the edge of sentimentality, in the Christmas tale ("An Orange from Portugal").

Halifax was a town of extraordinary contrasts between the dour Puritanism of many of its inhabitants and the sordid Alsatia of the water-side streets; a town where the pompous importers stalked to church on Sunday mornings, swinging their canes and oblivious of the waifs and strays and beach combers and discharged soldiers and sailors whom the respectable never seemed to notice but who helped to make up the deplorable and marvellous city that stirred the imagination of the boy from Cape Breton and gave him for the first time that sense of the wonder of human existence which helped to shape him into a novelist. Not only the wonder of human existence, but also the cruelty. For quickly the war cast its shadow over the boy's developing consciousness.

In MacLennan's hands, the Halifax explosion becomes a parable of Canadian history: it marks the end of the colonial era and heralds the beginning of a Canadian nation.

Roy Danniells, in his outline of Canadian literature in The Culture of Contemporary Canada, sees Hugh MacLennan as the representative novelist of the contemporary period, and though criticism has not judged anyone of his novels an unqualified success, his claim for his centrality has not been effectively challenged. On the debit side MacLennan has been charged with a habit of allegorizing and theorizing which at once over-simplifies the social and psychological issues that he explores, and deprives his characters of independent life. On the credit side, he has been commended for his breadth of vision, his vitality in narrative writing, and his urbane style. But whatever the final artistic verdict, he stands out in historical terms as the first novelist to subject the Canadian mind to a searching and informed scrutiny (211).

MacLennan's background and training gave him unusual qualifications for the pioneer task of exploring the *terrain inconnu* of the Canadian consciousness. Wearied of the unreality of Canadian fiction, he adopted the popular romance form and transformed it into an instrument of social analysis and criticism. Barometer Rising, published in 1941, is the key work for an understanding of his purposes and methods. Unlike romances which use reality as a backdrop for daydream, this work fuses a superbly

realized account of the Halifax explosion of December 1917, with a classic plot reminiscent of the Perseus legend. Neil MacRae, a falsely discredited army officer, returns to Halifax to accomplish two things: vengeance upon his Anglophile uncle, Colonel Wain, the author of his disgrace; and reunion with the Colonel's daughter Penny, who has borne him a child. At the moment when Neil's vengeance becomes possible, the city is blasted by the explosion of a munition ship. In the nightmare of rescue work which follows, Neil realizes that he "has changed too much to care for ..... (the revenge) he had a right to enjoy" (211). Freed of the tyranny of older generation, he had his Penelope, with the child who now bears their name, are ready to begin a new life. As the well-ordered time sequence of these events unrolls, MacLennan keeps the image of the city so carefully in focus that we finally see it in the relation of macrocosm to the microcosm of Colonel Wain and his circle: both typify the decadent colonial society with callous self-seeking that has betrayed an innocent generation into the pain and horror of war. And both, having sown the seeds of sin, reap the wild wind of death and disaster.

The task which Hugh MacLennan set himself was to write not a fairy-tale but a critique of Canadian society. In doing so he was forced more than once to sacrifice both plausibility and fullness of characterization to the demands of theme; and his subsequent work reveals his search for new means of reconciling the opposed elements of realism and symbolic statement. Two Solitudes (1945) studies a major social problem, the distrust

and animosity that separate different racial groups within the community - in this instance the French-English conflict in Quebec. Again, the characters and the settings take on symbolic weight, but Part I of the novel -- the account of Athanese Tallard and Captain Yardley, the elderly men of good-will, who fail equally in their attempt to heal the schism in Canadian life - is so fully and richly executed that the symbolic and realistic elements sound in resonant harmony. Part one of the second novel is, indeed, one of the best things in Canadian fiction. The final sections, which chronicle the problems of the younger generation, and end in a French-English "marriage", are threadbare and theoretical, though carefully designed.

In The Precipice, published in 1948, a study of Puritanism and its effects on Canadian and American societies, MacLennan's symbolic method breaks down, for psychic states resist the kind of personification which makes possible the dramatization of social forces. In Each Man's Son, published in 1951, MacLennan pursued the theme of Puritanism with more force and success. Within the circumscribed life of a Cape Breton mining village, he was able to explore the traumas of Puritanism in depth, and to find for his hero, Dr. Ainslie, and the "son" whom he inherits, a promise of release. Still dissatisfied with what he calls the "clinical" method, however, MacLennan turned in The Watch that Ends the Night, published in 1959, to a first-person narrator, George Stewart, whose reflections and analyses at once lay bare his inmost heart and give the action a new immediacy. Stewart is a

political commentator and a professor whose frail wife Catherine has suffered since childhood from heart disease. Some critics are of the opinion that Catherine is a symbol of "our sick civilization". Catherine's first husband was an idealistic doctor who, after a childhood of violence and a youth of Christian piety, embraced in manhood political causes which took him progressively to Spain, Germany, Russia and China. In the decade of "the bomb" this almost mythical figure returns to Canada, maimed and broken, but glowing with an existential knowledge which he believes can end the gloom of the long nightwatch - the darkness of self, or of history. Here again the microcosm - macrocosm pattern is implied. "Life is a gift", he affirms, and man, faced with the ultimate disaster, whether Catherine's death or the holocaust of the bomb, must cherish it in wonder and in love. This simple but difficult intuition floods the darkness of the self with light - with a new and tranquil assurance. Armed with this credo for an atomic age, George Stewart, the doubter and worrier, can now live fully in the present.

The Watch that Ends the Night is considered by some critics as the most ambitious of Hugh MacLennan's novels. The new narrative method adopted by MacLennan makes the novel his most finished work. The freight of didactic commentary is unnecessarily bulky and one is likely to think that the essayist at this point is crowding the novelist - that MacLennan is ultimately more comfortable with discursive statement than with dramatic rendering. And this speculation is in large degree confirmed by his three

volumes of essays, Cross Country (1949), Thirty and Three (1954), and Scotchman's Return (1960). In these urbane and often warmly personal discussions of subjects as varied as the St. Lawrence River, Ernest Hemingway, and student life at Oxford, we find narrative serving as the hand maiden of thought, and feel that this personal relation is perhaps the truest image of Hugh MacLennan's gifts. He has endeavoured, above all, to see the shape and meaning of Canadian experience, and if other writers have now gone beyond his position, his trail-blazing has helped them to find their direction.

MacLennan with his next novel Return of the Sphinx, published in 1967, took a second look at the "two solitudes" in Canadian life, the English-French dichotomy that now appeared to threaten a great political-economic-cultural crisis. Alan Ainslie (son of the failed boxer, and adopted son of the doctor, in Each Man's Son), has become Federal Minister of Cultural Affairs. His son, Daniel, has become a Quebec separatist, his daughter, Chantal, has fallen in love with his closest wartime friend, "Uncle" Gabriel. His Quebec wife, Constance, has died in a "senseless" accident. Ainslie is dominated by a powerful Anglophone minister, Bulstrode. Son Daniel's separatist activities effectively ruin his father's position in Ottawa; and Bulstrode, who thinks that the solution is a three-year Royal Commission on cultural rights, fails to understand Ainslie's sense of urgency.

Extending the above conflict MacLennan suggests that people the world over feel themselves in some way orphaned - ignorant of their past, and unable to find humane solutions for the present, perhaps the riddling sphinx has returned to blight civilization. Ainslie has done his best, but lacks power and energy to unravel the enigma. In this case the country itself is our main hope: "He thanked God he had been of it, was of it" (Each Man's Son 28).

Even though it does not dominate, Hugh MacLennan's work is typical of the main development in recent Canadian fiction. If other novelists share with him the major themes of the self, the nature of Canadian Society, and the religio-philosophical question of how to live, as well as the technique of combining social documentation with symbolic patterning, they nevertheless speak with great individuality. Morley Callaghan, Gabrielle Roy, Robertson Davies, Ethel Wilson and Brian Moore have all mapped out important areas of the Canadian *terrain inconnu*, and a dozen other figures have contributed individual works of interest. The majority of these authors have been concerned with what is described as "the discovery of self". Proceeding from MacLennan, we can consider a number of writers whose approach to society ranges from a quest for ultimate value to highly specific analysis and criticism.

Though MacLennan is more open and informal in his essays than in his fiction, the novelist, and the essayist are by no means unrelated. His evolving theories of literature in general and fiction in particular are described in several ways in essays like "Where is My Potted Palm?" and "The Writer Engage". Some of his essays experiment with the points of view, characterization, action, writing, nature description, anecdotes and dialogue that MacLennan was later to incorporate into his novels.

His novels generally deal with themes like national identity, regional peculiarities, the power of the land, fathers and sons and the Oedipal romance. Contrasting MacLennan with James Joyce Elspeth Cameron, says, he saw as his purpose not so much..... "to forge the uncreated conscience of his race as to reforge a conscience that has been fragmented" (Hugh MacLennan: A Writer's Life 148).

MacLennan is a firm believer in God and consistently asserted "I believe in God," 'Call Him evolution or nature or what you will'. He singles out the fundamental malaise of the modern world - its spiritual vacuum. In so doing, he lays the ground work for his later social and political commentary and for the central theme of his fiction. The materialistic nature of society, the acceleration of scientific and technological change, the appalling human need for various 'isms' once religion becomes a matter of indifference - all these have concerned him deeply in what he has

increasingly seen as an eye of transition. In a convocation address at the University of Waterloo in the year 1977 he was recommending 'new maps' to locate God.

The essay "Where is My Potted Palm?" written after four successful novels, throws much light on the pioneer work done by MacLennan in the field of Canadian Literature. Contrasting the frivolities of some writers, he outlines his early attitude towards fiction - writing. That attitude grew out of either disappointment with two unpublished novels, So All Their Praises (1934) and A Man Should Rejoice (1937), neither of which was set in Canada.

After these experiments, he abandoned a plan for yet a third novel of broad international themes and settled for less glamourous subject of Halifax during the few days before and after the great explosion of 1917. The success of Barometer Rising encouraged his plans to explain Canada to herself and to the world at large.

Middle-class sentimentality has been replaced, in our fiction, by a peculiar middle class 'chic' which finds homosexuality more interesting than normal relationships, which believes ostensibly in liberal politics, yet views the materialistic society produced by the triumph of liberalism with a fascinated revulsion. The late Victorians, who fancied themselves romantic, were as hard as nails, and selfish too. Our period, which thinks itself realistic, has adopted in the fiction its critics praise the realism of an alcoholic

or a potential suicide. "No wonder the book-buying public is turning aside from the novel to buy non-fiction at the rate of seven to one" ("Where is My Potted Palm?" 12).

MacLennan finds it hard to think back and remember how different was the public attitude then to the art of the novel. Except in matters of technique he was quite unable to see his own work objectively. Obviously the subjects and characters he has written about must have seemed interesting to him. For a brief time they have seemed interesting to a few thousand people. He opines about fiction.

> But most fiction, even the kind considered successful, has the life span of one season's leaver. A novel must be exceptionally good to live as long as the average cat. It must approach greatness to last for a generation. If it survives beyond that time it possesses some quality so indefinable that neither the author nor the contemporary critic recognizes it when the book is new. At least this has been true ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the taste of the cultured men abandoned the classics and failed to discover any more of excellence to put in their place ("The changed Function of Fiction and Non-Fiction" 13).

As the social and psychological novel depends on the capacity of the public to recognize allusions, to distinguish the abnormal attitude from the normal, to grasp instantly when a character is prompted to act by the pressures of his environment and when by his own idiosyncrasies, it seemed to MacLennan that for some years to come the Canadian writer would have to pay a great deal of attention to the background. He must describe and define social values that dominate the Canadian sense. The novelist must for a time be something of a geographer, an historian, and a sociologist, to weave a certain amount of geography, history and sociology into his novels. As British and American writers do he cannot take his background values for granted for the simple reason that the reading public had no notion what they were. It was his conviction when he planned Barometer Rising that he must write consciously for two audiences - the native one and the foreign one - and that he must pay special attention to the background. In his first novel the catastrophe which struck Halifax was at least an historical event.

Now Canadian novelists need not worry so much about the problem of unfamiliarity. It was not the case before 1939. Canada was apathetic about herself, neither a colony nor a nation and in the literary world to quote MacLennan "she was little better than a dumping-ground for foreign books" ("The Shadow of Captain Bligh" 61). Now Canada has become one of the most self-conscious nations in the world. And according to United Nations

Development Programme standard Canada stands first among the countries of the world in economic progress and prosperity.

The self-consciousness of a country is, of course, a symptom of growth out of adolescence into maturity. For any novelist it is a much better state of mind than the decadence which has infested so much fiction in Britain and the United States since War. MacLennan thinks that it is not ingenousness that is destroying the prestige of the novel but it is the belief abetted by avant-gardists that technique is more interesting than content. MacLennan argues that those avant-gardists have no knowledge of science and little perspective in philosophy and history.

The forces of history have always fascinated MacLennan, particularly the ways in which an understanding of the past can be used in interpreting the present, or in prophesying the future. His understanding of the light and dark sides of the stable eighteenth century leads to a new view of the twentieth century and its dearth of great artists. MacLennan extols Joseph Haydn in his essay "The Shadow of Captain Bligh" published in the year 1953.

> Hydris Mass, like the greatest work of Shakespeare, is at once majestic and intimate. Above all it seems effortless and its joy and triumph are so breathtaking that no one who is moved by music can easily listen to it without

> reflecting that our modern world has produced no creative genius with his originality, his joyousness, or his power (The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan 64).

MacLennan is romantic about past ages and he decries his own calling it 'the age of distraction'. He continues about Haydn,

> How lucky Haydn was to have lived before the radio and the telephone, before civic societies which would have made exorbitant and unavoidable demands on his time and energy, before publicity and interviewers and income tax and traffic horns and metropolitan dailies - to have lived, in short, before the age of distraction (64).

The nationalistic intent of the United States, born of rebellion and local pride, was to melt everyone down into one archetypal American citizen, the British colonies, speaking both English and French, being religiously Protestant and Roman Catholic, and culturally Anglo-Saxon and Gallic, could have no such homogeneous sense of nationalism or citizenship. They were isolated islands in a vast wilderness they could barely understand each other and the business of living on the more difficult northern frontier demanded all their energies for a long time.

Canada has enacted multi-cultural legislation which simply confirms what it has largely practised. Canada's official policy of federal

multiculturalism, based on the findings of recommendations of Book IV of the Royal Commission Report on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1970), was introduced in 1971 by Prime Minister Trudeau in an address to the House of Commons.

> It was the view of the Royal Commission, shared by the Government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the regional peoples and yet another for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly (Emerging Identities 531).

The Royal Commission was guided by the belief that adherence to one's ethnic group is influenced not so much by one's origin or mother tongue as by one's sense of belonging to the group and by what the Commission calls the group's 'collective will to exist'. The government shares this belief (531).

More than five million immigrants who have come to Canada since 1945 have dramatically changed the country's ethnic composition. Whereas Canada was once basically a bicultural society, British and French, it is now a

fully multi-cultural society. This great post-war migration has brought a wider diversity of people to Canada. Although the majority of immigrants in the immediate post-war years were British or Western Europeans, recent immigration has introduced large numbers of people from Asia, the West Indies, South America and Africa into Canadian society. While Government policy is limited to voluntary application, most Canadians have greeted the new comers with an open attitude, and tolerance has generally prevailed. Yet building a socicty based on respect for ethnic diversity has presented its problems. Prejudice, fears of prejudice and isolated cases of open discrimination have often made it difficult for recent immigrants to adjust happily to a new life in Canada, and to dream of a bright future in world's one of the most prosperous countries.

Although MacLennan's society is a vaguely assorted mixture of cultural elements that are partly British and partly American, Macrae in the novel Barometer Rising foresees an assimilation of these elements into a new and coherent union that would be neither British nor American, but distinctly Canadian; and he expresses the rather idealistic hope that the new Canada will be such a significant development that it would affect "God knows how many millions of mankind" (79).

It was only after World War II, with the black revolution for equal rights that the United States as a nation was forced openly to concede what

Canada had always known of itself, that it is a polyglot, pluralistic state, that in it the cultural 'melting pot' does not and never did exist. Canada had its first French Roman Catholic Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier in 1896, a mere thirty years after Confederation but it was not until 1960 that a Roman Catholic John Kennedy, was elected to the highest political office in the United States, no black or Spanish American has achieved that yet. While the United States in the 1860's was fighting the bloodiest Civil War known until that time, the scattered, pluralistic communities to the north in Canada were talking Confederation around a table. And the bilingual Laurier was the first to create a truly national sea-to-sea government with powerful Cabinet representation from every region. War is not a Canadian forte, talk is. Thomas Haliburton in his work The Clock published in 1838 throws much light on political and social climate that existed in Canada during that period.

"I have often been amazed," said the clockmaker (a swaggering American peddler).

> When travelling among the Canadians to see what curious Critters they be. They leave the marketing to the women, and the business to the notaries, the care of their souls to their priests, and of their bodies to the doctors and reserve only frolicking dancing', singin', fiddlin' and gasconaddin' to themselves....'. 'How is it then, said I (a

> Nova Scotia Squire)' they are just on the eve of a rebellion.....? (28).

In such a particular political and social climate, it is no wonder that Canadian writers do not create protagonists that suit the traditional literatures of the world, where self-assertion, rebellion, larger-than life and fight-to-the-heroic death patterns are always recognized and forever extolled. Perhaps it is because they were unnoticed beyond their own borders that Canadian writers have had so much to do with shaping the northern half of North America into the particular kind of state Canada is.

The Indian tribes throughout the temperate regions and the Inuit of the Arctic coast and islands were the first to voice their celebration of the enormous land that was to become Canada. Their songs and stories were passed from one living memory to the next linking each speaker and listener with the very origins of personal and community consciousness. Though most explorers of the time found the original people 'uncivilized' and 'barbaric' as Rudy Wiebe says in the essay 'Canada in the Making' it is only a result of racial prejudice. Certainly the Indian and Inuit made of living, their civilization, was perfectly adapted to the world they inhabited.

The history taught in school was mostly about kings of England beginning with John, Cromwell and assorted generals including Wolfe. The only Canadian that appeared was Prime Minister King, but he was standing

beside the central historic figures of Churchill and Roosevelt. School literature was comparatively better though not much.

Louis Riel, Canada's greatest visionary, a man both French and Indian declared to his English Canadian Judge and jury before they sentenced him to hang in 1885. "This is a principle. God cannot create a tribe without locating it. Even birds have a place; we have to walk upon the ground, and when that ground is too large for us alone we are willing to share it with those whose country is too crowded ("The Scorched Wood People", 1977). It was Canada the land that gave the nation its visibility not a political or colonialist or any racial entity (Wiebe 20).

The fact that Canada is here is no longer in doubt, that it took Canadian something like a hundred years to doubt it is a uniquely Canadian characteristic. To quote Robert Kroetsch, one of the most imaginative writers: "We are Canadians. We know we Dreamt. But we cannot remember What" (Wiebe 34).

One of the functions of revolution is to renew time. It enables us to begin again. Rudy Wiebe in the essay "Canada in the Making" says:

> As Canadians we fear that we are a people without a beginning. Canadians as old as those in Quebec prepare, now, again, to give themselves a beginning;

> We cannot find out beginning. There is no Declaration of Independence. No Magna Carta. We live with a terrible unease at not having begun. Canada is a poem. We dreamt a poem, and now we must try to write it down. We have a gift of language, and now we must make the poem (35).

Canada has truly been created as an English-French confederation during the last forty years. It has been 'written down' by its artists particularly in word and image and sound the kind of humanity they are unheroic with no aggressive sense of destiny, but with a particular personality which may not be so badly suited to life in the global village under the bomb.

Rudy Wiebe in the essay "Canada in the Making" writes:

> In any case, the only way a country ever comes into existence is by art, the art that fights for its peoples memory and soul, that interprets and shapes its society, that cuts its society loose from its unshaped embarrassment, that captures and holds its history in the artifact of story or picture or song the way a potter captures and holds the essence of her vision in the clay she shapes between her hands (35).

There is no need for Canadian artists to run away permanently, as they once did, to the cultural centres of the Western world - New York, London, Paris. As Prairie novelist Kroetsch and Quebec poet Lapointe see, there is no longer any need for 'cultural cringe'. In their immense and differing regions of landscape and people Canadians are themselves so diverse to be international.

> Even as 'my country' is being made and accepted, such acceptance is not easy. On a globe shaking from hatred and hunger and overpopulation and depleting resources, Canada has 'so much world in a world where men have so little' (37).

Freedom has always been the most expensive possession in the world, and the price for it has been paid in different coins from age to age. In the early days of Canada the coin was hardship and endurance. And though the land is rich, and though gigantic war either foreign or civil has not even torn it, there has been more than enough of the usual human pain in Canada. The aboriginal people know it and tell of it in their stories and songs, so do many of the small minority people, all those individual traditions and races that together make up the United States of Canada.

The Cree word for Canada is Ka.... Kanata, which the Cree leader Harold cardinal translates as 'the land that is clean'. Canada exists: its

enduring question is whether as a nation it can truly live up to its land and its name.

The sense of the individual trapped and virtually destroyed by the forces of history reaches its furthest limit in MacLennan's novels. He portrays the development of the west from the time of the first immigrants to a period sometime in the future when technology assumes control of history. Just as Neil Macrae at the end of Barometer Rising identifies with the underground historical force, so Geoffrey Wain becomes the spokesman for technology and military industrial complex, but a spokesman unsoftened by humane values. Raw power of technological exploitation indicates that technology posed a real threat to liberal democracy. It is observed in the novel that the more one rationalizes the world, the less remains for the individuals. The novel's ending, as in so many utopian and dystopian novels, refuses to provide the reader with a solution to the problems posed by technology and comes close to implying that no solutions may exist.

MacLennan's cure for the ills of the traditional novel is anti-modernist in spirit and detail. He is critical of the modernist response to "the development of psychology as a quasi-science": they have chosen to "indulge in experiments in form, in symbolism and obscurities of language and eccentric subtleties" ("The Story of a Novel" 53). In "The story of a Novel", MacLennan accuses the modernists of writing "clinically", and therefore

failing "to purge the soul of pity and terror, which is art's supreme function" (37). In an essay on Hemingway, MacLennan states the gist of his case for an anti-modernist renewal of the traditional novel, when he calls for "characters who are thoughtful men . . . speaking in a dialogue full of abstract words . . . Rational men discuss their own neuroses and show an awareness of themselves as coherent, complex personalities involved in a mundane existence" ("Homage to Hemingway" 80) "Thoughtful men . . . . speaking in a dialogue full of abstract words" is, of course, a perfect description of the discursive novelistic style that MacLennan had always practised, even in the early action-based Barometer Rising, and continued to practise in The Watch That Ends the Night.

Canadian literature has proliferated considerably since MacLennan flourished in the 1940s and 1950s. It was not that he was in the mainstream, but even that he played a major role in creating that mainstream. Recent investigations into the nature of the Canadian literary canon -- notably the 1911 collection of essays Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value have raised questions that bear directly on MacLennan's works. In Canada, the clear motive identified by a number of such critics is one common to "emergent" literatures; the quest to valorize a national identity. As Leon Surette puts it in his essay "Creating the Canadian Canon" the evolution of canonical value projects a displaced expression of nationalist ideology. From this perspective, he explains, "Canadian criticism becomes an enterprise in

which the central enterprise was the discovery of the Canadianness of the literature written in this country" (91).

The balloting that occurred at the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel in 1978 was indeed a litmus test that took stock of the Canadian canon that established the top one hundred Canadian novels. As might be expected, MacLennan's works were centrally situated in the results. Five of his novels at that time were on the list of the top hundred novels; one was in the top ten; three were among the top twenty (Steele, 1982).

MacLennan's first published novel, Barometer Rising was considered a nationalist landmark. He himself undertook in writing it to produce a regional work. It was his American wife Dorothy Duncan who persuaded him to focus on Canadian nationalism. Critical responses to Barometer Rising, which hinged more on wartime national pride than on literary evaluation, convinced MacLennan that his career as a writer would depend to a great extent on the "Canadianness" of his work. A decade after Barometer Rising was published, MacLennan had internalized and aligned himself with Canadian nationalism. MacLennan fumbled his way to what was to him an unwelcome conclusion in the light of the critical reception of Barometer Rising that Canadians were hungry for a spokesman. The Canadian public wanted to have the "Canadianness" of Canada spelled out, defined and described.

MacLennan's fictional moral dramas of self-determination and quest for meaning - even when focussed, as in his early and late novels, on individual powerlessness and, in the late novels, on the consequent breakdown of community - take place in an historical and social context. His contribution, historically, to the development of a distinctively Canadian literature is unquestioned, and, at his best, he engages us in a fiction that is both discerning and moving. Barometer Rising marks a major advance in Canadian fiction. To Hugh MacLennan belongs the distinction of opening a frontier of the richest promise.

Chapter II

THE HISTORICAL MATRIX

In Canada itself, as is the case with most of the 'new world' countries, responses to history are often formulated at least in part on the experience implicit in being a new world country, a phenomenon which lends itself to an historic explanation. Writers like Hugh MacLennan conceived of the new land as golden, believing it could supply a new source of values to replace the old world's outworn texts of history. It allowed the immigrants to apply ideas of change and progress without the traditional checks of the world. North America gave much scope to those developing social forces that could transform its *tabula rasa* into a new book of history. The land of Canada holds value both for its virginity and as the locus for the transformation of culture into nature.

'History..... is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake,' exclaims Stephen Daedalus in James Joyce's novel Ulyssus, voicing a wide spread concern, that man, trapped inside history, has lost his deeper or primal identity. The metaphor of entrapment in history's labyrinth finds expression when James Hutton in 1788 said, "we find no vestige of a beginning -- no prospect of an end" (Ronald 79) with a feeling of both awe and anxiety. As Nietzsche remarks, once history becomes man's ultimate horizon then all values are relativised, they become mere products of man's will to impose

form on chaos (Ronald 79). How can a ground of value be found or introduced in a world dominated by history? By making history something of value itself, all movement forwards, any process of transformation, becomes an end in itself, the result being that everything, even the individual gains value only through what it can become, not through what it is.

"Man, in a word, has no nature; what he has is . . . . history. Expressed differently: What nature is to things, history, res gestea, is to man" (Jose Ortegay Gasset 217).

The genre which most extensively explores the contradictory attitudes towards history is the novel and in particular the historical novel. Canada's authentic historical fiction emerges after 1918, with the Great War, the ensuing Depression and the terrifying powers unleashed during World War II. Canadian authors not only felt the changes at work in the making of their history and culture, but saw the need to free the country of its colonial identity. Not only in Canadian literature, but in Commonwealth literature as a whole, this stage of development often sees writers turning to the land or the nation itself as a source of values to free the individual from the forces of history. It seems clear that the appearance of truth can be gained only by abandoning the romance forms and offering the conventions of realism. These conventions give novelists like Hugh MacLennan a superb vehicle for conveying an air of historical authenticity.

Ronald Hatch in his essay "Narrative Development in the Canadian Historical Novel" writes:

> A novelist wishing to depict history within his framework begins by penetrating the mysteries of what appears as an objective past, and then replicates its patterns in his historical explanations. The past is viewed as an objective totality which offers the implicit possibility of exhaustive explanation. As a necessary corollary, the future becomes thought of as a great invisible book of history waiting to be written (79).

MacLennan sees traditional history and the traditional novel being displaced by two new genres. One is what he refers to as "creative non-fiction," or the artistically narrated stories of "real" events and persons, especially persons and events associated with the dramatic affairs of nation-states. The other, which he calls the "serious novel", he describes in some detail. Its characters are likely to appear more as victims than as decisive actors because their powers of action over their fate have been "submerged by the vast powers of organized society and the increasingly terrible hubris of rampant technical science." The main purpose of this type of fiction is to explore the regions below the threshold of consciousness where are found the "well-springs of human motives which are externally translated into the

insensate abstractions of the powerful dramatic nations." Its goal is to create a "pattern of order true equally to art and to the life . . . . the novelist knows." The serious novelist, in fact, should explore "the foundations of the proud tower of society which lie concealed in the human earth on which the tower rests" ("The Changed Functions of Fiction and Non-Fiction" 246).

MacLennan illustrates his point by recalling his own experience as a writer. As a young man, he tells us, he wanted to be a writer of non-fiction -- a historian. But he soon learned that this meant the writing of "serious prose" -- a factual, scientific sort of discourse presented in "a style as dry and emotionless as the report of an experiment in physics or chemistry. What was not required, he discovered, was an engagingly expressive prose exemplified by such traditional literary historians as Herodotus and Gibbon. MacLennan thus became a novelist in spite of himself. He did so, however, with the understanding of a historian that was based on his study of the ancient world:

> When I took to research I entered a small corner of later Roman history, a study considered hopelessly old-fashioned in the 1930s when people believed in Marxist determinism and waves of the future. Now in the mid sixties, I often wish this study really was out of date. The underlying cause of Rome's collapse can never be proved

> by the kind of research techniques still considered respectable, but the symptoms have been clear and verified in our society for quite a long time. Rome became a state-worshipping, capitalistic, military bureaucracy, her financial operators went in heavily for debts - merchandising; her governors failed to prevent a steady erosion of the currency, neglected the provinces in favour of the cities, and bribed the urban proletariat with handsome handouts and spectacles. In their efforts to "pacify" and "civilize" the other cultures surrounding them, to spread their own way of life among those they called barbarians, they ended by barbarizing themselves. The later centuries of Roman civilization were attended by profound psychotic disturbances. There was such hatred of authority, finally, that Tertullian, well before the final collapse, boasted that he "owed no obligation to forum, campus or senate, and that "all secular powers are not merely alien from, but hostile to God ("The Changed Functions of Fiction and Non-Fiction" 248).

Oxyrhynchus was a Greco-Egyptian town that flourished on the Nile, but gradually dwindled during the Roman occupation of Egypt. MacLennan gained his Ph.D. at Princeton University with a thesis relating to this town.

He presented Oxyrhynchus as a colonial society that failed because it did not develop a valid life of its own when the link with the imperial centre was broken as the Roman Empire disintegrated. The resemblance between this situation, and that of Canada as a colonial society moving perilously towards independence must have been evident to the novelist when he was writing his thesis in the early 1930s. The theme later took its place in Barometer Rising.

In a deep sense, MacLennan's story of the Roman colony of Oxyrhynchus, which he based on an analysis of Egytian papyri and some guiding ideas of the historian Michael Rostovtzeff, is essentially the same story that he tells in all of his novels. His understanding of "small corner of later Roman history" did enjoy its own again in the twentieth century as a shaping element in all of his fiction.

His thesis, which is the least known of all his works, describes the conditions of life in a city in the Egyptian province of the Roman Empire over the period of some six centuries. It argues that certain changes in the social, economic, political and religious life of this city and its surrounding countryside contributed to the Empire's decline and fall.

Michael Rostovtzeff was one of the first historians in the early decades of the last century to apply the theories of modern discipline to an understanding of the past. His early work, written prior to the First World

War, consists mainly of a study of Roman "tax-farming" in all parts of the Empire, including Egypt. His later writing, consists mainly of his two volumes A History of the Ancient World (1926-27) and his Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire (1926). He explains his approach to the past in the first chapter of the former work:

> In the endeavour to comprehend the complicated structure of man's social life, history works hand in hand with the departments of scientific inquiry which have gradually become separate both from history and from philosophy; these are the economic sciences, sociology, political and juristic science, psychology, and such branches of knowledge as literature and art, which bear upon man's spiritual life and the special products of his civilization.
>
> In close connection with the other departments of human knowledge, history tends to become more and more a science, whose end is to define the laws under which the life of man develops, and the regular process by which one type of communal life is displaced by another. Nevertheless, history still remains a branch of literature, because the narrative of events and the lively and

> picturesque transmission of them together with the truthful and artistic delineation of important historical characters, will always remain one of the historian's chief tasks, a task of a purely literary and artistic nature. While becoming more and more a department of exact science, history cannot and must not lose its literary, and therefore individual, character (112, 113)

MacLennan bases his analysis of change in Oxyrhyncus on a wide range of factors like economic, sociological, political, and psychological. He suggests that any society can also be understood as an "organism" having a certain 'life-force' or 'vitality' that may increase, decrease, or remain constant. He argues that 'growth' creates civilization just as 'decay' leads to barbarism.

In a paper entitled "Roman History and To-day," MacLennan makes it clear that 'private enterprise' was, in fact, the efficient cause of the rise of the Roman Empire and that the state formed to facilitate this driving economic force became servile and oppressive only when the strength of private enterprise waned. In the field of politics, the expression of this vitality depends on the existence of a kind of government that gives freedom to the individual. A society that is decaying is characterized by its "upper sections" absorbing the individuality and life force of the lower sections and thus being reduced to a lower level.

MacLennan once wrote that Rostovtzeff, at the conclusion of his Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, had intimated that Rome perished because her civilization was not of the masses but of a single class; that she fell because the upper classes, degenerating through the centuries, not only failed to absorb the proletariat but were themselves absorbed by the masses.

In the economic field, vital self-expression is repressed by such conditions as profiteering, speculation, bank-induced inflation, oppressive taxation, compulsory labour, and monopolistic trading practices. These conditions generate poverty; and poverty breeds lack of self reliance. As for the lower sections of a society in decay, their economic lives are characterised by poverty, their politics by violence and their religious behaviour by a mechanical acceptance of formulas of faith; the minds of the poor, of course, are also psychologically vulnerable to paranoia (113, 114).

Each of MacLennan's novels is shaped by his view that human society is a more or less vital organism that can develop either towards civilization or barbarism. This oxyrhynchian theme offers a basis for understanding the kind of conflict that is central to his plots and the qualities of his major characters. Typically, each novel involves a conflict between characters in an upper section of society. Those who are generating a higher form of civilization through the vitality of their creative self-realization are pitted

against those who would form a barbaric kind of society by repressing their vitality in one way or another - usually through a paranoid or obsessive commitment to a religion or substitute religion such as nationalism, socialism or sexual romance.

As Lukacs points out in The Historical Novel, the realist tradition portrays historical forces combining with individual actions to gain a determined end, a conjunction which means that history becomes imbued with an element of necessity. For Lukacs, the historical novelist should offer a sense of forces transmitted through the individual so that the reader experiences the manner in which the past necessarily becomes the present (81).

Barometer Rising published in 1941, by Hugh MacLennan is the most promising starting point to understand the development of historical novel in Canada. The novel set in the Maritimes during World War I portrays the catastrophic Halifax explosion of 1917. The novel declares history itself as one of its central concerns, the story unrolling chronologically, inevitably, the chapters headed by 'O'clocks' ticking toward the explosion that flatters Halifax and its old social order. It portrays a classic exposition of man's condition within the temporal scheme of history.

A short description of Halifax Explosion as is given in The Canadian Encyclopaedia, Second Edition, Volume II.

> At 8.45 am 6 Dec 1917, at the height of World War I, the Belgian Relief Vessel 'Imo' through human error and negligence, collided with the French munitions carrier 'Mont Blane' in the narrowest part of Halifax harbour. Sparks generated by the collision ignited benzol stored on 'Mont Blane's deck; the burning liquid then seeped into the holds, where it lit 2766t of picric acid, TNT and guncotton. At 9.06 the munitions ship blew a mile high in the world's greatest man-made explosion before Hiroshima.
>
> Over 2.5 KM^2 Halifax's industrial north end was totally levelled, either by the blast,the subsequent tidal wave or the raging fire caused when structures collapsed inward on roaring stoves and furnaces. Homes, offices, churches, factories, vessels, the railway station and freight yards - all were obliterated (61).

Out of a population of less than fifty thousand over sixteen thousand people died and nine thousand were injured, including 200 blinded by flying glass. Sixteen thousand buildings were destroyed and twelve thousand damaged, six thousand people were homeless and twenty thousand lacked adequate shelter. The misery was compounded by a forced evacuation of the

city, necessitated by fire threatening the main dockyard magazine, and by appalling weather conditions in the days immediately following the explosion.

By sheer power of description, the explosion in Halifax harbour becomes the dominant episode in Barometer Rising. As an imaginative historical record of it, MacLennan's narrative is probably the best account of the greatest man-made explosion before Hiroshima and writing it MacLennan demonstrated from the fiction writer's perspective how much the kind of history that grips the reader's imagination depends on the literary arts. The Halifax explosion cannot be dismissed lightly as a mere event in history, for a view of the past which includes the ability to set specific events within a pattern from which a theory of history can be drawn.

Regarding its thematic importance, we have to see the explosion as an event within MacLennan's own life which loomed so large in his memory that he found it a natural choice as a central incident once he had decided to write a novel that would be set in Canada. In his essay "Portrait of a City" (1949), he wrote a restrained and slightly whimsical account of what he witnessed of the episode as a school boy.

> One cold, clear December morning, while the boys were playing on the packed ashes about the school, and the first fight of the day was brewing, there was a roar past

> all hearing, and we saw the windows of the school burst inward and the trees toss, and a teacher stagger out the front door with blood streaming from her face. During the following hours as the sky darkened first with smoke, then with clouds, and finally with the snow of a drinking blizzard, we saw the north end of the city in flames and the dead and wounded streaming south in slovens, ash and garbage carts, wagons, cars, baby carriages, trucks, ambulances in anything that would roll (18).

MacLennan's description of the Halifax explosion, nevertheless sees it as the introduction of a deus ex machina, a force external to the plot like supernatural elements who were lowered mechanically into the stage in old Greek plays. Critics argue that the introduction of the explosion stood in the way of the proper development of human relationships within the novel. He used this event in such a way as to evade his duty as a novelist. He has taken the explosion as a fitting climax to his novel, Barometer Rising. But he could not achieve a convincing fusion of human drama and catastrophe.

The novel Barometer Rising opens with an unnamed man wandering through Halifax searching for an unnamed goal, musing that he inhabits a universe devoid of meaning. To be unnamed is to have no beginning, no geneology, no history. The unnamed lost his name in Europe's war, where

life seemed composed "of nothing but chance, and all meaning leaked away" "one chance must lead to another with no binding link". Such statements are borne (37) out in the course of the novel as the large historical forces at work, symbolised by the two ships on their collision course, destroy Halifax.

Neil Macrae in the novel Barometer Rising says:

> Merely to have been born on the western side of the ocean gave a man something for which the traditions of the Old world could never compensate (38).

MacLennan is historically accurate about the above sentiment. Many Canadian soldiers returning from World War I felt that Canada offered them a new beginning, one which could take a radically different direction from that of Europe. He offers what appears to be a solution to the problem of value when Neil Macrae discovers that Canada itself offers him a new vision. Europe he pronounces dead, but Canada, a new country, promises possibilities radically different from those of the old country.

In war time, Halifax assumes importance to England because of its harbour, in peace time, the city lies forgotten, valueless. The novel attempts through its protagonist, Neil Macrae to waken Canada from its long colonial slumber to its own individual destiny for only then Neil and other youngsters like him can gain a future. The author depicts this abstract battle

for new national goals through the highly personal struggle that Neil wages against Geoffrey Wain, his old commanding officer.

Although some unenlightened individuals would like to turn Canada into a colonial, military dictatorship, men and women with talent and vital energy can create a new civilization in Canada through self-respect, hard work, and the thoughtful use of the arts and sciences. The plot of the novel develops this theme by establishing a conflict mainly between members of an old, upper-class family that has given its community some five generations of leadership.

The protagonists in the novel Barometer Rising are Penelope Wain and Neil Macrae. Penelope is no sentimental love story heroine. Her character, greatly conceived, is almost a tragic one. She faces a harassing and complex situation alone, even while she is surrounded by those whom she loves, and who, in turn, love her. Every effort to escape is seemingly blocked until the cataclysmic explosion thrusts her life back into something like normalcy.

Penelope Wain, a ship-designer by profession, is described as having a "sympathetic and comprehensive mind", "and the town was filled with individuals who would like to have found excuses for talking with her" (10). She has great "potential energy" "integrity", and "insuperable control" over herself (193-194, 215). Bringing to her work the "heritage of both Europe and the eastern United States." She is an expert in mathematics and science yet

appreciates the beauty of a design. She praises craftsmanship and is opposed to mass production. Her cousin, collaborator, and spouse, Neil MacRac, is likewise a person of talent.

Neil is the son of a romantic marriage between John Macrae, a Cape Breton ship designer, and Jamsie Wain, the favourite sister of Geoffrey Wain. The early death of both his parents left him to the care of his uncle Geoffrey, who not only failed to understand him, but actually resented him. It was an irony of fate which threw him as an officer into his uncle's battalion, and an even more bitter irony that called upon him to execute his uncle's battle order, an order so contradictory that full obedience was impossible. In his love for Penelope, Neil shows an impulsiveness which springs from the intensity of emotion. This intensity he no doubt inherits from his High Land Scottish forebears, but his own passionate idealism fans the intensity of both his love for Penelope and his hatred for Wain to a white heat. His words to Penelope at the close mirror both the intensity and the restraint of his feeling. "Wise Penelope! That's what Odysseus said to his wife when he got home. I don't think he ever told her he loved her. He probably knew that words would sound too small." He has been "one of the natural leaders" at school, a captain in the army, and an engineer by profession. He has both "vitality" and "a violent natural energy". He is hard-working, "imaginative", and, like Penelope, is in possession of the "urban and technical heritage of both Europe and the eastern United States" {193).

The antagonist in this struggle over the future of civilization in Canada is Geoffrey Wain—a man whose force and ability have not been used. The central conflict in this narrative is between Geoffrey Wain and Neil Macrae, and since Neil is the "hero", Wain is by consequence the "villain". He consorts promiscuously with a cheap and vulgar woman. His thwarted ambition for a generalship causes him to seethe with "anger and wounded pride", thus crippling him psychologically. In his political attitudes he is colonial minded, authoritarian, and imperialist; and he longs for a military dictatorship (101-104). His way of life clearly leads to barbarism as defined by MacLennan.

Alec Mackenzie, though in himself a minor character, provides the key to the whole plot, since Neil's defence rests on the fact that, owing to the peculiar circumstances under which he memorized it, Alec remembers the exact words of Colonel Wain's battle order. MacKenzie's outstanding qualities are his absolute honesty and unselfishness. "He assists Penelope Wain and Neil Macrae in their civilizing role (124).

Evelyn Phillips is another minor character. She is the rebellious and ungrateful daughter of a fisherman. She considers herself better than her parents, lies about the existence of her war-injured father, and declares her unwillingness to care for him (69). In her passive vulgarity, she stands "for disorder, for the state of mind which is prepared to let everything take its

course" (68). She collaborates with Wain by selling him her sexual services and her sub-literate, secretarial skills and thus supports his barbarizing role.

Angus Murray, the son of a Cape Breton farmer, is a man whose powers of mind and body intended him for something nobler than life has made of him. His character has its roots deep in the pioneer life in which his father had been, at the cost of tremendous effort, successful; on the other hand, he has lived in a world of commercial values, a world where success is measured by dollars, and where little regard is paid to the riches of literature and art. By the world's standards, he is a failure—a surgeon deprived of the strength of his hand by war wounds; a fellow officer of Geoffrey Wain. He is very outspoken, straight and honest. His attitude to Penny is unfailingly tender and sympathetic, and his holding of Neil's problem shows understanding and kindness.

Geoffrey Wain represents the Canadian colonial who cannot believe in Canada's worth, for him, everything of importance happens elsewhere, and he longs for the opportunity to live in a truly important setting. Indeed he wants the war, the slaughter to continue until he gains a staff posting overseas so that, at war's end, he will possess enough power to help govern the worldwide military industrial complex he sees developing. Wain's belief in the centralist Government, composed of businessmen and military leaders stems from his deep-seated belief that nothing regional possesses value

beyond its potential for exploitation. This attitude leads to the belief that only one centre of power can and should exist, an idea which obviously helped produce fascism. Indeed, Wain's role in the war shows the degree to which later fascist forces were already at work in the early part of the century. MacLennan himself in one of his discussions has referred to Wain as a fascist.

Neil Macrae's nationalism, his feeling of pro-patria (for one's country), defends the individual and the new countries against a pan-national tendency to centralise all power in military-industrial structures which subsume all governments and all individuals.

Neil stands for the efficacy of pluralistic individual action against Wain's identification with a monolithic force of history.

MacLennan recognizes the paradox of the 'new' the impossibility of retaining the good and desirable qualities of the new land while allowing its commercial transformation. He portrays Canadian nationalism during and after World War I as a positive force which can possibly overcome centralist ideologies of the European type, he also sees that new economic forces in the structure of capitalism may undermine even the best intentioned of nationalist policies. At various points the novelist indicates that the fast pace of industrial and commercial development forces the people of Cape Breton to change entirely their way of life. In Barometer Rising the character Alec

Mackenzie remembers the days when boats were built by hand, by ship-builders with an innate sense for what made a boat beautiful, sea worthy and a pleasure to sail. Neil Macrae learned his love of ships and developed his skill in ship building by working alongside his Cape Breton relatives. With the advent of new methods, the old ship builders become a part of the past. These changes brought a drastic difference in the outlook and values of the people. The difference is clearly observed in the life-style and attitude of Geoffrey Wain's secretary. She comes from Cape Breton and is 'kept' under the control of Wain and sells her body like any other marketable commodity.

But the changes that take place in the minds of the people and in their outlook and attitude are more disastrous than the changes on the face of the land. The mind becomes colonized and fragmented. It becomes an instrument for mirroring the world of fragmented values. The individual loses his ability to judge the whole. A one-eyed vision develops and it is praised and valued. Everything is evaluated with professional expertise. Human aspect is relegated to the back. It is highly shocking to Angus that such people who are supposed to be modernists combine decency and ability with an almost overwhelming ignorance of the larger picture. Angus finds this new way of thinking everywhere in Halifax. As a crowd of Haligonians watch the ship Olympic set sail for England packed with Canadian soldiers, Angus's friend Smith, an engineer, discusses the ship entirely in engineering terms, forgetting about the men on board and the role they must soon play in

the war. To portray this change, MacLennan introduces another narrative line which follows the characater of Angus Murray.

> The unbelievable and blind stupidity of this man, coupled with his unquestioned ability and decency, seemed to Murray terrifying. His attitude toward the war was that of a well brought and precious child playing with a set of meccano. The only difference between Smith in war and Smith in peace was that now he had unlimited funds at his disposal (102).

The Frankfurt school of social philosophers calls such habits of thought the 'instrumentalization' of reason: use defines everything. The conception of a larger moral picture disappears, and with it goes the values implicit in life linked to a community.

Technological progress, even as it opens possibilities for change in the social structure, does not solve the problems of value and well-being. Unless and until people at the helm of affairs are prepared to admit freedom of thought and action there will not be any well being. Even in the modern age intelligent and skilled people are not given proper freedom of thought or action. This aspect has been made clear in the characterization of Penny Wain. Greater educational opportunities allow women to enter the professions, and Penny Wain, Geoffrey's daughter, becomes a marine

architect. Yet Penny remains unhappy in her new situation, and while she enjoys her new-found independence and mobility, MacLennan suggests that she cannot find satisfaction in the job itself. She wants to design beautiful, sea worthy ships, but must forego such ideals to design ships, not for the comfort of the men but their practicality for war. She knows that her ship will wallow in the high seas and that the men will be seasick much of the time. Thus even as the new technology gives her personal independence, it shackles her to its blind movements.

While the novel's form constructs a universe dominated by dark historical forces, MacLennan refuses to give any particular character a hegemonic narrative line and all his major characters, in Barometer Rising - Neil, Angus, Wain, Penny continue to offer plausible responses. After the explosion which transforms Geoffrey Wain's house from a hostile fortress into a hospital, both Angus and Neil experience a moment when they see Canada poised between the old and the new. Both recognize that it might play the role of mediator between the United States and England, nation-states representing technology and tradition. Neil makes the leap of faith, and identifies himself with the still-hidden forces which were doomed to shape humanity as certainly as the tiny states of Europe had shaped the past.

The novel gets a classic comedic solution in the formation of a new family as Neil's decision attracts Penny. Yet the happy ending cannot cancel

entirely the effects of scepticism and doubt. In the end, the novel presents the image of a family bravely stepping forward to attempt a new future. MacLennan being a classicist and influenced by Calvinistic doctrines appears to hold only the slenderest hope that mankind can prevail against the dark forces of historical destiny.

Tolstoy in his famous work War and Peace reminds us that the historical novel allows the reader to see that the connections between the events in the world never really stop at any precise point. Where the historian normally attempts to give explanations, to supply points along lines of cause and effect that leave an illusion of completion, the historical novelist continually widens the sense of connection until there seems no end. Something which first appears to be purely individual, or economic or religious turns out to be part of a larger structure.

At the basis of the novel Two Solitudes is the notion that attempts to advance civilization in Canada by combining the "legends" that have defined its nations, religions, and classes are doomed to failure; only individual creative realization can overcome the divisive and repressive attitudes of Canada's collectivities so as to create a higher form of civilization in the country. Thus the theme of the novel is concerned with the prospects for civilization in Canada. The unsuccessful protagonist in the conflict is the aristocratic Athanese Tallard, whose personal attempts to reconcile English

and French, Protestant and Catholic, factory and farm, and science and tradition are defeated by the failure of his succumbing to pressures produced by religious and nationalist paranoia and by his marriage. Paul Tallard and Heather Methuen are the successful protagonists. They achieve self-realisation as individuals through their work, their marriage, and above all, through the practice of their respective arts--painting and writing--and thus contribute to a new form of Canadian civilization. They are strongly supported by Yardley, a student of both the arts and sciences.

The main antagonists of Tallard are the oppressive Catholic priest, Father Beaubien, and Tallard's own son, Marius, whose paranoid delusions generated are by mystical nationalism. The main opponent of Heather and Paul is Janet Methuen, who is likewise blinded and debilitated by her national and religious prejudices.

D.H. Lawrence once said that "the novel treats the point at which the soul meets history" (The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan 288). This statement is demonstrably true of MacLennan's Two Solitudes, the title of which has not only passed into our vocabulary, but has become the very way in which people perceive Quebec in relation to English Canada. Re-reading his novel in 1977, MacLennan commented that it "now seems to me tragic as, curiously, it did not seem at the time I wrote it. I had more hope for humanity's common sense than I do now" (The Other Side of Hugh

MacLennan 289). Since the beginning of the Silent Revolution in 1960, and with each major event in its development, MacLennan has commented publicly on the chances for the survival of federalism. The November 1976 election of the Parti Quebecois under Rene Levesque put the future of Canada in doubt. In his essay "Two Solitudes: Thirty-three Years Later", based on a speech given in January 1978 at Queen's University, MacLennan analyses new balance of power in Quebec, where French-Canadians live, by treating Levesque in the tradition of Carlyle, as one of those public figures who are "invested with immense power to affect destiny." With deeply felt sympathy for the Quebecois cause, MacLennan argues for and believes in the eventual triumph of Canada's nationhood. MacLennan continues in his above essay.

> If Canada holds together, the victory of Rene Levesque on November 15, 1976, will possibly be regarded as one of the luckier events in our peculiar history. Levesque succeeded in doing something no other Canadian politician has ever done. A nation which had always been polarized psychologically, is now, polarized politically. He has managed to wake up English Canada to a few realities about this nation of ours. Now, a year later, he is waking up a great many Quebecois to what they may lose if they continue to hide behind the myths

> told them in the past by some of their priests and in the present by the Parti Quebecois (288).

MacLennan says that history is so ironical that she is apt to make cynics out of the few people who take her seriously. These would be a reasonable chance that Canada will become less schizophrenic than she is and if this happens, then some historians in the future will be naming Levesque as one of her survivors.

Between Quebec and the rest of Canada there is also something more interesting than an economic situation. 'Two Solitudes' has always been at the root of Canada's problem as a nation. What has divided Canada in the past has not been language, though certainly language contributed to the division. It has been the point of view of the elites and rulers on both sides of the linguistic fence.

The collective mind of English Canada, the United States, and only to a slightly lesser degree of England, is pragmatic. As external conditions change, the pragmatist, who can seldom spare the time to see a situation in its entirety, puts the past behind him. He lives in the present and he builds a future he refuses to face until he comes to it.

Until only a few years ago, the education of the French-Canadian elite rested its philosophy on the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, who created the most complete and inter-related synthesis in the entire history of

learning, and behind him was Aristotle, who had died more than a thousand years before St. Thomas was born. This is one more reason why Quebec refuses to forget her past.

The present Quebec, of course economically has hardly a corner left in which Thomas Aquinas could rest his head. It is very different even morally from the society described in MacLennan's novel Two Solitudes. The new breed of Quebecois is now a city-dweller, and he is doing his best to forget what it used to be like down on the farm with one character with ten children and was pregnant with the eleventh. The external changes have not entirely changed Quebec's ancient attitudes or her inherited emotions. The younger, middle class products of her belated industrial revolution, who described themselves as technocrats, Levesque's enthusiasts, who think they are planning a political revolution according to the most sophisticated formulas in the revolutionary textbooks - are emotionally still so involved with the past emotions of French Canada that a single word in the wrong place can trigger them off. In this sense they are correct in calling Quebec a true nation. The tragedy comes from their inability to understand the Anglo-American pragmatic experience, while at the same time the pragmatists are just as incapable of putting themselves into the emotions of a people that loves Pepsi Cola, fast cars, and Florida vacations. Levesque has said many times that he cannot lose when all those singers and poets who have been

conducting a passionately paranoic love affair with their nation are behind him.

The title Two Solitudes has been used so often by politicians, especially in Quebec, that the novelist had almost come to believe that it was a political novel. The novel Two Solitudes is a fairly simple tale of people living together in a region where religious traditions made it impossible for them to know one another. The accepted rule seemed to be this: in order to avoid trouble, avoid one another. The history taught to the French-Canadian children was diametrically opposite to the history taught to the English-Canadian children. The two, however, did share a common denominator; each was equally false. In the middle, the politicians contrived and the operators operated with great benefit to themselves and what was visible in Quebec was also visible in the entire nation. To the average Quebecois, English Canada was another world. To the average citizen in the Anglophone provinces, Quebec was generally referred to as "the French-Canadian Problem" (Two Solitudes 293).

Canada in those days was generally a stable society because both the French and the English used to be thrifty. MacLennan cites that in Middle Europe there was a confederation of various ethnic groups dominated politically, and to a lesser extent economically, by the Teutons. The various lesser components of the Empire spoke different languages and were

diligently taught to detest one another; the only area in which they shared an emotional agreement was a mutual detestation of the teutonic majority. Two religions - Roman Catholic on one side, Greek orthodox on the other had collectively hated one another for more than one thousand years. So MacLennan used to ask himself whether Canada was anything more than a latter-day version of the confederation in Middle Europe.

Under the surface the resemblances are not really close. In Canada people live in what still is a new world. No Mongols or Turks ever invaded Canadian territories and butchered or enslaved Canadians. No archdukes supported their luxurious livig by selling able bodied young men as soldiers to foreign armies. The federal government in 1917 had imposed conscription on Quebec, and it is futile to deny that English Canada, and especially the conservative party, has been paying for that ever since. Canadians are still adolescents in their country, and while this may be embarrassing to the people, hopefully it has also some advantages. The hatreds of adults are casually implacable, but quarrels between adolescents can often turn into friendship after a good squabble.

If Canada is in a state of genuine hostility, why is it that on a person-to-person basis the Francophones and Anglophones of Quebec have been so cordial to one another for sometime. One reason is that at long last most

Quebec Anglophones are not only learning French, but are associating so much more with that they have a chance to speak it naturally.

MacLennan asserts that he prefers human beings to abstractions about them, especially in a country like Canada where people have only recently begun to think seriously about what the whole country amounts to. He believes that it is to many of these abstractions that Canada owes its present state of confusion, or paralysis. It is because of abstractions that English-Canadian and French-Canadian nationalisms do not speak the same language.

It is believed that modern nationalism is a nineteenth-century phenomenon, and it arose as a defence mechanism against the exploitation of unorganized ethnic groups by highly organized imperial powers like the France of Louis XIV and Napoleon, the Austria of a long succession of Emperors, the Russia of a variety of Tsars. MacLennan argues that in the last century it spread into Asia and Africa and over the years it became mixed up with nineteenth-century ideologies like socialism and communism. Socialism fused with nationalism to produce the tyrannies of Mussolini and Hitler. Whenever nationalism is elevated to the status of lay religion, it produces fanatical loyalties which in turn produce fanatical hatreds.

Like most Anglophones living in Quebec who were not born there MacLennan came to Montreal because it was the only place where he could

find a job. Even then in Francophone Quebec the myth persisted that the English were rich and the French were hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Most of the French people spoke perfect or almost perfect English. This did not excuse the native-born Anglophone Quebeckers from learning French because a better school system would have made it obligatory. In Montreal the majority of perfectly bilingual Anglophones lived in the working-class districts, and though they went to English schools, they played and fought in the streets with their French neighbours.

In Montreal, according to MacLennan the politest city in the world, the two cultures of Canada had evidently decided that the best way to coexist was to ignore the existence of one another. The Francophones said the Anglos were too arrogant to make friends with them. The Anglophones said the French clergy forbade their people to make friends with the heretics. But hardly anyone said the above things in the presence of the other group. The absurdity of this situation was visible to everyone except the natives. It was even visible geographically.

So MacLennan comes to the Hitler War, when once again "two race legends woke remembering ancient loyalties and ancient enmities" (The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan 289). It was only then that he understood just how traumatically shocked French Canada had been by the imposition of

conscription in 1917. It was then that his conception of Two Solitudes emerged.

Canada was literally abolished by the Hitler War. By the time it was over, loyalty to Britain had become meaningless because the Empire had gone into liquidation. It was then, though half-heartedly, that English Canada at least began to accept that Canada was alone and would have to grow up whether she wanted to or not. It was an idea that took a long time to percolate. So far as the English-French relationship was concerned, the 1950s were lost years.... English Canada completely forgot about Quebec and plunged into the huge commercial boom without even realizing that she was now in the process of making herself a commercial colony of multi-national conglomerates, and was developing an enormously high standard of living by selling her natural resources.

In Quebec, underneath the deceptively calm surface an enormous change, a truly revolutionary change, had at last occurred. For the first time in her history she developed a large, affluent, ambitious, educated middle class. MacLennan makes a humorous statement about this development. "And if Marx was ever right about anything, he was right when he said that it is from a rising middle class that revolutions come" (297).

While MacLennan was writing Two Solitudes, another writer from the province Manitoba, Gabrille Roy, put much of the future character of Quebec

into a single book, Bonheur d' Occasion. In the character of Jean Levesque, who saw in the war boom a chance finally to make a break with a poverty-ridden past, the novel not only prophesied the rise of the ambitious French-Canadian man of affairs with his house in Westmount, his Cadillac, his cottage in the Laurentians, and his vacation in Florida.

In November 1942, Hugh MacLennan aired his views on what was popularly called 'the French problem' with John. P Humphrey, a professor of international law from Mc Gill University, and the French-Canadian author and lecturer Emile Vaillancourt. In his broadcast MacLennan continued to explore the national issues he had raised a few months earlier in "Culture, Canadian style" and "Anniversary of an Idea." There, he had come to the conclusion that if Canada were to have a national literature at all, she had first better become a real nation; at the moment, loyalty to the individual province superseded allegiance to the nation. In the discussion MacLennan reiterated his notion that Canada must pull together towards some greater destiny than that of the combined purposes of her individual elements. For him at this point, 'Canada's national purpose after this war has got to be..... to provide social security for our people'

MacLennan was not only expressing his own ideas in his broadcast, ideas on a subject he had already chosen for his second novel; he was listening as well to the opinions of the other two men, each of whom could

elucidate certain points about sentiments in Canada at the time. Describing ways in which French-speaking people were being hurt and exploited by the English-speaking majority, Vaillancourt documented the extent of Quebec's battered pride, like most of his people he lamented the fact that there was no Canadian flag and that the nation was still referred to as a 'Dominion'. These shortcomings were like a 'slap in the face' to French Canadians. About the war in Europe and the threat of conscription, MacLennan was specific: "it is neither fair nor sensible for anyone to expect French-speaking Canadians to feel it necessary to fight merely because Great Britain happens to be at war. There will never be a Canadian national understanding until that fact is accepted and respected. But - let no one forget this - Quebec fights now because she believes that England's cause is her-own cause and the cause of humanity" (Radio broadcast in November 1942).

MacLennan made it clear that the voices of a small group of trouble-makers who wanted to resist the war altogether did not represent the true spirit of Quebec. But if Canada could only define 'a clear vision of what she wishes to become', he concluded. 'a flood of energy would be released from all nine provinces'

MacLennan had earlier expressed that Canada's 'national schizophrenia' might well symbolize the 'international breakdown' in the world at large. When he had spoken of 'national schizophrenia' before, of

course, he had been referring to the division between 'British' and 'American' that characterised the English-Canadian consciousness. After living in Montreal for several years, he was coming to see that "what was wrong in the city (Montreal) was what was wrong with the nation itself" (And This is His City 16). It struck him forcibly that 'the crucible of Canada's future was Montreal'. Thus, to write of the French-English split, so evident around him, was to strike at the heart of the nation's deepest problem. And a forceful analysis of the impediments to national unity within Canada, it seemed to him, might appeal to an audience beyond Canada's borders: the barriers between the two 'races' might turn out to resemble those that kept the great nations of the world from peaceful coexistence.

In an article "How Do I Write," MacLennan discussed in considerable detail the process by which he had written his novel. "The writer must be closer to mystery than to answering questions', he maintained. 'He must be himself, and find his own harmony. This is absolutely all he has to offer" (Scotchman's Return 26).

MacLennan believed that "Intuition, not intellect, must determine creative writing." This is a philosophy in sharp contrast to the method by which he had written Barometer Rising: He had written to Barrett that what bothered him about Barometer Rising was the unavoidable necessity of making the explosion a dues ex machina; and also the deliberate limitations

imposed by him on himself for the sake of the market. He wanted his second novel to be intuitive or organic: 'as life grows organically, it can't be subordinated to a plan'. At the same time, a novel without any plan at all is a shambles. Every novelist has to somehow solve this dilemma in his own way (14).

Two Solitudes, then, as MacLennan conceived it, was to be a Canadian version of The Forsytesaga by John Galsworthy, in which he aimed for a convincing handling of time and readability above all. This type of chronicle of generations in which Galsworthy specialised could incorporate the Canadian material he felt to be essential in a Canadian novel at the time. Using Aristotle's dictum that drama proceeds from the known, he reiterated his own statement that in Canada, (the novelist) must build his stage along with his drama (Cross Country 28).

MacLennan was also inspired from the writing of Jakob Wasserman in writing his Two Solitudes. Wasserman's The World's Illusion set out to create a kind of double-world of German society on the eve of the first war. From the above novel MacLennan derived the notion of a 'double-world' in Canada, one half of which was the French-Canadian community of Quebec. To portray this community presented a formidable challenge: his notion that the French-English split characterized Canada, and that he should be writing about it, feeling in the face of his conclusion on completing Barometer Rising,

that a writer must create out of his own background in order to be authentic and universal. MacLennan was not French Canadian; he did not speak French fluently; nor was he a Roman Catholic. This problem was especially perplexing for MacLennan, who, like the majority of the English-speaking Montreal community lived a life that was almost hermetically sealed in the English speaking sections of the society, with virtually no interaction with the attitudes, customs, and aspirations of the majority culture.

While beginning to write his novel Two Solitudes, with no particular story in mind, he had simply started drafting scenes around certain characters who represented some of the ideas floating around in his head with no fixed sense of how they would ultimately fit into a total picture. His earliest scenes had been written about Paul Tallard, a young French-Canadian student in a Seminary in Montreal. It took an extraordinary dream to throw these random scenes and characters and ideas into a significant relationship to each other. Early in 1943 his unconscious brought to the surface an image so striking that in it he would recognise his novel's thesis. Indeed, to him this dream would remain its 'genesis', as he later described it:

'I saw a tall, angular blonde man arguing with a stocky, darker man. They were shouting at one another more in frustration than in anger and a voice in the dream said to me', "Don't you see it? They're both deaf (Hugh MacLennan 176). At first the dream seemed to him to be about his own

deafness in one year and its association with his father whom he had thought had caused it; the two men shouting at each other reminded him of the shouting matches between his father and himself that had taken place over the Classics during his childhood. But MacLennan became even more convinced in time that the dream was about his novel. At some unconscious level he recognised that Lord Durham's description of the country over a hundred years earlier as 'two nations warring in the bosom of a single state' (Hugh MacLennan 178) still applied: French and English in Canada remained very much at odds with each other and deaf to one another's needs. Just as the small, dark son had at times been unable to get through to his powerful, fair-haired father, so the minority of French Canadians within Canada was finding it impossible to make the dominant Anglo-Saxon majority understand its difficulties. Through this dream his theories about French and English, and the few scenes he had already drafted, jelled into the concept of 'two solitudes' that would be his concern.

A note attached to the manuscript in the Mc Gill University Library confirms what he had already said at the time he was writing, that Athanese Tallard was originally intended to play a minor role:

> I had planned that Paul Tallard be the chief character in the book, and began with him as a seminary student. Then, in order to account for Paul, I began thinking of his

> father and writing scenes about him, and from that moment on, old Athanese Tallard took over the novel and held command of it until his death ("On Solid Ground" Hugh MacLennan 171).

So effectively the old man dominates the novel that the section of the book that follows his death seemed redundant to Claude Bissell who dispensed with it altogether in his later school edition.

The central concern of the novel Two Solitudes is to render the forces that go into the making of an artist. Every aspect of the novel from its beginning to its conclusion bears upon this theme: it traces all the influences - international, national, and personal, on the individual who will be the one to create the first novel in the nation's cultural history. The story begins in 1917 at exactly the same time that Paul, a boy of seven, becomes conscious of the larger world of human affairs; it ends in the fall of 1939 with Paul halfway through the novel that will record Canada's first irrevocable steps toward becoming herself, knowing against her will that she was not unique but like all the others, alone with history, with science, with the future.

As the retired Nova Scotian sea captain John Yardley observes on one occasion: 'The obscure conflict within the Tallard family would certainly centre on the youngest member. Beyond that, the constant tug of war between the races and creeds in the country itself would hardly miss him....'

(173) Paul knows that his father Athanese, a stubborn Norman from Quebec, is a member of Parliament in Ottawa, where he comes in for a good deal of criticism from both French and English. He is also aware that his mother is English while his father's first wife, mother of his half-brother Marius was French. His father sends him to an English school where he studies science. After Athanese has quarrelled violently with the local priest, Beaubien, who finds his ideas revolutionary, Paul is dragged off on the train from Saint Marc to Montreal where he accompanies his father to a Presbyterian church to be converted to Protestantism. At the bedside of his dying father, he witnesses Athanese's instinctive relapse into Catholicism for the last rites, after which his English mother and his French nationalist half-brother fight bitterly over the direction his education should now take. Athanese's will reveals that the business risks he took on behalf of Mc Queen have ruined him financially, a state experienced directly by Paul who must now live in greatly reduced circumstances. Paul becomes a victim of the Depression as well as being isolated from both English and French cultures. He tells Heather later: "it's a tribal custom in Canada to be either English or French. But I'm neither one nor the other" (Hugh MacLennan: A Writer's Life 174).

MacLennan felt compelled to demonstrate the enormous extent to which Paul's father had made him what he was. Here the autobiographical element is quite evident: if he were to explain how he himself had arrived at the place in national cultural history he had occupied since the publication of

Barometer Rising, he would have to explain the inflexible perfectionism with which his father Dr. Sam had driven him in his youth; the grip Athanese Tallard exercised on MacLennan's imagination testifies to the intensity he responded to for so long in his own father.

In Athanese Tallard is symbolized the conflict MacLennan perceived at the heart of the nation. Athanese is torn between two forces: the emotional bond to his group, the French Canadians in Quebec, who cautiously cling to the values of the past, and his national understanding of English industrial society and the promise it holds for a better future. MacLennan had commented in "Canadian Unity and Quebec":

> at the present moment, Canada is like a woman with two men courting her. Both those men think their future wife should be just like themselves. But the two men happen to belong to different races, they have different values in life and they go to different churches. And because they're so different well, the lady hasn't made up her mind yet, and the marriage hasn't yet taken place. 'MacLennan simply reversed this situation: he had two wives consecutively, one French Catholic, the other English Protestant.

Athanese sees what can and should be done for Quebec, but he is paralysed by his traditional attachments. All he can do is place his son in a school that will ensure that Paul will not be emotionally bound to French Canada to the same extent. As he tells his eight-year old son:

> We'll choose an English school. You'll learn science. You'll find out what makes the world go around'. Paul replies: 'Isn't it because God wants it to?' To which his father responds: 'Yes, yes, I know.... Next year you will go to a fine English school. You'll still be a Canadian, mind you. Don't forget that'. Later, Athanese explains to the priest in defence of his decision. 'I want him to learn to mix naturally with English boys. I've never believed in this artificial separation, I want our people to feel that the whole of Canada is their land not to grow up with the impression that the province of Quebec is a reservation for them (Two Solitudes 175).

MacLennan had pointed a finger directly at the educational system as 'the greatest weakness in the province of Quebec,' in his radio talk with Vaillancourt and Humphrey, MacLennan pointed that Quebec educators encouraged their pupils to dwell too much on the past. He did not mean by that an excessive study of history. He believed that history could be a

modern study if people used it for guidance in their affairs. MacLennan maintained the view that in Quebec, provincialism was mainly the result of a traditional point of view. In Two Solitudes, a change in education was fixed on as the key to any development towards true nationhood. Paul will know French and French Canada, but he will also be on an equal footing with English Canadians who are up-to-date in the study of science, as an artist, his point of view will be 'Canadian', not just French Canadian or English Canadian.

Captain Yardley, among the novel's characters, has glimpsed while moored once in the tropics, a state of mind he calls 'the ultimate solitude' (178). A cosmos separates 'the ultimate solitude' of a Darwinian world from the love composed of 'two solitudes' reaching out to protect each other. Man, as individual or as nation, has the choice: he can hate and destroy, aimlessly, or he can love and create, with purpose. MacLennan maintains the view that war is but one example of man's wrong-headedness in applying science to destructive ends; capitalism is another (178).

As Elspeth Cameron points out, most critics including the French Canadians, saw in the novel "a deep respect and affection for French-Canada". When one places Two Solitudes, in the comparative context of its contemporary European and American narratives, the novel represents a classic example of what Iser calls an "oppositional" perspectival structure,

one that opposes the norms presented by one perspective to those represented by another, each opposing the deficiencies of the other.

Two Solitudes reveals the desire and need for a national identity, both social and cultural, a certain fear of American social, economic and cultural hegemony, an uneasiness with regard to increasing urbanization, and its effects on Canadian socio-cultural values and perceptions.

To describe how the oppositional perspectival structure operates in Two Solitudes, the most striking element is the symmetry with which the opposition is underlined by two explicitly designated complementary extremes, the materialistic, colonial, urban values of upper-class English Montreal on the one hand, and the nationalistic, rural, classically manipulated cultural traditions of French Quebec on the other. The degree to which the characters conform to the respective value systems determines their place in the normative hierarchy outlined in the novel. The most objectionable characters most rigidly uphold the old order, while the central characters with whom the reader is expected to identify and sympathize illustrate the old order's deficiencies and deliberately break its norms. Thus the double configuration formed by the French and English characters corresponds neatly to the norm opposition of the two societies. The novel very well throws light to the cultural history of Anglophones and Francophones.

The most objectionable characters in the novel on the English side are Janet Methuen and Huntly McQueen. On the French side Father Beaubien and Marius Tallard are the counterparts. Father Beaubien's prejudices and dubious moral conduct are determined by his ignorance, his nationalism and his naively literal conceptions of catholic doctrine, and Marius's fanaticism can be explained by childhood traumas, there are few extenuating circumstances in Huntly McQueen's and Janet Methuen's past that could mitigate the reader's rejection of the past values these two characters represent. Huntly McQueen's small-town background and the impoverished gentility of his pious mother are hardly enough to explain his ruthlessly pursued financial ambitions and unprepossessing personal eccentricities. Very much a self-made man, Huntly McQueen represents the North American oligarchy, combining an unshakeable faith in progress and business with middle-class hypocrisies, prejudices and pompousness. He strives towards a consolidation of his influence in other spheres by implementation of his financial methods with relentless disregard for human and social consequences. When he enlists as his partner Tallard, who sees the inevitable need to industrialize Quebec to avert the impoverishment of what has remained a backward rural society, the dam and factories are built, but at the price of altruistic Tallard's ruin and the corruption, exploitation, and self-alienation of the community of St. Marc.

French-Canadian culture is the most traditionalist in the New World, and the most self conscious. It traces its roots to seventeenth and eighteenth century France, but as early as the first decades of the latter century French observers noted that a distinctive French-Canadian culture was developing. After 1789 French Canada was largely cut off from France until 1815, and the noble and clerical émigrés, who were the first Frenchmen admitted to Canada by the British since the conquest, instilled a horror of the French Revolution which left a lasting impression on the French-Canadian mind. The great majority of French Canadians were forced to create a culture from their own resources. To a considerable extent it is a united culture rather than one which has developed naturally.

French-Canadian culture is understood as "an intricate amalgam of the French heritage, the North American environment, and Roman, British, and American influences"(Mason Wade, The French Canadians 368). Its unifying spirit is a "nationalism" which is really an intense provincialism complicated by religious and ethnic factors. Hence French-Canadian culture is characterized by a defensiveness and a sense of loneliness and insecurity.

The Catholic Church plays a greater role in French Canada than it does anywhere else in the modern world. All French Canadians are conscious of the great debt they owe to their clergy for ensuring cultural survival in the post-conquest period, though there is a growing group today who feel that

this debt has been abundantly repaid and that the clergy should abandon many of their traditional activities.

The French-Canadians are more democratic than the French, though they still cling to a crumbling social hierarchy which has no equivalent in English-speaking North America. The French-Canadians are devoted to French culture, but they maintain that they alone have maintained its best and oldest classic and Christian traditions unsullied by France's revolutions, free-thinking, and godlessness. French-Canadian French, in its popular forms, is as different from the French of France as colloquial American English is from Oxford English. It is believed that both exhibit less correctness, more careless enunciation, a certain unbridled freedom in adopting newly coined expressions and far greater regional variations.

Most French-Canadian scientists, unlike their English-speaking colleagues, are knowledgeable about literature, art and history. As a rule the younger French-Canadian scholar is now more at home in both Canadian cultures than his English-Canadian contemporary and is apt to be far more familiar with both European and American cultural traditions, since he is more frequently multilingual and does not have the same resistance to American cultural influences as the English Canadian who is hard put to maintain his own cultural identify against pressures from both England and the United States. Cultural colonialism is far rarer in French Canada than in

English Canada, since most French Canadians trace their North American roots back to the French regime, while the descendants of authentic United Empire Loyalists, who came to Canada as a result of the American Revolution, are a small minority of English Canadians, most of whom have much more recent connections with the Old World.

The cultural bonds between French Canada and France was strengthened by the political struggle between British imperialism and French-Canadian nationalism from the Boer War to World War I. In 1902 Monseigneur L.A., Paquet, the great ecclesiastical orator, gave a classic definition of "the vocation of the French Race in North America."

> We are not only a civilized race, we are the pioneers of civilization; we are not only a religious people, we are the messengers of the religious idea; we are not only submissive sons of the Church, we are, we ought to be, numbered among its zealots, its defenders, and its apostles. Our mission is less to manipulate capital than to change ideas; it consists less in lighting the fires of factories than in maintaining and making radiate afar the luminous fire of religion and thought (The Culture of French Canada 382).

This is a type of cultural nationalism expounded by the clergy of French Canada during the second half of the nineteenth century, affected the growth of French-Canadian culture for nearly another fifty years. French Canada steadily, though selectively, drew more cultural reinforcement from France, although there were those who rebelled against French cultural influences, as well as English political ones and American economic ones as Quebec was gradually caught up in the North American industrial revolution.

> The fact that the industrial revolution was largely brought to French Canada by cultural aliens - Englishmen, English Canadians, or Americans - strengthened the anti-industrial bias of French-Canadian intellectuals, who saw their idealistic dream world threatened by a crossly materialistic one which seemed to endanger the very life of their culture (The Culture of French Canada 383).

French-Canadian intellectuals finding few or no economic opportunities available to them, turned against the capitalist system which seemed to them to favour the English-Canadian and American economic overlords of Quebec. Isolated from Rome and Paris by the war, and at odds with English Canada and the United States on the question of all-out participation,

Canada. Since the war more and more English Canadians have realized that culturally Canada must be both French and English if it is not to be American, and there are an increasing number of points of contact between the two cultures which for so long have been separated, French Canada appears to be well on the road to a cultural flowering reminiscent of that in New England in the mid-nineteenth century, but arising from a highly distinctive mixture of the French tradition, the North American environment, and English and American influences.

Pierre Chauveau, one of the first Canadian literary men and the first Superintendent of Public Instruction in Quebec, had likened Canada to the famous staircase of the Chateau de Chambord, so constructed that two persons could ascend without meeting and without seeing each other except at intervals. He added: "In social and literary terms we are far more foreign to each other than the English and French of Europe." This situation prevailed until the end of World War II, as noted in Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes, the best Canadian novel dealing with intercultural relations, as Mason Wade put it in his work The Culture of French Canada.

There was a noticeable change in the trend towards ethnic diversity and more than six million immigrants who have come to Canada since 1945 have dramatically changed the country's ethnic composition. Whereas Canada was once basically a bicultural society, British and French, it is now a

fully multicultural society. This great post-war migration has brought a wider diversity of peoples to Canada. Although the majority of immigrants in the immediate post-war years were British or Western Europeans, recent immigration has for the first time introduced large members of people from Asia, the West Indies, South America and Africa into Canadian society. And Canada's official policy of federal multiculturalism, based on the findings and recommendations of Book IV of the Royal Commission Report on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1970), was introduced in October 1971 by Prime Minister Trudeau in an address to the House of Commons.

> It was the view of the Royal Commission, shared by the Government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet another for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, all should be treated fairly.

The Royal Commission was guided by the belief that adherence to one's ethnic group is influenced not so much by one's origin or mother tongue as

by one's sense of belonging to the group and by what the commission calls the group's 'collective will to exist.' The Government shares this belief.

By 1984 the federal government was providing more than $23 million annually for its multicultural programme, including aid to day care centres, heritage-language classes, and cultural festivals, and the preparation of histories of major Canadian ethnic groups. The policy has also focussed on changing Canadians' attitudes toward immigrants.

Canadians have often taken pride in the image of their country as a "cultural mosaic", or as a "tossed salad", in writer Arnold Edinborough's words, rather than as an American style "melting pot."

The idea central to Hugh MacLennan's third novel The Precipice is that true self-realization of individuals, upon which the progress of civilization depends, must be based on a reasoned understanding and acceptance of human nature rather than as a Puritan "guilt-habit" that would deny or repress it. He deplored the puritanical severity of some Canadians, mainly when it was expressed in censorship of books like his own in which writers used sex not for sensationalism but to portray life honestly. Concentration on achievements had resulted in a kind of 'hardness of mind'; Americans as a group he wrote, are 'as coldly impersonal as steel'; their emphasis on technology had accelerated life's pace to an inhuman degree.

Canadians, with their slow pace of evolution, might, MacLennan speculated, have a better deal in the end:

> At the present time of transition, our small size of population makes the strains easier. In facing the future, we are less the prisoners of our own past. For it seems that nothing but catastrophe can check the furious progress of Americans into a still more bleak and dangerous desert of technology than they have reached now. The very vastness of the apparatus their genius has created stands over them now like a strange and terrible master. Canadians have as yet fallen in love with no such Frankenstein (The Precipice 211).

The novel's title, arising as it did from the biblical parable of the Gedarene Swine rushing blindly off a cliff to their own destruction, was a symbol at the heart of the novel reflecting MacLennan's views on American technology. It stood as a lesson to Canadians and Americans alike that the rapid social change was likely to come to no good, and that technology was apt to prove a Frankenstein's monster if moral considerations did not govern its development and application. MacLennan fixes on the general theme of puritanism, and was able to link patterns in Canadian life with those in the United States, thus widening both the scope of his novel and its potential

audience. MacLennan brought into play the effect of the American efficiency expert Stephen Lassiter on the Canadian girl Lucy Cameron in order to show the differences between American society and Canadian society in regard to Puritanism. In Lucy's elopement with Stephen to New York, the impact of urban life with its extensive industrial environment on those who move from rural communities is demonstrated. In Stephen's affairs, and also in the many divorces in the novel the immorality of American life is shown.

Like many of the other heroes of MacLennan's novels, Lucy Cameron comes from an old family and is endowed with much intelligence and inner reserve as well as a deeply reflective nature. She loves poetry and music, and she cherishes knowledge, which she believes holds the key to human freedom. In her own life, she overcomes the "walls of the Puritan tradition". She does so first by marrying a divorcee, then by adapting to the worldly culture of New York City, and finally by understanding and forgiving the neurotic compulsions that drive her immature, unfaithful, and unreflective husband to the precipice of his despair.

Lucy Cameron's own inhibitions together with various manifestations of Puritan compulsions in others are the antagonists in this struggle. These latter "guilt habits" include the narrow attitudes of the townsfolk of Grenville, Bruce Fraser's repression of his love for Lucy, and Carl Bratian's obsessive pursuit of profit. They also include several neurotic forms of

behaviour: Stephen Lassiter's quest to prove himself through the substitute religions of work and romantic love; the escapist alcoholism of Matt McCunn; and the marital exploits and consequent religious conversion of Marcia Lassiter. MacLennan makes it clear through the words of Bruce Fraser that persons who cannot sort out their personal lives in a reasonable way are liable to become the puppets of barbaric leaders. A link between individual neurotic weaknesses and social barbarism is also suggested by the savagery of the Second World War in Europe, the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the intuition of Lucy Cameron that the advance of American civilization has reached the edge of a "precipice".

In MacLennan's next novel Each Man's Son, he introduces a man, Dr. Daniel Ainslie, whose experiences could be modelled on his father's as a colliery doctor in the mining community of Glace Bay. To portray him, MacLennan drew on his own childhood memories of the brook encircled house outside the town where he had grown up with the consciousness that Dr. Sam was an important man in the community. Dr. Ainslie, the self-driven doctor with a passion for translating Classics, who badly wants a son, is based to a great extent on Dr. MacLennan. The novel's sub-plot, which revolves around the coal miner Archie MacNeil, who has gone off to the states as a successful prize fighter, leaving his wife Mollie and their eight-year-old boy Alen to fend for themselves, reflects the barbaric underside of life in Glace Bay. The two plots merge with tragic inevitability when Dr.

Ainslie and his wife Margaret adopt Alan after Archie returns home, finds Mollie in the arms of her French lover Camire, and kills them both in a violent rage.

MacLennan decided that Calvinism was the key to his father's character. For the first time he gave serious thought to the nature of the ethics by which Dr. Sam had lived. MacLennan once maintained that Calvin had been one of the most evil men, if not the most evil man, in history. Later he changed his views on the matter considerably. Calvinism is not as absurd a theology as it appears to be, MacLennan wrote to his friend Gray and continued:

> When I look around me at some of the intellectuals of the 1920s, unhappy, broken-down, bewildered and miserable in their early fifties, their marriages on the rocks, their ideals locked up in the Kremlin, the easy prestige they once enjoyed become a mockery, I see little difference between their position and that of the sinners who had insisted there was no hell until they found themselves there. My mortal quarrel with Calvinism was not that it denied realities, but that it inculcated into children the idea that God was each man's personal enemy, and that a man committed a sin merely by

> existing. Theoretically, the Anglicans also believe this, and so do the Catholics, but the Catholics presume to be able to forgive this sin and the Anglicans treated God much as they treated parliament (Each Man's Son 229).

In his novel, he would attempt to demonstrate the terrible effect Calvinism could have on a man and illustrate that those who tried to live by such ethics were as much victims as torturers. Ironically, the foundations of the house that once supported Dr. Sam and his religious household later supported many a Christian congregation in the building that replaced it - the Newsom United Church.

It was a new departure for MacLennan to attempt a psychological study such as this. Forgetting some of the works of Morley Callaghan and Grove, he even considered that it was a type of fiction unheard of in Canada before. At any rate, coming to grips with such intimate truths of character as he was now dealing with was difficult: 'I find myself still more faced with Freud's statement that in psychology courage is almost everything'. Apparently he felt that he had found the courage to come to grips with his characters. On 5 July 1950 he sent off the manuscript of Each Man's Son to Angus Cameron in New York and to John Gray in Toronto with a confident flourish. 'Nobody ever wrote a book even vaguely like this in Canada before' (230). He thought Canadian writers, like those in Britain and the United

States, could now take their background for granted. With this novel, for the first time, he felt free to concentrate on whatever he wanted. To him, it looked like the real point of departure for Canadian literature.

MacLennan had turned for models to the real giants: the classical Greek tragedies he had studied and the Sakespearean plays he revered. This was the literature he thought of when he used the terms 'universal' and 'heroic'. The Greeks emphasized a well-structured plot and the three unities of time, place and action. He would follow suit. His subject lent itself well to heroic treatment: both the heroism of his Calvinist protagonist, who must transcend his loss of faith and overcome his guilt in order to break through to an acceptance of human error in himself and others, and the more down-to-earth heroism of his prize-fighter Archie. Shakespeare had shown how local rustics with their bawdy jokes could be used for comic relief in a tragedy. MacLennan wished to cast the pawky people of Cape Breton in the same role. He could take Glace Bay for granted, adapt tried and true techniques from his models, and concentrate on the intrinsic story alone.

MacLennan's great achievement in his novel was understood, despite all the quibbling over revision that preceded the publication of Each Man's Son. In Dr. Ainslie he created an extraordinary character. Even critic Harding had agreed that 'the doctor, with his Calvinistic Cape Breton hound of heaven snapping at his heels is excellently drawn' ("New Departures,"

Hugh MacLennan 233). Certainly, he knew that his character was 'unsympathetic' and he feared that he would be considered 'an unsuccessful character if only for that reason'. He had used Ainslie both as the protagonist and as the structural pivot on which the resolution of both the main plot and the sub plot depended. In his struggle for creative self-realization, Ainsley's main antagonist is his own inner "beast" of self-repressive guilt. In his lesser quest for fatherhood, Ainsley has two potential rivals. One is the well-educated but morally corrupt Louis Camire, who wastes his life through a blind faith in a coming socialist revolution. The other is the primitive boxer Archie MacNeil -- a working-class man of exceptional physical strength but weak intelligence. As MacNeil lacks self-control and becomes a violent, punch-drunk murderer, he is the very essence of barbarism. In the end, the adulterous and deluded Camire is murdered by a vengeful MacNeil, and MacNeil, in turn, is brought to heel by Ainsley. Ainsley's main victory, however, is over his own self-repressive guilt.

A truly civilized life necessarily involves a conscious love of the mystery in all life, especially the inner life-force of one's own self; neurotic obsessions, whether sexual, political, religious or existential, which can misdirect, repress, or destroy this inner vitality, are to be avoided. The main protagonists for this truly civilized life are George Stewart and Catherine Carey. George Stewart comes from a well-established family. Despite his feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, and despite his temporary agreement

with left-wing political theories during the Great Depression, he manages to avoid the obsessive "disease" of political Messianism (245). He keeps in reasonable perspective the "logic" of both class warfare and the struggle against Fascism (157-58). He maintains this sense of proportion by insisting on the passionate and irrational element in politics and by postulating that life is surrounded by mystery and by the Unknowable (227). At the same time, Stewart manages to work effectively as a journalist and to realize his inner life force through his joyful relation with Catherine. Possessing a strong life force Catherine comes from an upper section of society (302). Despite her physical disability and her sense of failure as a wife to Jerome, she also is able to resist the psychological "disease" of political messianism (151). She realizes herself as a wife, mother, and painter (8).

The antagonist in this struggle is the ambiguous, character of Jerome Martell. His background is mixed. He begins his life in a logging-camp world characterized by a crudeness and violence that leaves him emotionally insecure for life (153); nevertheless, he receives a privileged education, first with a respectable middle-class clerical family in Halifax and later in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University. Although he eventually becomes a respected surgeon in Montreal, his strict religious upbringing followed by a wartime experience in which he kills eleven men render him vulnerable to a neurotic obsession. To assuage feelings of guilt, he converts from Protestant Christianity to a secular faith - a revolutionary, anti-fascist, left-wing political

persuasion - and then uses his life-preserving medical skills in the service of this cause. In the end, Martell departs from the scene of political struggle to perform medical services in a remote region of Canada, the implication being that the civilized values of George Stewart are to prevail.

It was of Montreal MacLennan was thinking - the city that was like part of his own soul - as he began to write The Watch That Ends the Night. He called Montreal 'City of Two Souls' and regarded it as the 'crucible of the nation's future'. The dynamic mix of English and French, of European and North American, made the city seem to him 'a vital organism', a covetous, bawdy, exciting place.

In Barometer Rising, MacLennan had tried to express the new nationalism by illustrating Canada's release from the bonds of colonialism and demonstrating the necessity for a 'non-committal' attitude towards both Britain and the United States. In Two Solitudes he had tried to show that in Canada's state of 'becoming' a modern state based on the co-operation of two different nationalities was a model that could be useful for the entire Western world. Both The Precipice and Each Man's Son had tried to put a finger on one of the central traits of the nation - an inflexible Puritanism, different from the American version, which was both the nation's strength and its demon. Neither of these last two novels had quite captured what he wanted. Now he groped, as if in the dark, for something so elusive he could get at it only

through theories that seemed somewhat preposterous. What indeed was the nature of Canada's national character? In MaLennan's long letter to John Gray he made a preliminary attempt to answer the above question.

> It is a fact today that the destinies of millions of people are not affected by their own characters at all, but by the policies of nations .. . where individual character was destiny before, national character seems destiny now. I have felt this deeply for a long time, ever since World War II began. And it was this feeling, probably more than anything else, which was responsible for the nature of at least two of my novels before Each Man's Son. People who don't feel this way about national character, naturally have thought that a book like The Precipice was cold and intellectual. At any rate it was a relative failure ("Plumbing the Depths" 253).

> But if you look back on the great dramatic characters - Oedipus, Faust, Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Macbeth - only Hamlet is credible today, assuming Hamlet to be a modern man. No modern man could ignore so blindly the warning signs of impending danger as did the others unless he were mad, in which case he would not be

> tragic. The last great tragic heroes were Capt. Ahab [Moby Dick] and Rubashov [Darkness at Noon], and it is significant that Rubashov was not so much the symbol as the incarnation of communistic intellectualism. But any other man intelligent enough to be a great general [Macbeth and Othello], or a great king (Oedipus) would inevitably have enough sophistication, enough knowledge of society and psychology, to withhold his decisive actions until he had verified the evidence. At least, any modern civilized man would so act ("Plumbing the Depths" 253).

MacLennan argues that on the other hand, this is not true of nations. Nations are apparently as incapable of heeding warning signs as were primitives like Othello and Oedipus. Nations succeed or fail according to their characters, and in the case of nation after nation, the individual tragic flaw has brought them to visible ruin before our eyes. Germany was Faust (the ablest and blindest of all the tragic heroes). The flaw in France 'La peur d'etre dupe' - the over-trust in the intellect which enables France as a nation to be satisfied if she can analyse a situation in such a way as to uphold her intellectual vanity even at the cost of her existence. The flaw in the United States is the flaw of adolescent pride, which is constantly at war with the good side of that same adolescent who has received a very moral upbringing

and can't understand why everyone doesn't like him, who doesn't want to grow up. According to the novelist the United States is so complicated and yet so transparent.

But a country like ours, at least up to the moment, is at best a sort of Horatio to Hamlet - though the U.S.A. is not much of a Hamlet ("Letters to John Gray" 254).

The above diatribe, reveals MacLennan's keen dislike of one assumption on which much fiction of the time was based that character determines destiny. His own personal experience had been exactly the contrary, and it was out of intense personal frustration that his aesthetic theories arose. Like an Oyster, MacLennan was turning inward, going back again and again to the indigestible grit of his life experience, trying to make of it something with meaning and value.

MacLennan had revered Shakespeare along with the classical writers of Greece and Rome, as a writer in the heroic tradition who struck universal themes. Later he changed his stand and called into question the validity of the term 'hero' in relation to Shakespeare characters. According to MacLennan, in the context of modern society, with its extensive communications systems and universal scientific education, men like Othello, and Macbeth simply could not possess the 'tragic flaws' upon which their destinies pivot. Only Hamlet's dilemma had kept pace with the evolution of

civilization. In an essay written in 1955 called 'Shakespeare Revisited', he refined the view to conclude that in Shakespeare's work there was a shocking absence of heroes: More than any other writer who ever lived, he took it for granted that decent men are dull. Worse still he assumed they were all dupes. He does not offer a single truly religious person in the whole folio, none who is at once steadfast, intelligent and competent.

MacLennan could not agree to the premise that 'character is destiny', for to him the forces of fate lay beyond the control of the individual. Instead, the individual's life was subject, more than anything else, to the policies of nations. The trouble with following this modern trend in fiction was that it had already been done to death: characters had become too ordinary to be termed 'great' or 'tragic'. It became his personal challenge to find some concept of man's relation to the contemporary world that would reveal his role in the face of destiny yet avoid the depressing and, by now, trite conclusion that life is insignificant and man worthless. If neither Shakespeare nor modern English fiction provided suitable models, how were man's heroism and life's value to be dramatized in modern times? Deeper still was the issue of national character, and MacLennan began to answer his question by changing the theory of character as destiny to national character as destiny. He theorized to John Gray that 'Tragic flaws' might seem improbable in individuals, but such flaws could easily be detected in the blindness of entire nations.

MacLennan compared Canada as Horatio to the United State's Hamlet. It suggested that Canada was at best a minor character in a world drama in which the United States played a major role, Horatio being no more than a 'side-kick', a willing collaborator, to the glamorous Hamlet. Canada's national 'flaw', as MacLennan recognized, was that it was curiously undramatic: in reaching nationhood gradually, without the suffering that usually accompanies such rites of passage, it did not lend itself to conventional heroics. He sensed that it was going to be inordinately difficult to create a hero who could at one and the same time be 'great' and yet represent the nation. It seemed to MacLennan quite impossible to translate his thoughts into a contemporary novel.

In an essay in 1955 "The Transition Ends," MacLennan analysed the new state of the world and the era of change which had ushered it in.

> The agonizing transition which followed the end of the Victorian epoch has at last ended. What has resulted from the recent class war in the West and the struggle for power in Europe we can now see pretty clearly. It is unity - not the unity of the true believer, but the unity of disillusioned men who have settled for the mundane principle that life must go on regardless of the number of ideas which must be sacrificed. It is strange, It is almost

> fantastic, to compare the social atmosphere of twenty years ago to that of today, who in 1935 could have believed that the European balance of power would count for so little in 1955? What socialist of the hungry thirties dreamed of the day when he would be a bureaucrat working for the Technical Assistance Department of United Nations, relying gratefully on the capacity of General Motors and General Electric to produce a surplus? What prophet of the Hitler Decade guessed that Hitler's Beyond-This-Nothing War would result in unprecedented prosperity for the West? Does history always mock its makers? Did all thinkers think irrelevantly, all those heroes die irrelevantly, all those prophets prophesy irrelevantly? (257).

For MacLennan, the answer to above questions was 'Not quite'. He argued, 'The chief feature of this new age is the final acknowledgement by the West that the principles of democracy apply to all mankind'.

In his unpublished novel A Man Should Rejoice the question that had hounded him had been whether a human being could feel significance when he lived in an age of transition. In Barometer Rising he had related the Halifax explosion in an earlier war to the wild devastation afoot in the

Second World War once fascism and capitalism were unleashed; by the time MacLennan wrote Two Solitudes he had done his best to turn Canada's state of "becoming" a nation out of its diverse elements into a reflection of a move towards unity throughout the whole Western World. In The Precipice he had analysed some of the forces behind the transition - capitalism in particular - and had shown the negative results of accelerated change. As the transition apparently came to an end in the uneasy truce between East and West known as the 'Cold War', he combined a number of these earlier concerns in the widest consideration of human history he had attempted.

MacLennan believed that it was in the character of the fictional hero that an age reveals its inner meaning. It was natural for him to look carefully at the representative heroes the transition had produced: Conrad's Kurtz, Galsworthy's Soames along with the heroes of Proust, Joyce, Hemingway and Koestler, all demonstrated the obsession with loneliness and escape from the haunted self that MacLennan believed was typical of the neurotic age that had spanned the first half of the twentieth century.

Taking into consideration his own book MacLennan asked himself the question: 'What manner of man will the hero become in this new, more stable age? He reflected that the hero would be more intelligent than the haunted men of the transition, less desperate, less neurotic, and more willing to accept life as it is. As it is with men, so it is with nations. Only by accepting their

own limitations can they become wise; only by facing down their own fears can they hope to be happy.

All along, MacLennan's greatest difficulty as a writer had been to find a focus for his material. He wanted to let what he called the 'great themes' shape themselves organically from within to reflect life. But he did not want his novels to become shapeless. He failed to find a satisfactory resolution to this problem. His first novel Barometer Rising, while beautifully focussed, had been too limiting by leaving out so much he wanted to express. In Two Solitudes, Athanese Tallard had run away leaving the protagonist Paul far behind. In The Precipice MacLennan lodged his point of view unwisely in his heroine. In Each Man's Son, great themes were not treated. To compound this dilemma, the attention of critics and public alike had lavished on his so-called nationalism distracted his energies from this purely fictional problem. Basking in the praise his themes evoked; acutely responsive to the need Canada expressed for a spokesman in fiction, he had mistaken technical problems for cultural ones. As he was seduced from his wider ambitions by the more narrow success of national popularity, he had proceeded in an ambivalent way. He wished that he had been born elsewhere, where fiction had a base in tradition, a recognizable identity, and a ready market.

MacLennan maintained the belief that Canadians had nothing to learn from the Americans. Canadians must resign themselves to writing good

books and forget about attempting to crack the United States market. 'We in Canada must paddle our own canoe' (Hugh MacLennan 261), he emphatically concluded in an image that found its way into the very heart of his novel. He was of the opinion that the best fiction shows the soul of a man of good will: 'He is a lonely man, often guilt-haunted without knowing why, religious even in his agnosticism, deeply caring even when he shrugs his shoulders. He yearns desperately for a change from the technological nightmare in which he finds himself. The novel, he asserted, must return to people again and a belief in the value of the individual' (Each Man's Son 262).

MacLennan was late in recognizing what was by that time a commonly held theory - that the revolution from third person to first person fiction, begun by Joyce, Woolf and Faulkner, was intimately related to the times. He had himself experimented with the first person and he had tried a stream-of-consciousness technique for some parts of his novel. As the novel failed to get a publisher he did not like writers who had used the first person in their works. Looking inward had so often meant narrowing the arena of human experience, and he had not looked to those writers for inspiration.

The base of inspiration for his novel The Watch That Ends the Night was provided by the city of Montreal. Over and over again he explored aspects of the city—its geography, its hospitals, its politics, its art shows,

even its streetcar conductors. In the city, he maintained, good and evil are juxtaposed in stark contrast and with greater intensity than elsewhere. Above and beyond that, Montreal remained for him 'the heart of Canada' both politically and culturally. Once again, in expressing these views, he revealed his growing self-confidence; making the best of circumstances he convinced himself that he had had the best possible environment for a writer—a childhood in small communities and now the anonymity of a large city, which allowed him not only the freedom to say whatever he wished but also located him at the hub of his nation's life.

The young MacLennan who had grown up a conservative and had flirted with Marxism in the thirties, toying with liberalism and socialism along the way, had become a reasonably independent political commentator, but with increasingly conservative leanings. After the second World War, when events such as the Berlin blockade and the coup in Czechoslovakia had appeared to him to be part of a deliberate strategy of aggression on the part of the Soviet Union, he had come to oppose communist principles strongly, for communism in the service of Russian Imperialism was a far cry from the society he imagined it might bring about two decades earlier. He was also critical of United States imperialism in the Far East, he wrote articles such as 'The Albatross' (1955) arguing for peace and neutrality wherever possible. Reflecting the political orthodoxy of his day, he saw Canada's international role as that of 'middleman, encouraging co-operation and compromise, but

one in which of necessity, ties with the United States formed the bedrock of Canada's foreign policy. On the whole MacLennan preferred the British system of government to either republican democracy or communism.

In Canada, he felt little sympathy for the Liberal Government, even though he voted for its return to power in 1953 on the grounds that its members were able administrators and the most likely to preserve national unity. His disappointment with the conservative party, with whom he had more understanding occasionally surfaced and later he felt that the Liberal Party was falling out of popular favour and the Liberal government over the years had combined the worst features of socialism with 'the worst features of capitalism'. In the course of writing these political commentaries, he was clarifying his own views as well as working out the political stage for his novel The Watch that Ends the Night.

In his essays like "The Curtain Falls on the Grand Style: A Dramatic Account of the English People" (1957), "Joseph Haydn and Captain Bligh" (1953), "Confessions of a Wood-chopping Man" (1956), he was sufficiently at ease in his writing to produce work that was beautifully structured, intellectually interesting, and deeply felt. Essays such as these moved with natural free-association around a well-structured set of ideas, revealing character at every step. He had come to see that the essayist uses facts as a catalyst to reveal his own personality. He wrote his best essays with an

authenticity that revealed not only his growing self-confidence but also his trust in his readers. In the torrent of essays and addresses he turned again and again to the theories of fiction that were to mould and shape the novel The Watch that Ends the Night. The most important of these ideas were expressed in a paper called "The Artist and Critic in Society", which he had been invited to deliver at a conference at Princeton in 1953.For him art had a purpose - it was useful. The artist's function and duty is this, he maintained, "within a framework of truth to make compensation for the human predicament." MacLennan stated succinctly a moral view of literature in which he diverged from current trends. He believed that there must be some genuine emotion if the communication could be called an artistic one. He termed much modern writing 'bruises without healing' and decided that for him such a lack of affirmation was unacceptable.

In MacLennan's enumeration of the aspects of life Hemingway had regrettably overlooked can be seen his intentions for his own next novel:

> Thoughtful men cannot help living on mental levels that are distinct from physical ones. Rational men discuss their own neuroses, they are interested in science, they become involved in a multitude of activities for which the Hemingway style lacks an adequate vocabulary. They argue about communism and democracy, are

> concerned with high cost of living and getting on in their jobs, they worry about their children's education and the danger of another depression. They show an interest in women as personalities, not as mere embodiments of a sensual dream. In short, their minds, their ambitions, their awareness of themselves as coherent, complex personalities involved in a mundane existence make them entirely unsuitable as catalysts for Hemingway. Such men are even apt to wonder at times how they can save their souls ("Homage to Hemingway" 92).

While MacLennan was learning certain things about Hemingway from English prose course, he was also picking up information in his modern novel course.

MacLennan held the view that fiction should aim at younger generation and students thought highly of Joseph Conrad, a writer he himself admired. According to him older people seemed to prefer non-fiction and lighter work. He thought that the younger generation were so disgusted with the false optimism of western official society that it was one thing against which they could be relied on to react with violence.

For a moral view that coincided with his own MacLennan turned to South African writer Alan Paton. It was rather Paton's artistic morality that

attracted him. Paton was a writer in a position similar to his own, who lived and wrote in a country that was not then of prime significance in the world scene.

In The Watch That Ends the Night, beginning in the present with Jerome's telephone call to George naturally stirs into action memories concerning both men which hinge on the pivotal character Catherine, to whom they are both actually married. It is natural that George thinks first of his own and Catherine's past lives, then that he should turn to the recollection of Jerome's account of his childhood. These two memory streams merge naturally into a common flow once all three lives intermingle. By the time the sequence of recollections reaches the present again, the reader can feel the truth of George's sense that an age has passed since Jerome's call that morning. MacLennan for the first time in his fiction, successfully recreated mind-time by knocking the complacent George off course with the flood of memories that must inevitably ensue on Jerome's call. As George speculates on life itself:

> I thought about Jerome and wondered what he had done the night before, and I thought of him as I remembered him in the past. What is time anyway? The past seemed part of the present today. Time had lost its shape Time is a cloud in which we live while the breath is in us.

> When was I living, now or twenty-five years ago, or in all those periods of my life simultaneously? (35).

After this 'cloud' of time is reproduced, in which past and present are lived simultaneously, the final progression of the story neatly and naturally resolves the conflicts into a satisfying affirmation. On a CBC Anthology programme published as "The Story of a Novel" (1960), MacLennan recounted the entire process by which he so slowly and laboriously wrote this book. His general theory about fiction stated here simply reflected his personal views, as it had so often before:

> Somewhere around 1950, it seems to have occurred to millions of readers that this kind of external action [Shakespeare's] - this drama played as a means of revealing the tragic nature of man - was apt to be both inaccurate and inadequate. . . If they [modern novels] were tragic they usually dealt with outcasts, with men excessively violent, with men excessively primitive, with men excessively criminal.
>
> Around this time, it seemed to me, as it seemed to the educated public, that the basic human conflict was within the individual. But how to find an artistic form for this concept? That was the question. Certainly the

> novelists failed who wrote clinically; they absolutely failed to purge the soul of pity and terror, which is art's supreme function . . . Somehow I was going to write a book which would not depend on character-in-action, but on spirit-in-action. The conflict here, the essential one, was between the human spirit of Every man and every man's human condition (Elspeth Cameron 275).

No greater example of the conflict between the human spirit and man's condition can be imagined than that with which he had lived daily for the decade just before he published The Watch That Ends the Night. Dorothy's condition had worsened during that time. The horror of her oncoming death held MacLennan in its grip and seemed to haunt him into trying to make a sense of world in which such things could happen. It seemed at times to MacLennan that this long, drawn-out torture was a perfect example of flies to wanton boys. But the whole process also signified Dorothy's tremendous will to live. More than once she announced proudly: 'Well, I've fooled them again'. (39) a phrase Catherine Martell was to use frequently in The Watch That Ends the Night. Fittingly the novel was dedicated to Dorothy; 'To you wherever and whatever you may be, my thanks and this book'. In the characters of Catherine and George Stewart, he came to terms with the personal conflicts he was both observing and enduring. Through Catherine he shows the positive element. Dorothy's example provided of inner strength

in the face of staggering adversity. Dorothy had had to abandon her writing career at its height in 1948, before she had completed the novel she had begun.

In Jungian terms MacLennan's character Catherine was a pure 'anima' figure. As such, for MacLennan, she reflected not only Dorothy but the essence of femininity in all the women who had affected him. Her name, like Katheleen's in Two Solitudes, derives from his mother's, as does the contralto voice so typical of all his heroines. Like his mother, like his youthful sweetheart Jean Shaw, like Dorothy, and like all his heroines, she is dark-haired and opulent. In her is combined the positive force of a strong spirit, a spirit in time with nature's cycles, and the negative power of what Robertson Davies has so accurately called the 'spiritual vampire'. Like the Sirens of Homer, to whom she is compared in the novel, Catherine is at once the power of the anima and a snare for all men. Catherine, through these same powers for good and evil, by her sheer forcefulness and by the hold she has on both Jerome and George, exemplifies the 'spirit-in-action' MacLennan wanted to portray; the battle between her spirit and her fate partakes of a depth and universality that he had always tried to capture. But it is the character of Jerome Martell, also an archetypal figure, that he saw as the 'key figure' in The Watch That Ends the Night.

More than any real life models, or combination thereof, MacLennan felt that Jerome Martell had swept into being on one of those waves of his own unconscious that washed over him from time to time. In Jerome, consequently are combined all the qualities associated with the man of action. He is at once MacLennan's doctor father and all fathers-powerful, larger than life, courageous, intelligent, primitive. Just as Catherine is all women, Jerome is all the men of action MacLennan had admired and envied. Jerome's mysterious healing powers, like Catherine's creative virtues, are coupled with immense destructive capabilities. Both these strong characters pit their energies against the force of the circumstances into which they are born.

MacLennan's determination and his own sense of quest to 'paddle his own canoe' as he had termed his endeavour with this novel, that inspired the seminal dream about Jerome which he thought formed 'the core' of his book. Jerome represents a side of MacLennan that found expression in athletics and in his rugged persistence with his writing, but that side of him stood in relation to his whole personality in somewhat the same way that a minor key reflects the major to which it is related.

George Stewart is both the major key of MacLennan's self and the new hero he had been trying to define, a hero that, would faithfully reflect the times. With Stewart, the novelist transformed the love triangle he had

already used in each of his novels into a modern psychomachia, or drama of the soul. All three main characters merge inside George to some extent, dramatizing the choices he must make in life. Catherine has held sway in his soul from childhood; Jerome in the extraordinary scene when Catherine recovers from her last embolism, actually seems to become one with George spiritually.

Like so many of MacLennan's earlier heroes, George is the naïve, speculative man. Like Angus Murray, Paul Tallard, Bruce Fraser, and Dr. Ainslie, George is the observer who is contrasted with the man of action. Although MacLennan was unconscious of it, his character George reflects well the rational traits he had earlier thought might be represented by Horatio. Heroism for him, as for his author and his nation, lies in his extraordinary powers of endurance. MacLennan chose the most effective point of view to focus the psychomachia that had always attracted him.

It was really only with The Watch that Ends the Night that the novelist was to find the right artistic form through which to present his story. That story was essentially a religious one. Indeed, as he described it, the experience of writing this novel, had been, in the deepest sense, a 'revelation'. As MacLennan once declared 'In absolute humility I felt that the Lord touched me at the end of this novel and I was only thankful I didn't quite break down under the final strain'. Or, as he wrote after travelling to

Scotland. "In the course of writing I became a religious man, and the book is essentially religious in nature. One night in the Highlands its real theme came to me. It is contained in the verse of the 90th psalm: 'Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men" ("Plumbing the Depths," Hugh MacLennan 286).

The stories of MacLennan's characters, he decided, like Tolstoy's, would be given their place in the historical events of the time in the most natural manner possible.

MacLennan had scanned the course of human history searching for the man he most would like to have been. After surveying a vast panorama of military leaders, athletes, explorers, scientists, inventors, writers, he fixed on the religious ecstasy of Handel during the period he wrote The Messiah.

MacLennan worked out his personal view of life in the character of George Stewart. George plumbs the depths of human despair and feels every best and murderous impulse of which man is capable. Like Marlow in Conrad's Heart of Darkness, he travels down into his soul to find only the perversion of human energy; in the midst of this chaos, however, he ironically feels the spontaneous transformation of this energy into form, morality, and love. It is no accident that MacLennan, as he concluded the novel, turned to the religious music of Bach and Beethoven and found there a reinforcement for what was happening to him and, through him, to his

character George Stewart. In an essay written in 1957 called "Triumph, the story of a Man's Greatest Moment", MacLennan had scanned the course of human history searching for the man he most would like to have been. For George Stewart, the revelation of light arising out of darkness enables him to make sense of the mystery of human life and to affirm it; in Catherine he can see eventually the destructive power he had formerly associated with Jerome; simultaneously he can see that the strength of virtue is equally in Jerome.

The Watch That Ends the Night was acclaimed in Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Germany, assuring MacLennan's reputation as a writer throughout the English-speaking world and beyond. He told an interviewer a couple of months after the novel came out that the novel was a very good, very competent book. To the same interviewer he stated: 'while' The Watch doesn't avoid many of the basic tragedies of the human condition still it doesn't "look back in anger". I felt a revolution of this sort was necessary if the novel as a genre was to live:

> This was the novel that had been trying to write its way out of him from the very beginning; in it are all the 'great themes' he had already wrestled with, merged with all the significant life experiences he had since known, presented from a vantage point that, more than any other, spoke of his philosophy of life and art. Finally, he

> had got it right. He felt that he had written himself 'across a frontier or through' a sound-barrier? (Elspeth Cameron 301).

The Theme of MacLennan's next novel Return of the Sphinx is also a variation of the Oxyrynchian argument. Fundamental to this novel is the idea that, despite the neurotic fanaticism of a small group of young separatists who have deluded themselves into preferring a terrorist means of resolving social problems, Canada will remain a civilized country in which the French and English will accommodate their differences in a reasonable way.

Alan Ainsley, the foster child of Dom Ainsley in Each Man's Son is the main protagonist of the novel Return of the Sphinx. His adoption and up-bringing by Dr. Ainsley and his marriage to a woman from an old Quebec family make him a member of the upper section of Canadian society, his work as a foreign service officer, magazine publisher, and federal cabinet minister enhances this qualification. His several contributions to civilization are also made clear. Before the action of the novel begins, he has fought bravely against Nazi Germany. He has also done what he can at the United Nations to facilitate peaceful co-existence between the superpowers, and has opposed the economic domination of Canada by U.S. monopolists. His main role in the novel is to oppose his son's substitute religion of nationalism and

terrorism and to work for a reasonable accommodation between the English and French out of a hope that Canada will be reasonable enough to "accept its own nature" and thus become "priceless to mankind" (Hugh MacLennan 120). Ainsley is given moral support in this role by Gabriel Fleury, the aristocratic, well educated, architect from France. Joe Lacombe, the officer who flew with Ainsley during the Second World War, is a second protagonist. While he understands and empathises with the concerns of Quebec separatists, he works to present terrorist violence. By virtue of their well-reasoned acts, Alan Ainsley and Joe Lacombe are the mentors of civilization.

Daniel Ainsley is the main antagonist in the conflict. He is named after and resembles his biological grandfather, Archie McNeil -- the miner and boxer who murdered his wife and her lover in a fit of insane violence. Schooled in the Puritanism of Jansenist Catholicism and suffering psychologically from a neurotic hatred for his father, he eventually turns for identity and comfort to the surrogate religion of tribal nationalism and to terrorism. In his paranoia, he imagines himself to be national martyr-saviour. Clearly, the potential for a development of civilization does not lie with this character.

Most of historically peaceful French Canada is willing to co-operate with enlightened leaders to preserve civilization in Canada. Among the

lower sections of society, there is an analogous polarisation. The proto-barbarians are the street rioters and the audiences of Daniel's television programme who are comforted by their uncritical faith in the religion of nationalism.

In a letter to Gray in 1967 MecLennan wrote: 'the nation is still in an oedipal dilemma. English-Canada for years refused to accept responsibility of the father's role however painful. She resents Father England because he has lost his power.

As Dorothy Tyler put it in the Detroit News: 'MacLennan sees the trouble and violence in his own Quebec as merely a cube in the mosaic of fury and destruction sweeping the world in our time. . . . He notes the sexual explosion that has always preceded a cataclysm in civilization. What, therefore, are we in for? So the sphinx might be asking. Moreover, we live in a world in which both Marxian and post-Marxian ideas are at work. Scott Donaldson in the 'Minneapolis Tribune' realizes that 'MacLennan clearly intends for the reader to draw the analogy to unrest in American cities, and to war and forms of social disorder elsewhere (336)

The young, MacLennan came close to saying, would be better understood by reading Return of the Sphinx than by pooh-poohing established writers:

> What is going in McGill now is more frightening than the separatist movement and, without arrogance, I can say I understand it completely -- or nearly completely. Anyone who works with hundreds of the youth as I do, who knows and accepts Rattray Taylor's Sex in History, knows the true causes underlying all this. I'll add another of my own: this drug taking, decadence and abandonment of all reason and principle in the west-government and radical young -- is precisely what our ancestors meant when they spoke of the hand of the Lord. In modern times, it's the built in instinct of self-preservation within a living species. Only by complete decadence of will in the USA and western technological society can, apparently, the human race be spared for another try. That is what I mean by the sphinx's return. . . . Nor need the decadence last longer than another decade before a patrist reaction sets in (337)

Return of the Sphinx had dealt so openly and vehemently with anti-American sentiments in Canada, its greatest success lay south of the border. It was American critical reception and American sales that encouraged MacLennan to think about writing another novel.

In MacLennan's eyes, the force that most threatened to tear apart the nation, and mankind in general, was the other side of man's inherent nature -- the instinct to kill. In his article for the Toronto 'Telegram' he pointed his finger directly at the ascent of technology, as enemy to the humanitarian attitude towards life he believed necessary to preserve the entire human species. The war-mongering that had resulted in two world wars during his lifetime was an obvious example.

Unless readers pay heed to certain "voices in time", western civilization, including civilization in Canada, will come to an end through both a holocaust and barbarism; in fact, the forces making for this degeneration are so strong that the worst may now be inevitable.

Technology is now driven largely by its own dynamic momentum, loosening man's control and unleashing unknown forces. It is inculcating in man's mind a culture of dependency, eroding his cognitive and deductive powers. Over-dependence on technology may result in an atrophy of human intellect. Man may be an incidental beneficiary or unintended victim but he is now marginal to the march of technology. A nuclear Armageddon, either through computer malfunctioning, terrorism or a desperate act of a cornered ruler is a real possibility. That it has not happened so far is sheer happenstance and good luck.

John Wellfleet and Conrad Dehmel, are the main protagonists for civilization in the novel Voices in Time. Both men learn from their mistakes. Wellfleet comes from a family whose business has failed. As a teenager during the 1970s, he cultivates a proto-barbaric culture involving drugs, sexual promiscuity, scholastic laziness, and defiance of traditional authority. After living through a nuclear holocaust brought about by his society, he mends his ways and works for a renaissance of civilization. He develops an interest in the arts and sciences -- in poetry, music, and especially history. He even finds a new historical meaning in Conrad Dehmel's doctoral thesis about a "lost city" in ancient Egypt. This meaning is consistent with the analysis given earlier in this paper of MacLennan's own doctoral dissertation on the lost city of Oxyrhynchus.

Conrad Dehmel, the second proponent of civilization comes from an ancient and cultured family. Although Dehmel studies hard as a youth and becomes a disciplined scholar in the field of history, his neurotic motives for doing so - his desire for an acceptable 'release' from his father, for escape, and for a grandiose academic career - make him blind both to the human significance of his findings as a historian and to the signs of the coming barbarism in his own society. After Dehmel learns to think more deeply and truly as a result of his experiences in Nazi Germany and after he falls in love with the enlightened Hanna Elrich, he becomes the advocate of certain civilized values. These include a deep concern about the capability of the

human brain to function reasonably in an age when it cannot grasp all the information that is available . They also include opposition to terrorism as a means of social change, opposition to the "exploitation of paranoia by experts in paranoia", an affirmation of the right of a democratic state to enforce its own laws, opposition to student riots, which threaten to burn down universities, opposition to chauvinistic nationalism as the substitute for religion, and a respect for the right to personal privacy. Above all, these values predicted on a respect for facts and truth.

A third protagonist for civilization is the young Andre Gervais. It is Gervais the member of a small company formed to begin the re-building of a new city on the site of the ruined Metro - who initiates the renaissance of civilization. He is interested in many aspects of human culture, music, science, engineering, architecture, archaeology, and historical truth. He also treasures books and is excited by moral philosophy. He celebrates individual responsibility and self-realization.

The main opponent of civilization is Timothy Wellfleet, the broadcaster cousin of John Wellfleet. Timothy is enthralled by his quasi-religious devotion to sex, and he also suffers from paranoia. He is cynical about his society, takes little interest in history, respects no one but himself and distorts truth. He designs his television broadcasts to titillate the emotions of an ignorant, mass audience.

The common man as perceived by Timothy is an ignorant, deluded, and docile entity. He belongs to lower section of society that is pressing towards barbarism. His basic nature is ape-like, and he is as likely to suffer from mass psychoses as the common man in Hitler's Germany. Only one member of the lower section of society is patiently on the side of civilization as envisioned by Conrad Dehmel - the kind, old forester who conceals Hanna Erlich and her father in a Black Forest Cottage.

In MacLennan's history and fiction, human life involves a perennial struggle between the forces of civilization and those of barbarism. The main proponents of civilization express their inner life force through the arts and sciences. They do so most easily in the context of a self-governing society and a free-enterprise economy, which takes for granted the activities of such business entrepreneurs as Sir Rupert Irons, Edward Tarnley, and Andre Gervais. The pied pipers of barbarism are typically individuals whose inner force is perverted or suppressed by a paranoid obsession stemming from either a guilt generating religion or a modern substitute for religion such as sexual romantic love, communism, and nationalism. In all of MacLennan's novels except in Voices in Time, the proponents of civilization prevail over their adversaries. In Voices in Time it is the adversaries of civilization who gain the upper hand in the end, and the forces that destroy our civilization are similar to those barbaric forces that destroyed the culture of Oxyrhynchus. In MacLennan's novels, history has repeated itself as fiction.

MacLennan uses the most striking aspects of the journey of two of his protagonists. Each implies some root attitude of the novel. Neil Macrae's in Barometer Rising, as the indomitable spirit of Canada, and Jerome's, in The Watch that Ends the Night, as a reaffirmation of the country's past after the catharsis of the Depression and the Second World War. Archie's return, as if from the dead, fits the plot and theme of Each Man's Son.

Jerome Martell's voyages of discovery in The Watch that Ends the Night meant going to war. Although MacLennan touches only briefly on the blood and anguish of battle, his heroes' experiences in the two great conflicts indicate the place war had in his thought. He makes the first the thematic centre of Barometer Rising. As Neil, a courageous and resourceful young man, had come home to throw down the gauntlet to privilege and intrigue that would willingly betray him to preserve its dying way of life, so Canada, a plucky and resourceful country would survive the war to become a new nation, freed of colonial status and gradually freeing itself from a complex that caused Canadians to belittle their country. Despite MacLennan's great admiration of Oxford, his books make no brief for the British or their mimics in Canada.

MacLennan subordinates his contempt of British imperialism to his disdain of Canadian colonialism. He reiterates this point in Two Solitudes, for, despite Barometer Rising, he apparently felt he had not talked himself

out on the subject or that Canada had not heard him right. Two Solitudes takes up the subject of conscription for armed service, that great federal axe of 1917 that split the nation into two solitudes, but does not develop it extensively. An ardent French-Canadian nationalist, Marius Tallard makes his voyage unwillingly, disillusioned by his own people and sacrificed to Janet Methuen. After these early episodes, he drops almost entirely from sight, like the whole matter of conscription, to live out his days disgruntled and embittered. Following Two Solitudes, war figures less as political implication than as ordeal by fire for the heroes and as a mirror of modern morality.

In The Precipice, Canada comes of age, but Bruce Fraser's observation that "you can almost see and hear Canada growing up" (14) is far less a refrain in a song of hope than a line from a study of his deeper concern that, in a plane "you love the moment when the bomb drops" (18). And during the years when Bruce contemplates the brutality of war, Carl Bratian and Stephen Lassiter go on making money, until Stephen, guilt-ridden because he sees the superficiality of his work at such a time, sets off alone to find out what life is about. Finally, as if to prove Stephen's assumption that the "only valid test of an idea was whether or not it would work" (21), the Americans bomb Hiroshima in a triumph of pragmatism and science over humanity, an explosion not to be read in terms of Canada and her political future, but of all men and their survival.

In The Watch that Ends the Night, his most religious novel, MacLennan set the same idea of the decay of civilization. Its title, neatly ironic about the contemporary situation, is a line from an old hymn and a phrase that soldiers of another great epoch knew as, they saw the dawn come to the wild outer lands where barbarians lurked, threats to Roman safety and Roman civilization. Atomic deterrents can no more save man than social theories. Only faith in the beauty and the spiritual meaning of life can rid him of his malaise and keep out the grisly forces ever knocking at the gate.

In the novel The Watch That Ends the Night a curious image of the thirties emerges. History is recreated here. George is conscious of the Depression only when he travels on weekends from Waterloo school, located in the country outside Montreal, into the city itself. Here he watches the crowds of unemployed flowing along St. Catherine Street. He feels guilt only because he has work and they have none. Then MacLennan moves George up the ladder of Montreal Society through renewed contact with Catherine.

> Along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia you grow up with the conviction that . . . . man, living with the shifting immutability of the ocean and the unshifting immutability of the granite rocks, can never dominate his fate . . . but must take life and the world as he finds them (Hugh MacLennan 8)

These concepts he expressed through the explosion in Barometer Rising and through the threatening presence of the mines in Each Man's Son. Yet, on one level, like Dr. Ainslie he tried to discountenance them, since he held that man can alleviate some of his distress through rationality. To believe otherwise, if faith offered only the frightening God of Calvinism, made life into a hopeless straight-jacket of pre-determined affairs or reduced it to the crazy freedom of mere accident. Involved in this problem of freedom is MacLennan's sense of history. To him the past had always seemed pertinent, revitalized as it was when, as a boy, he had "relived" the lives of the old Greek heroes. In the years that followed, his studies at Dalhousie (B.A.1929), Oxford (M.A.1932), and Princeton (Ph.D., 1935) confirmed his bent for history and his belief that history repeats itself. As Alan Ainslie, trying to find some spark of hope in his and Canada's future, remarks, "The Sphinx has returned to the world before, after all" (Return of the Sphinx 44). At its best the cyclical interpretation, though deterministic, holds forth the promise of another Golden age.

In Barometer Rising, none but the "elect" like Penny and Neil, steer safely between the Charybdis of accident (the Halifax explosion) and the Scylla of determinism. Here MacLennan writes about the loss of power to assert one's individualism in a society controlled by historical forces.

MacLennan's fiction is frequently peopled, then, with characters caught up in historical events the First and Second world Wars, the Depression and today's violent revaluation of social mores and structures. Depicting character as social being and individuality offers challenge enough but to an author like MacLennan, who focuses consistently on the forces of history the challenge increases.

In the novel Voices in Time the clever meshing of the life stories of three men who are representatives of three different generations roughly thirty years apart presents a portrait of the artist as an old man. Nowhere else in his work had MacLennan so closely related the concerns of his characters to his own struggles to give literary shape to his perceptions. John Wellfleet, in his monumental task of composing the contents of the boxes of family papers into a story, dramatizes MacLennan's own attempts to come to terms with his time and the people he has observed. Timothy Wellfleet's story traces the years from his birth in 1938,just before the Second World War up to the Destructions. The climax of his career is a Montreal Television news show he hosts during the October Crisis of 1970. As a result of his actions on this show, his stepfather Conrad Dehmel is assassinated. Dehmel's story is almost entirely set in Germany where he was born to the wife of a German naval officer in 1910. His life experience includes a revulsion from the First World War enthusiasms of his father and his love for a Jewish girl, which is blighted by forces increasingly beyond their control as Hitler comes

to power. Dehmel just barely survives the concentration camp at Belsen and recovers in North America where he eventually marries Stephanie and appears on Timothy's television show.

Timothy's show features explosive interviews with public figures. One of the instant marriage, instant family, instant coffee, instant jobs' generation, Timothy has justly taken his part in the consumer society first in advertising and then in television, like his entire generation, he has done his best to make the world like 'an international airport'. Nor is he troubled in his pursuit of selfish ends by any belief in God; his 'god' is technology; the powerful modern storehouse of scientific knowledge which he uses for irresponsible ends. Timothy is a representative of the kind of modern artist neither MacLennan nor John Wellfleet can tolerate.

Through Timothy, MacLennan comes close to parodying the vision of life and the kind of art which he had deplored formerly in writers. Self-centred stream of consciousness, to MacLennan ultimately reflected nothing but chaos and dark night. Such writing, according to MacLennan, does nothing to affirm life and lacks the form which the true artist must provide. John Wellfleet decides that it is up to him to make sense of this material, so alien to himself. 'There was little continuity', he complains of Timothy's contributions, and this meant it was impossible to let Timothy speak entirely for himself.' With masterful ability Wellfleet arranges long quotations direct

from Timothy into a meaningful sequence, linking them with his own recollections and observations.

'The murder of truth leads to the murder of people', MacLennan had stated in his article on the October Crisis of 1970. In the character of Timothy he dramatized the process by which this can happen. Creatively manipulating human responses through the technology he employs in the television studio, Timothy wields an enormous power over the lives of others. With purposes as trivial as mere entertainment or raw sensationalism, he carelessly makes and breaks reputations and lives with as little responsibility as that with which the S.S. Mont Blanc was loaded in Halifax harbour in 1917.

To live with no other god than that of technology, with no sense of history and no purpose other than the selfish whim of the moment, is to court disaster. As MacLennan demonstrated in Voices in Time, such a philosophy does result in murder, has already caused political terrorism, and could lead to the near destruction of the entire world.

Born in 1910 Dehmel, like MacLennan, has first idealized and then been repelled by the age of the hero in the First World War. Like MacLennan, he has been dominated by a strong-willed father who has served in the war. Like MacLennan Dehmel thinks of himself as having been an innocent victim trapped in history. "What should have been the prime of my

life was blighted by the place and the time where 'I spent it'," he laments in his memoirs (Voices in Time 22). It was the same for nearly all Germans of my age, and for hundreds of millions of others. We were robbed of our youth, of the best years of our lives, and this may explain why so many of us have failed the youth of today'. Dehmel combines in his life story both the tragic fate of the romantic and the blistering vision of man's 'heart of darkness' which Conrad recorded. Like, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of German Intelligence, who is Dehmel writ large, is caught in a chain of mathematical equations from which there is no escape. Like Canaris, Dehmel is 'trapped in the collapsing vaults of history' (362). Although Hanna Erlich, Dehmel's beloved has earlier realized that 'huge events and appalling personalities were poised to intervene in the personal lives of every living soul in Europe, the romantic streak in Dehmel refuses to accept this truth and for Hanna's sake he becomes a man of action whose interference in her life ironically leads to her capture, torture and death.

The only positive role the individual can play in a tragic era, Dehmel concludes, is to preserve something on which a new era can construct itself: "My old dreams of earning the right to belong to civilization as its interpreter vanished. What was needed now was not to belong to the old civilization, but to survive this nihilism in order to preserve the seeds of a new civilization" (Voices in Time 26). For John Welfleet, this statement serves as an inspiring example. Just as Dehmel's records of the major landmarks of the

German cities have played a constructive part in the rebuilding of urban centres after the war, so too will Wellfleet's record of these voices in time provide a potentially important moral guide to Andre Gervais and his friends in their reconstruction of Montreal.

MacLennan's novel Return of the Sphinx shows human history moving through eras of patrist and matrist ascendancy. Wellfleet's record also shows human history moving similarly. The extreme patrism of the 'millions of boy-men' responsible for imposing their fantasies of bigger and more powerful explosions on the world in two world wars is represented by two colonels reminiscent of the megalomaniac Colonel Wain in Barometer Rising: Colonel Gottfried Dehmel, Conrad's father, and Colonel Greg Wellfleet, Timothy's father. In Gervais, MacLennan hopefully imagines the rebirth of a patrist society which will constitute a coherent and moral era.

Such a view of history is cyclic, and MacLennan in Voices in Time refers back to the two historians whose work most influenced his own social history of the Roman Empire in his thesis at Princeton. Dehmel, who has also done a thesis on the lost civilization of Oxyrhynchus, agrees that the Russian progressive historian Rostovtzeff and the German philosopher Spengler were right in their notions of the rise and fall of empires.

Conrad Dehmel in Voices in Time, speculates on one occasion. "A civilization is like a garden cultivated in a jungle. As flowers and vegetables

grow from cultivated seeds, so do civilizations grow from carefully studied, diligently examined ideas and perceptions. In nature, if there are no gardeners, the weeds that need no cultivation take over the garden and destroy it" (62).

During his lifetime too many of the men who thought of themselves as civilization's gardeners, in nearly everything they did from the promotion of superhuman science to superhuman salesmanship, devoted the ambiguous genius of their programmed brains to the cultivation of the weeds. They watered them with the jungle rains of the media. The Klieg lights of the studios were their hothouses. In this image, which derives in part from a juxtaposition of the Garden of Eden and the fallen world, MacLennan contrasted the two inherent sides of man's nature: the altruistic and the aggressive.

MacLennan believes that there is a God of evolution who works through all life to create even disorder. There is, in other words, a purpose to even the most purposeless human behaviour. The reason man himself has such difficulty grasping this truth is that each man lives his life in a set of specifics so overwhelming that he cannot step aside and see the overall pattern. Only in old age can a man hope to look back and out over his own life and that of others with sufficient detachment and insight to sense its purpose. John Wellfleet dramatizes this process of detachment in the novel

Voices in Time. With this novel he successfully planned his universe with the same kind of purpose as his 'God of evolution', still allowing for the organic growth of story and characters. As his epitaph from Goethe's Faust states:

"You draw near once more, swaying shapes/That once showed yourself to the clouded gaze" (Hugh MacLennan 366). Both for MacLennan and for Wellfleet, things have become clear in old age that in youth could not be comprehended.

In MacLennan's address to the students at the University of British Columbia he had said:

> We live in a period where it is possible to recognize an objective pattern within history itself. We live in a tragic time, certainly. So did Shakespeare. But there is not a single Shakespearean tragedy which does not end upon a note of renewal. Megalomania, egotism and blind wickedness run their courses in Shakespeare, but a Fortinbras, a Montano, a McDuff or an Edgar—previously almost bit-players—enter at the end to restore sanity and recover the state ("Through Time and Space" 366).

And, it could be added, Horatio. Once again, MacLennan identified himself and his country not with the heroes like Lear, Macbeth, and Hamlet, who by taking major decisions revealed their tragic flaws and precipitated disaster, but with the bit-players who survive and carry on.

As the critic Katherine Govier off handedly observed: "The book is perhaps a lesson in how to live in unconscionable circumstances and keep the spirit alive" ("Through Time and Space" 28). MacLennan, in treating this theme through the ambivalence of power, especially as it is manifest in technology, is directly in one of the mainstreams of Canadian intellectual history.

The narrative power of the book speaks everywhere of the experienced artist. Quoting Andre Malraux to describe his experience in writing it, MacLennan said: "Jacob's struggle with the angels is what, really, I think writing a novel is . . . Writing the writer, rather than writing the book." Once he finished he confessed: 'I'll never write a serious novel again. It almost killed me" ("Through Time and Space" 371).

It is not so much that MacLennan's novels have signalled steps forward in national consciousness, as critics would have us believe, but that the evolution of his own life and his inherent nature symbolize that process and the nature of the majority of people living in Canada. The evolution he himself traced in his reminiscences, 'Fiction in Canada', from innocent

unconsciousness through national fervour to the experience of the world citizenship, parallels Canada's development from colony to nation: that development relied on reserves of the very qualities he drew on in his career - strong moral principles, hard work, caution, altruism, and persistence.

In Voices in Time, MacLennan set the story in the future not so much to predict things to come but to get a meaningful perspective on the present. He had come to feel that "History is the product of the fantasies of men" (Hugh MacLennan 377); it was for this reason, too that he adopted the future: he tried to reflect the fantasies he now observed moulding the lives of men in his novel's form.

Rudy Wiebe advises to find values which counter the western sense of history and its emphasis on transformation. Mavis Gallant who has lived in Europe for many years shows in her fiction how a different view of history can be applied to the contemporary situation. The difficult task in such fiction is the creation of a narrative line which gives credit to the twentieth century sense of historical forces operating in nature and yet shows that history forms but one aspect of cultural identity. Once achieved, such a narrative line allows the individual at least partial freedom from history. Both Rudy Wiebe's and Gallant's narrative art demonstrate the importance that culture plays in developing our sense of history, a lesson which Timothy Findley develops in The Wars (1977) and Famous Last Words (1981). The Wars forces

the reader to view with suspicion historical documents about World War I, and to engage in the actual making of history by witnessing the story of Robert Ross as he undergoes the experiences of war. The Wars does not ask the reader to observe history but to confront it. Just as history books are products of human industry and imagination, the past itself takes form through human invention and intervention, arranged in narrative form. No invisible book exists with the so-called "true facts". Consequently the past is something shaped in the present and in continual need of reshaping. As we observe Robert Ross with fellow soldiers, friends, family and lovers, it becomes clear that he can become a good officer only by throwing in his lot with those who blindly follow history's orders. Robert's position under Captain Leather contains obvious similarities to that of Neil with Wain in Barometer Rising. Findley develops a sense of history unfolding in time and still shows that an individual can refuse to follow the "forces of history" through the power of his moral judgement.

Chapter III

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

MacLennan is very consciously a social novelist, both in the sense that he writes about men and women in society, and in the sense that he rejects, both explicitly in his statements and implicitly in his practice, any idea of literature as a reclusive discipline. "It must grow out of society itself", he has said at many times and many ways. A number of critics, including Edmund Wilson and George Woodcock, have noticed his affinity with the great French social novelist, Honore de Balzac. In the back of his mind there was the aim to create a fictional record of how Canadian society worked. As Edmund Wilson has suggested, he "seems to aim . . . . to qualify, like Balzac, as the 'secretary of society', and one feels that in his earnest and ambitious attempt to cover his large self assignment he sometimes embarks upon themes which he believes to be socially important but which do not really much excite his imagination" (O Canada 12).

The novelist accepted the mores of his time, and in some ways this gave him an edge over less conventional minded novelists, for in the kind of socially oriented novel he would express his inclination to assimilate with ordinary nonliterary laymen and to share their tastes was often an advantage.

MacLennan was not impervious to the socio-political pre-occupation of his time. During the formative period of the 1930s, unlike so many of his

literary contemporaries, he did not succumb to Marxism in its Stalinist variety. He was highly aware of the political currents of the period, he saw Italy under the fascists, Germany under Hitler and went on a tour to Russia in 1937. These experiences and his discussions with his contemporaries made him from the beginning a social novelist.

In his revealing essay "The Future of the Novel as an Art Form" MacLennan lays particular stress on the 'true to life' aspect of fiction. The virtue of a novel lies for him in its power to "make social situations live' and to 'clothe political and economic forces with flesh and blood" (Selected Essays 146). This rules out from legitimacy in MacLennan's eyes the novel considered as fantasy. Indeed, he specifically deplores what he regards as one of the 'most curious aspects of the revolution in literature . . . . the discarding of the age-old axiom that unless a book or a poem is a communication, it does not really exist (101). All social fiction is a matter of communication, because it offers a view of human beings living in social connection, and to this we cannot fail to respond emotionally and intellectually.

Often what the novelist has to communicate is no more than an intimate view of local society. Jane Austen is one of the examples. Such novelists may look on the society they represent with an ironic or a critical eye, but they do not have any message to draw from what they see and

project on the reader's mind. Other kind of social novelists have the reforming urge, and offers us a critical portrait of a society in which a hope for change is projected so that the flaws they represent may be removed. MacLennan spans the two tendencies. In some of his novels, like Return of the Sphinx, the message is so overpowering. In Barometer Rising the truly fictional elements of the novel - the evocation of the environment, the formidable intervention of the explosion, and the inter-relationships of people in a genuinely microscopic society - are so strongly presented and felt that the message, even though it is at times explicitly stated is still not so dominant as in the later novel.

Keiichi Hirano remarks that 'Barometer Rising . . . . shows a firmer grasp of the ills of society than his later works'. The society MacLennan presents in his first novel seems more authentic in itself than those represented in his later works. For this reason its ills of inequality and carelessness for human suffering stand out all the more clearly. The novelist is successful in presenting the convincing panorama of a unique society, of a relatively small Canadian community which he knew intimately as a boy in 1917.

MacLennan has always been in the forefront to deal with and find solutions for social and national issues like 'Canadian Unity and Quebec'.

MacLennan had listened attentively to his wife, Dorothy Duncan, herself an author of merit (undoubtedly the prototype in general of Paul's wife, Heather, and of Catherine Martell) who advised him "to see Canada as it was and to write of it as (he) saw it." For MacLennan this became a dictum. In all the years ahead he remained a loyal adherent to what he called "serious, social fiction." In 1966, he contended as confidently as he had a quarter-century before "that a literature can have no blood and earth in it unless it has deep roots in the author's own society" (Alec Lucas 11).

MacLennan, again like Paul Tallard, in Two Solitudes saw the novel as a social force, and became a realist as much by circumstance as by choice. If he wanted to write about Canada convincingly, he had to reconstruct the background and set his own stage. The "general run of Canadian fiction" until then formed, as he evaluated it, "a handicap, repeating itself with reverberations of ancient traditions" and taking the Canadian scene for granted without ever defining "its essence." He had the task of "creating a perspective" for Canadian fiction that would include and explain the nature of the regional for Canadians and present the general scene for the international public so as to reveal how the processes shaping the destiny of Canada gave the country meaning in the world at large (Hugh MacLennan 12).

MacLennan did not think the novel a fictionalized documentary. For him the novel remained a story presenting a true-to-life social situation as a focal point for the study of vital and interesting human beings. It should also contain a vision uniting facts in an organic whole like Tolstoy's War and Peace.

Although MacLennan writes city novels, they occasionally and significantly centre on the agrarian myth, a belief that man for his betterment can and should ally himself with nature and society. There are hints in his works that nature can become a haven of security notwithstanding Angus Murray's aggrieved comment that "It was too easy to be sentimental and tell one's self that the pioneers were superior" (Barometer Rising 32). Memories of a summer garden permeate the harsh present of Neil Macrae's life; Lucy's door-yard flower beds signify a world of beauty and vitality impinging on her Puritan asceticism: dreams of fishing at the old farm haunt the unhappy Dr. Ainslie: and Alan Ainslie's summer cottage becomes his only asylum in defeat. It is evident from his works that MecLennan "maintains especially in his essay "Help Thou Mine Unbelief", farmers, close to the mysteries of germination, growth and death in the plant and animal world, are as a group more religious than industrial workers" (Alec Lucas 16). And it is no wonder that at the conclusion of The Watch that Ends the Night, George Stewart finds consolation "in the cathedral hush of a Quebec Indian Summer" (13) or that the even more distraught Alan Ainslie takes centre stage in the tableau:

> The vast land, Too vast were for fools to ruin it all . . . . (and) looking over the lake he at last accepted that he had merely happened into all this . . . . loveliness that nobody could understand or possess, and that some tried to control or destroy just because they were unable to possess or understand it . . . . He thanked God he had been of it, was of it (Hugh MacLellan 16).

Though MacLennan escapes the depressing naturalism and the tedious domestic realism of many novels of the twenties and thirties, his material posed similar problems. The dominant nature in MacLennan's novels is seen sometimes of another kind—dark mines and shark-infested seas. Since, however, he chose to handle historical facts and large social and political issues, he was perhaps more challenged to retain an imaginative approach to his subject, because in by-passing the demesne of romance he ran the risk of wandering off into a wasteland of didacticism. In order to balance the big impersonal theses he wished to develop, he was forced to introduce many details to humanize and lend authenticity to the lives and the world he described.

MacLennan sought the safety of the novel of plot for his novel Barometer Rising. Though he later snubbed it, dismissing it as a melodramatic tour de force, his first published novel ranks high among its

kind. MacLennan's social conscience and imaginative insight work hand-in-glove, and the political ideas and structural elements of the novel of plot combine neatly. Dramatic and sensational events occur, forming the pivots on which the story turns and the core of its political argument. On one level the narrative, becomes a serious game of hide-and-seek involving Penny, Neil, Angus Murray, Colonel Wain and Archie Mackenzie. On another, it foregoes the suspense of the search for the drama of lives threatened with the frightful catastrophe of the explosion of the munitions ship, Mont Blanc. MacLennan believed in fiction as fulfilling a vital need in a world where fact menaces the imaginative on so many fronts.

MacLennan concentrates on emotional crisis rather than the humdrum details of domestic realism or the biological facts of naturalism. Marriage rarely remains a simple item of plot and general background in MacLennan's books; its implications are nearly always both wide and varied. Paul Tallard's marriage to Heather Methuen acts as denouement and suggests a reconciliation of two solitudes. Unfortunately, it may also have caused the nineteen-year delay in publishing a French version of Two Solitudes since in this marriage French Canadians seem to see a man, himself the symbol of the assimilation of the French by the English, used to indicate the merit of the process. Only thus, as they interpret the novel, does MacLennan suggest that they can hope to have any status as citizens. Years later, the Return of the Sphinx became in part MacLennan's own testament to the death of the

high hopes of Two Solitudes. The runaway truck that killed Alan Ainslie's wife and destroyed his happy marriage also signifies what the rapid modernization of Quebec has meant to the old relationship between the two cultures of the province.

Marriage between Lucy and Lassiter in the novel The Precipice is given as a method of plotting and of examining the nature of the friendship between two peoples, Canada and the United States [MacLennan wrote in "The Psychology of Canadian Nationalism"].

Canada, as a nation is not masculine at all. She is feminine. This feminine psychology came into being because (Canada) happens to share the major part of the North American continent with a colossus like the United States. Were it not for the United States, Canada would never have been a nation at all . . . (Now) any threat to her basic values calls up a reluctant but implacable resistance. This, however, has not prevented her from enjoying the United States "much as a good wife enjoys the spectacle of a robust husband being himself" (21).

In the botched marriages of Each Man's Son and the double marriages of The Watch that Ends the Night more complexities are implied. Reversing a common literary motif of the search for a father, the first of these places the marriage of Dr. Ainslie and his search for a son well upstage and presents another facet of Broughton Life. Ainslie hates the mines and trees, like

Archie, to fight against them, but, unlike Archie, not by the hand, the physical itself, but by the head and hand, by the rational, either in reading the classics or through attending the sick and injured. In the name of this approach to life, Ainslie sterilizes his wife, an act the more dubious, if not actually sterile like his love, when guaged by the values of these Mortons, who become parents even though a Dr. Ainslie would have forbade that a "woman with a heart like that should ever get pregnant." MacLennan could not let the matter rest and returned to it in The Watch that Ends the Night. There Catherine, though suffering from a heart disease, bears a child by Jerome, and George, ever cautious, convinces himself that she could not live through a major operation.

The marriage by turn of Jerome and George to Catherine is central to the plot and meaning of The Watch that Ends the Night. MacLennan says that he made no attempt to analyse Canada in it. Instead the novel was to depend on "spirit-in-action." It may be a spiritual autobiography in which the author pays homage to an ailing wife, who in youth had the courage to take life defiantly and in middle age, despite her desperate illness, to celebrate its beauty. Or, again, Catherine becomes the focus of two attitudes, the "vital physical" and the intellectual as related to the spirit of man. Jerome, his faith in God blasted in war, fights for meaning in terms of the mundane. George Stewart, his faith in man undermined by the Depression, tries to find security through withdrawal into a private world. As Ainslie,

Archie, and Mollie, in Each Man's Son become symbols of head, hand, and heart during man's struggle against adversity, so in The Watch that Ends the Night, Jerome, Catherine, and George are studies of the life force, the spirit, and the mind within the process of man's maturing and, more broadly, within the nation's maturing.

Norah Blackwell's left-wing remark that Catherine is "sick capitalism" which is obviously in need of a strong dose of communism does invite a reading of The Watch that Ends the Night as allegory. The book actually disclaims such a remedy. If Catherine acts as a focal point for such inner perspectives, she has a similar role in the examination of two external traditions, the pioneer and the British. Yet if Catherine is not quite a sick capitalism, she may well be the Canada that the first Great War was to usher in, that was to greet the dawn after the last watch in the darkness of colonialism, a country courageous in acquiring nationhood yet debilitated in her early years by political and economic uncertainties and later by fear of a nuclear war and by a spiritual complacency bred of affluence.

Jerome can for a few years play an important part since he brings to bear a tradition of a vital past with the power to make the new Canada thrive. He signifies something of a rural Canada of an older generation. Jerome has become a man of transcendent faith, a "primitive" who is misled by the new political gods of the thirties, assumes that mankind can live by

bread alone. Only after his second journeying and his second brush with death he renews his belief in the spiritual as the way of salvation. George's story centres in the secular, in the English, middle-class urban tradition that seems to have gone to seed after the war. MacLennan gives the portrait of George's father as a man whose sweet nature is matched only by his inability to prove himself in the new mechanized society until he invents a can-opener with "built-in-obsolescence." Politically suspect and all but obliterated as a valid cultural attitude in the Depression, the liberal intellectual tradition of Canada, like the values of the nation's rural past, needed revitalizing. George, like Jerome, goes on a pilgrimage, and, after visiting Russia, regains confidence in his own country. Hope for the future lay not in the new communism, but in the genuine reaffirmation of the old Canadian liberal tradition. And in the forties it regained its place. Although Canada needed the tradition, it alone was not enough. Secular as it was, the tradition could easily, during times of prosperity, lead to spiritual indifference. As George puts it, "now prosperous under the bomb . . . why ask where you are going. When you can't stop even if you wish? Why ask why, when it does no good to know why?" After Hiroshima, MacLennan intimates, a nation, like an individual had better look to its soul. In the new world of the fifties, George is not to be displaced by Jerome. Yet as Catherine gains strength from her former husband after his spiritual rejuvenation, so Canada requires as a support of her cultural and political values some of the old religious faith.

Adultery and illicit love have a place as well as marriage in MacLennan's novels. Although the adulterous affair has relatively little importance in the structure of the novels, it does testify to the deleterious effects of living in a morally chaotic society. It is however, only one design in a pattern that includes betrayal of many kinds from Colonel Wain's betrayal of his nephew in the first novel to Daniel Ainslie's betrayal of his father in the latest. A list of all makes sombre reading since it groans with such iniquities as Athanese's adulterous betrayal of his first wife, Janet Methuen's informing on Marius, Mc Queen's failure to keep faith in his business deal, and Kathleen's perfidy, when she, herself a woman of little breeding, indicated her contempt for her husband both as a man and as a distinguished representative of a people by sleeping with Morey.

Each Man's Son, sets up perplexing questions related to the theme. Does Ainslie betray his wife when he sterilizes her and thus, again symbolically rejects his mother? Does he sterilize his wife because he unconsciously assumes he is betraying his stern father and his God through her and so strikes on a way to furnish himself and his wife for enjoying sex? Or, finally are the Calvinists betraying life through their belief in a God whose love likewise seems sterile and undemonstrative? There are Jerome's desertion of Catherine and Norah and Daniel's familial defection. There must also be room at the top of the list for war, nazism, and communism, as MacLennan sees them the great betrayals of mankind. Nevertheless, betrayal

is not his final word on the human situation. He never takes the existentialist stand that death is the ultimate betrayal, making life absurd.

The journey themselves get little attention, since MacLennan uses them largely as landmarks along the road that leads his characters to maturity, the last stopping place before they step forward into self-dependency. He makes an exception of Archie MacNeil reporting fully his battles in the ring until his return home, when punch-drunk and broken, in a great and ironical moment of triumph and tragedy, he wins and loses all in his last fight.

In his account of Jerome's "voyages of discovery" in The Watch that Ends the Night and especially of his desperate escape by canoe from his mother's murderer MacLennan makes another exception. It becomes a motif of Jerome's personality - "always driven on just as he had been driven down the river" (35), George remarks and serves as a controlling image of the whole symbolic drift of the narrative. "I", says George, "remembered Jerome. The canoe in which he had issued from the forest had now taken him out into the ocean, at night, with a hurricane rising. Jerome, Myself, Everyone" (38). And the dreaded hurricane, bred in the fear and suspicion of the Depression came and went, and the world settled down after the war to living in the shadow of the Bomb, as George lived in the shadow of Catherine's illness. Then as society, sick with the "nausea of existence," had turned to the anodyne of mundane self-satisfaction, or existentialism, so, too, had George

toyed with both during the first years of his marriage and in his desperation as he watched Catherine dying. Catherine's death was symbolic. A belief in the spiritual and a love of the beautiful was dying in the modern world.

George's subconscious which represented the sub-conscious of society rose to discover "in dismay that what he believed to be his identity is no more than a tiny canoe at the mercy of an ocean. Shark-filled, plankton filled, refractor of light, terrible and mysterious" (26).

MacLennan began his career worrying over the lot of Canada. When he published his work The Watch that Ends the Night, he began to worry about the decay of civilization in an age menaced by a nuclear war that, at best, would preserve man only as a frightened, half-savage cave-dweller.

MacLennan is always aware of the dark force that lies below the surface in man, indicting the scenes in which his characters play out their lives as if Freud, Jung, and Calvin were whispering to him as he wrote. In MacLennan's early enthusiasm for Canada, the explosion spoke tacitly for violence as conducive to progress and intimates that in the pangs of war a new nation, free from the false values of colonialism, would be born. Likewise the mines of Each Man's Son, with their dark stopes, relate to the world behind the explosion, but only in Return of the Sphinx, is this symbolism so explicit as in Barometer Rising and The Watch that Ends the Night. MacLennan makes clear his fear not only of the disintegration of

Canada but also of the crumbling of civilization, the worship of a half-animal, half human monster, the beast god of primitivism having risen to subvert the young. If Dr. Ainslie found love, and George faith in life, as ways to dispel their gloom, Alan Ainslie is left groping in a grim dawn, not the bright day that was to greet the watch that ends the night.

The Halifax explosion was to become a "fortunate fall" in that it created a nation, while the storm eventually revealed the merits of unified social action. Jerome and his pilgrimages, however, manifest MacLennan's later doubts of the efficacy of such solutions in which man identifies himself with society and works only within it. MacLennan wants us to believe that man must identify with a greater thing than self, but the "greater" can longer be one's country or unified social action. Jerome goes beyond nationalism and finally above all the social "isms" to discover a meaning in life. Man has to believe in and value the "mystery" above it all. Dr. Ainslie learns something of this, but it is Jerome who sees it clearly and, almost as if a spirit, brings his discovery to bear on the world he returns to after years of suffering and wayfaring in distant lands.

Man's welfare is the heart of the novel Return of the Sphinx. Alan Ainslie had fought to preserve the values that had lighted man's path from the jungle. Yet in peace he suffered defeat, overthrown in a world where the causes he fought to are spat on and villified in a social upheaval threatening

to become as widespread and as devastating as war itself. The Halifax explosion, that terrifying experience of MacLennan's boyhood, and Calvinism, that religion of younger days that described man as a battle ground on which sin and salvation contend for his soul, are very much present in the novel. Even nature herself, sometimes a shark-filled ocean, but here a beautiful landscape, seems, also, an arena where the same forces engage in cosmic battle.

MacLennan's fiction is much more political and social than romantic. His work reveals a whole spectrum of novels, all of which, with the exception of Barometer Rising, have many of the qualities of the baggy catch—all the chronicle. As a category it is opposed to the novel of plot, to the novel of character and to the dramatic novel. None of these appears in pure form, but, in general, they are distinguishable and are pertinent to MacLennan's handling of the novel. Its setting signifies the little world and ticking moments of the individual life and the spaciousness and time of countries. Like the dramatic novel, it accents the growth of personality, but only partly in terms of the interplay between character and environment. The chronicle makes clear that its drama is played out against historical fact and within the changeless change of society. Instead of working out event or a limited and dramatic pattern of behaviour as related to environment, the novelist simply follows his hero's maturing. He foregoes suspense and the conflict of a static or a dynamic character working out its destiny in a limited situation. As his

principle of ordering his material he depends on the tensions that result from setting permanence against change in this general scheme: father-son, age-youth, generation-generation, past-present; or, broadly, in terms of the tension produced by yoking disparate elements together so as to illustrate on one level their relationship to the process of growing up and, on the other, to large social issues or history.

MacLennan's fiction is cast in a modified form of the chronicle, the developmental novel, which brings the hero forward as a child and keeps him under a literary microscope as he grows up, fostered and frustrated by his environment until he attains selfhood, often simply a matter of leaving the shade of a parent. The history of English fiction from Tom Jones onwards sparkles with examples of the genre, which later developed into the young-artist novel and, as exemplified by Sons and Lovers and A Portrait of the Artist, became one of the superior achievements of fiction in the early years of the century. MacLennan, more than any other Canadian novelist, has concentrated on the developmental novel.

In Two Solitudes, Paul manages to become the artist-hero despite all his troubles. Unfortunately Athanese upstages him badly, so that the novel seems broken-backed when the old man dies and Paul steps into his shoes as protagonist. After Tallard's death, the organizing principle of the novel changes from dialectic to linear progression. Paul, the central character,

simply passes through the three stages of maturing, reaching manhood when he triumphs over McQueen, and over his starchy mother-in-law, by stepping forward, in a kind of noble gesture, as a defender of Canada, but as she saw him as a soldier of the king. Paul's life unquestionably reflects the issues of the society. More obviously the book suffers from Paul's being pitted against one of the finest character creations in Canadian fiction.

The Watch that Ends the Night has been MacLennan's only venture with the autobiographical form. In Return of the Sphinx he reverted to the third-person point of view, but he does avoid the bifurcation of his earlier novels of the kind by casting only one person, Alan Ainslie, as hero, and making him the fulcrum of well-balanced structural units, as he was in Each Man's Son. The book becomes the extension of a young man novel, parts two and three occurring as reminiscences of Ainslie's youth threaded through the experiences of his middle-aged present. Thus MacLennan exorcises his old bugbear of bi-temporal time, the chronological and the dramatic, for time here matters only as it relates to the duration of a central problem. The hero's youthful warfaring overseas gives the story social and historical perspective.

Beyond selecting a central issue and playing a single protagonist off against a single antagonist, MacLennan adds much to the symmetry of the book through the motif of the empty room or the demolished building as a means of merging plot and thesis. Through the house in Barometer Rising,

he had objectified his theme of colonial privilege as opposed to Canadian rights and, in Each Man's Son, he had made the mine and the hill-top hospital with its beacon light serve as symbols of the instinctive and scientific as modes of being. And, here, in Return of the Sphinx, setting becomes a way of denoting the emptiness of family life and Canadian nationalism and the disintegration of a formerly stable society. The weather, another MacLennan favourite, and a major "character" of Barometer Rising, has a comparable role here as a might of jungle sultriness. Despite this fine beginning as a kind of chorus character in a world steeped with sex and a novel devoted to a study of the threat of the irrational to civilization, it fades until the very end, where the setting becomes a beautiful September morning during which the "lake and forest, married in perfect silence," bring some encouragement to the downhearted Ainslie.

MacLennan always intended that his characters should project themselves as living people, a goal he achieved, with such memorable characters as Athanese and Archie on the stand. Nevertheless, he has stuck close to traditional categories of characterization. One of these, the chorus pops up frequently. The chorus character had already made his name as Dr. Murray, Captain Yardley, Matt McCunn, Dr. Mackenzie and Mrs. MacCuish.

Even though MacLennan has a talent for the portraiture of comic character, he buries it beneath a mountain of high seriousness. Aunt Maria

and Uncle Alfred should have stayed longer at tea in Barometer Rising. In one of MacLennan's soberest novels, Each Man's Son, contains perhaps as contrast to Dr.Ainslie's mirthless life, the most humour of any of them, with its tall tale of giant MacAskill's giant indignity, the wonderfully anecdoted, judge Mackeegan, who thought perjury "a lot more serious charge . . . . than rape because perjury is personal," and the miners themselves, but exuberant drinkers rich in local colour and epitomized by indomitable Angus the Barraman.

In most of MacLennan's major *dramatis personae* the influence of the traditional character is obvious. After Barometer Rising, with its clearly marked hero, heroine, and villain the casting was not quite so apparent again. But the protagonists, even if "unheroic" like Paul and George, always live by old-fashioned virtues and sometimes a bit too nobly. Yet MacLennan's fiction is not the world of high-born suitors, cads, and "weaker vesicles." His novels often reflect the modern tendency to make women stronger than men. His work is not filled with contemporary fictional favourites—perverts, alcoholics, nymphomaniacs and homosexuals. His work centres on the relatively decorous and placid middle class. Among many of the protagonists chosen from this group there is a marked family resemblance. Beginning with Neil Macrae, the list of maimed or sick reads like a hospital chart. Yardley, Fraser, McCunn, Martell, Connolly, Alan Ainslie, Lucy Cameron and Catherine. All the men suffer from war wounds,

and the two women from weak hearts, but all represent a group in which physical defects have social and frequently psychological overtones.

Most of the major characters, from Neil to Latendresse, as orphans answer to another roll call of unfortunates. MacLennan uses them, not to try to delight the reader with a good cry, but to provide a wider canvas for his picture of society, the orphan securing him greater opportunity to cut across strata within it and to expatiate on the ills of modern life.

Young men heroes of MacLennan are always outsiders, often lonely and introverted for the movement of the developmental novel and of life necessitates that the protagonists find a road in, a way to make their lives prevail. "If childhood is a garden," George wrote of Catherine and himself as they separated, "the gates closed on us then and ever afterwards we were on the outside" (The Watch that Ends the Night 46). Exiles from innocence, these youth must discover a way into and through experience to achieve true maturity. Like Martell, escaping from the known into the unknown, they look both ways longingly, to an irretrievable past and to an uncertain future, trying to find stability. All these young people invariably disclose a want of set values and a definite idea of what goals - social, cultural, educational - they should seek in a world sick with the running sores of poverty and war. This dilemma does not deny them their "heroism", for, in the end, it is their stand for traditional humanism that sees them through their struggles and

holds out the promise of restoring society's deteriorating political and social structures.

MacLennan seems to fight shy of the problems he poses, backing off finally into the shelter of the establishment to allay his fears, some critics comment. As a result, the Marxists have been at his heels, and especially because of The Watch that Ends the Night. In the earlier books, Lucy's denial of Bruce's Marxist boast that "the battle against nature had been won" (The Precipice 38) and Lamire's mild socialism, based on envy rather than altruism, were but warning shots before MacLennan's all out attack in The Watch Ends the Night. The "isms" of the twenties and thirties are scorned as nostrums for George's loss of faith in himself, in religion, and in the integrity of society. For the Marxists the book is "a deadly tool in reaction's arsenal", all left-wing characters in it appearing neurotic, except Jerome, who, however "seems terribly willing to lie duped." S. Lynn comments that MacLennan has "rationalized himself out of the real world and . . . . the class struggle out of existence," and has failed "to grasp and understand the tremendous, and far-reaching changes that have taken place since the war" (The Watch that Ends the Night 41).

MacLennan recognizes moreover, that Man's disturbances do not simply date from the Cold War and that prosperity does not indubitably produce spiritual well-being. Salvation is an affair of the soul, not a matter of

joining a group or taking up a cause within the orientation of the materialistic and pragmatic. Either extreme right or left requires man to surrender too much of his individualism to the state and, as George and Jerome learn, middle-class free enterprise can unduly hamper one person's rights while unduly fostering another's. MacLennan's is the age-old plea for man's inner reform and a tacit admonition that without it there can be no permanent and satisfactory *modus vivendi*. His is not an escapist philosophy. That Catherine and George find consolation at the end of the book as they do not mean that one can only find happiness by withdrawing from, in fact, only beyond life. Their lives at the end of the book do not vitiate but rather ehnance its symbolic significance. They give cogency to the argument that the values that should come first are beyond the world where guns or butter or death count. See to the first, the problem of the soul, and the rest will solve themselves. Although highly idealistic, MacLennan says that there is no hope for man if he denies the transcendental.

To select more or less haphazardly, there are Angus, a comic character, and Daniel Ainslie, by comparison largely a study in psychology, or, again, there are Paul and Neil. Paul is a writer-hero and an alienated youth suffering all the usual inner turmoil of his age. The other is a romantic hero, doubling as an "archetypal figure," according to McPherson, Neil's "wound", he notes, "his supposed death, his return and vindication are, in

microcosm, the record of youthful Canada, betrayed into war but returning home with a new knowledge of its own identity" (Lucas 43).

MacLennan focuses unduly on the irony of Ainslie's personality - the rationalist and the highly capable doctor who fears the flesh, the man who, in ministering to the body, neglects the heart, its very centre. Stephen Lassiter exemplifies a related difficulty. As an athlete and engineer, he fits the category of the Archies. He ought, then, to be one of MacLennan's most vital characters, but he is not, for he, too, loses much of his personality in trying to carry over-weight as a social type. One might say that he is intended as a satirical characterization, even though a sensitive girl like Lucy can marry such a bore, for, as MacLennan emphasizes, she is a spinster of some years and a small-town girl, and if not clutching at straws, is at least readily amenable to persuasion.

Character is a half-way station between inner and outer, of character as character and of character as function in both theme and structure. Its vitality stems from the tension between its individuality and its function. If either arm of the balance consistently outweighs the other, the character can become a type in a social study or the subject of a psychological case history. The balance, delicate at best, becomes even more ticklish when growing up is the dynamic of the narrative and the principle of characterization. The character may then appear as a free-living individual with little or no

thematic or structural function, or as one with little or no import except as function.

Critic Kattan, however, laments that types do not form a society. So far as this type of disapprobation shares common ground, all indicate dissatisfaction with character. Yet losing "symbolic identity" may be a matter of the reader's failure to recognize the intended symbolic pattern of the book. MacLennan does at times have trouble with character, but from excess didacticism, not from want of talent. He does tend to tell about, rather than present, his people in action, but more detrimental is his proclivity to hem his characters round with talk his own, as upstage comment, or theirs as discussions of issues.

Although MacLennan may have rejected the practice of the twenties and thirties of attributing most of the "miseries" of the characters to their families, he did follow it from the start by writing family novels as a method of studying the individual and the national psyche. Most of MacLennan's characters have fathers who are stiff, if not tyrannical, frequently because they are Puritans and generally because MacLennan depicts them as they appear to their sons. Thus, as normal in the young-man novel, they objectify the conflict within the psychology of maturing, the break that must occur so that the son may himself become an adult. A few- Paul, Jerome and George – in their search for a father reveal the other side of the psychological coin.

Growing up not only involves growing away from but a growing towards. It rejects one identification, one security of the past, to try to gain another in the future, a future that will effect a balance between the buried self of childhood and the revealed self of maturity.

Held up to the light in different novels, mother images are interestingly variegated: Marius's hatred of beautiful girls since one betrayed his mother; McQueen's mother fixation; Ainslie's lover's attitude towards Mollie; Daniel's jealousy of his father and his affair with Marielle, a mother figure. Taken as a group, they are facets of a "sons-and-lover" complex and a counterweight to that of the "fathers-and-sons." Most of the mothers seem to have lived wretched lives, especially those who had Calvinist husbands, and most, being dead, enter the novels only as memories or psychological influences. If the rejection of the father pertains to ideals and the question of domination, the break with the mother pertains to the seductive security of the past. Such a break can be painful, since it means the severing or loosening of a very close bond and a shift of the emotional centre in the subordination of one love relationship to another.

MacLennan's critics have related the psychology of growing up to the voyages of the young men. They see in them the heroes' search for identity and a concurrent implication of a country's effort to probe its own nature and to establish itself as a distinctive nation. Most of the critics have linked the

voyages or quests with mythology. Critic McPherson calls Bruce Fraser a "Promethean intellectual" and attributes a "Promethean pattern" to Dr. Ainslie's conflict with God. In Woodcock's account Ulysses overthrows Prometheus as the central mythological figure.

> The deliberate adaptation of the Odyssey . . . is admitted by MacLennan not only in the name of the heroine, but also in Macreae's remark . . . " Wise Penelope! That is what Odysseus said to his wife when he got home . . . " But MacLennan also uses for the first time a group of symbolic characters which recur . . . in his later novels: the returning wanderer, the waiting woman, the fatherless child, the wise doctor . . . . and the primitive, violent, but essentially good giant (Lucas 46).

Critics have continued to set Ulysses up as the controlling mythological symbol of his fiction, even for Each Man's Son, according to Douglas Spettigue, "a new concentration and depth were achieved through dividing Ulysses into three, as it were . . . ." ("Types of Myth" Lucas 46) so that Archie, the old prize-fighter, becomes not only the symbol of a returning warrior, but a third part of a mythological trinity.

MacLennan's are family rather than epic novels despite their debt to the classics. Ulysses was an old man bringing hopes of restoring the old

order in a disordered society; MacLennan stood with youth on the ramparts of the generation gap until Return of the Sphinx, when he left his position to cross over to the middle-aged. Jerome does fit the Ulysses pattern, but not necessarily exclusive of the Oedipal, if the word is taken to include the plays about the king. The parallels between those plays and Barometer Rising are striking. Both Oedipus and Neil have been abandoned to death, one by a father and the other by an uncle. Both suffer permanent injury as a result. Both are believed dead and both return incognito to solve riddles and to establish their own identities. The question of the right to power, as in *Oedipus Rex,* motivates much of the plot and introduces the implied conflict of colonialism and a rising nationalism. In MacLennan's later work the Oedipus Complex gets a firmer hold on some of the characters, as Dr. Ainslie's role illustrates, revealing itself briefly but vividly in this moment:

> [Mollie's] face was naked. He saw its delicacy, its tenderness, its love . . . and there was something else he recognized, a last reserve of strength which she was calling upon. To oppose him - to oppose his father? He passed his hand over his eyes (Each Man's Son 48).

Along with this phase of the Oedipal, Each Man's Son introduces the dark background of the myth. As Oedipus solves the riddle of the sphinx, so Ainslie tries to solve the social problem of the mine, a monster that lay in

wait, also, for the youth of Broughton, while within himself he fears that through sex he falls prey to a beast - part animal, part woman - that would destroy him.

Alan Ainslie cannot solve the riddle and thus subvert the irrational forces that would crush those values on which civilized society depends. Return of the Sphinx develops this theme at length. The "sphinx returned" in ancient days when it is alleged that Sophocle's son charged him with insanity; and thematically in *Oedipus* at *Colonus*, when the father and king fall victim to the instinctive aggressions of his sons in their thirst for power. Return of the Sphinx, a long plunge down into doubt from the height MacLennan reached in The Watch that Ends the Night reads as if he believes his world, also, to be engaged in social and cultural suicide.

MacLennan's characters become figures in a study of national and international affairs following a specific scheme. Beginning with national colonial and political matters in the first two novels, they move to international sociological and religious concerns, next to religion alone as a social force in Canada, then religion as a personal matter, and finally to an Arnold-like appreciation of culture as a social means of maintaining sweetness and light. Nationalism is at the centre of these circles, which, ever widening, finally touch on the farthest limits of man's concern with the protection of civilization and the salvation of his soul. Neil Macrae is ardent

nationalist. Dennis Morey and Bruce Fraser lament the butler's pantry complex of the country, even though the first Great War was supposed to have wakened Rip Van Winkle Canada from its colonial slumber.

Canada has had difficulty being Canada, or ascertaining its own distinguishing traits, as MacLennan's protagonists learn in their quests for their own identities both as individuals and Canadians. Caught between a greater power, Britain, and a superpower, the United States, Canada had difficulty in maintaining its own individuality. Neil, Paul, and the rest turn optimistically from the traditional to the new. But it remains for George and Jerome to discern that politics do not make a nation, that Canada cannot know itself through identifying with international movements or by sitting on its hands in prosperous complacency. It must examine carefully its own moral and religious fibre. In Return of the Sphinx Whatever optimism the earlier books may have had seems to have dissipated almost entirely. Critic Kattan believes that the riddle of the "sick" Canadian society is soluble. His answer seems to lie in the social and cultural, for MacLennan appears here to have reverted to seeking the meaning of life in the communal, and secular rather than the individual and religious.

In Two Solitudes, MacLennan deals with the subject of separatism within the country which threatens to undermine the country's future and wreck it as a nation. But he held out hope of a permanent cure. Athanese

and Captain Yardley, men of tolerance and charity, could not make the union work because of racism, antipathy between church and state, (as the breakdown of Athanese's first marriage symbolizes), and high - handed English Canadian commercialism; but Paul and Heather, the new generations united in marriage, appeared at the end of the novel as if they were the golden key to confederation.

Return of the Sphinx is treated as a social tract on separatism without recognizing its broader base. MacLennan has been accused of presenting the French-Canadian movement as immature and Latendresse as a biased portrait of a separatist. Of course MacLennan must appear as antiseparatist, since he believes in the nation, but he does sympathize with the French-Canadian cause to the extent that he derides Tarnley, and others like him who disregard or misuse the situation, as obviously as he assails those who would resort to violence. But those are only symptoms, as MacLennan perceives them of a world-wide malaise. His book is a plea for a greater understanding, based on rational discussion of traditional values, between two idealisms. Kattan's comments on The Watch that Ends the Night seems appropriate also to MacLennan's latest work as a study of Canadian and even world problems. Return of the Sphinx seems unduly schematic. Like Dicken's Hard Times it appears as a skeleton of a book rather than a book itself.

MacLennan takes too long to get his men on the board and tries to work on too many levels in too confined a space. MacLennan tries to demonstrate through Daniel that revolutions are the work of neurotics rather than the result of poverty and similar forces, and through Latendresse, that separatism has flourished as Catholicism has ceased to "go on" the "way it used to", the zealots in the cause of separatism apparently seeing in it a suitable replacement for their religion. The parallels between Daniel's bewilderment over the loss of his mother, symbolically a victim of modern industrialized society, and Latendresse's discontent with the church are presented very neatly, but MacLennan takes too little time to flesh out the characters and develop his themes. It is not so much a question, then, of whether MacLennan's analysis of separatism is right or wrong, but that he has tried to handle subjects that require a larger canvas than the book supplies.

In Two Solitudes MacLennan tested the soundness of Canada as keystone in the arch comprising Great Britain and the United States. MacLennan bent his gaze on the United States in The Precipice, his third study of Canada's status and stature as a nation. Assuming that at least one world tradition had been successfully transplanted, he isolates Puritanism as the common denominator of the two countries. The United States is rooted deep in the past in this way. Yet goaded by the urge to succeed that the country had inherited from a theology equating godliness and prosperity and

had misunderstood as a reciprocal equation, it had set up as hero the self-made man - Lassiter's grandfather and father, symbols of nineteenth century free-enterprise America, and Britain, the protagonist of a new cult of achievement in a society that now accepted a perfumed façade for the once central strength of the people. Strive as the nation might, it, no more than Lassiter, could satisfactorily substitute sex and money for a religious heritage.

MacLennan in his novel The Precipice warns that Canada's Calvinism damns the country, not to a frenetic whirly-gig as an escape from the curse of its Puritan conscience but to caution, introspection, and a dour denial of life. The country had few industrialists to get as models of getting on. But it had men like Lucy's father, or others, like Dr.Ainslie and Dr. Fraser, all serious-minded men dedicated to religion or education as ways of living that would mean accomplishment and a concomitant removal of a sense of guilt. Their God, no less than the Americans', was glorified apparently by man's making good on earth. The comparison of a small Ontario town with New York lacks balance, but it implies finally that Canadian Calvinism is less destructive than American. According to MacLennan's tacit postulates, it has kept the nation from the want of restraint and the ruthless practicality that particularizes America's efforts to forget its past and that, as the dropping of the atomic bomb indicates, has driven the country to the brink of spiritual collapse. The Precipice was not MacLennan's last word on Puritanism.

Within Canada itself Puritanism was a *bete-noir,* like the beast that growled at Dr. Ainslie in Each Man's Son, ever ready as a sense of sin and guilt, deriving from a doctrine of suppression, to damn "the perfectly natural" human desires. Belief in an arbitrary God had cramped the Canadian spirit as it had Dr. Ainslie's, and, in Each Man's Son, MacLennan makes a perspicacious assessment of the Canadian character. The book's portrait of a Puritan-agnostic has harsh lines that reveal Ainslie's lack of sympathy with human penchants and frailties. Yet Dr. Ainslie ultimately learns his lesson: his long self-examination frees him at last from his fear of being himself. He discovers the meaning of Christian humanism and stands victorious in his fight for happiness, not, as he had formerly tried to win it, by rejecting God, but by recognizing Him as a God of love and by realizing that his pride in self was another of his Puritan legacies. Return of the Sphinx dropped the subject of psychic problems allegedly produced by Puritanism as central to the nature of the country for that of the dilemma of race and Catholicism. Dr. Ainslie's "city of God is", according to Daniel, "this greedy country that rewards every bastard that milks it. . . " Marielle has a line from the old refrain, too, when she admonishes Daniel: "You are all Puritans over here and you don't even guess what it does to you" (Each Man's Son 32). Aside from these allusions to a once prominent thesis, MacLennan has, however, nothing to say of it. The sphinx is not the hound of heaven that

snarled behind the scenes of the earlier books, but a monster of pagan times terrifying the old and destroying the young.

MacLennan saw religion as a powerful influence in Canada's social evolution and growth of national spirit. His theory of a Canada controlled by an unconscious Puritanism may well be open to debate. Any answer that reduces a problem to one central issue almost certainly means undue simplification. Still, his arguments in his essays and in his novels are cogent and significant.

> Nor, is it (Calvinism) so absurd a theology as it appears to be . . . when one leaves out the egoism of the theology, I suggest that it comes closer to the truth of man's personal fate than any other . . . My mortal quarrel with Calvinism was not that it denied realities but that it inculcated into children the idea that God was each man's personal enemy and that a man committed a sin merely by existing (Lucas 54).

As Dr. Ainslie is caught between godlessness and Puritanism, he discovers a new God and hence set MacLennan on a course that led him to The Watch that Ends the Night, where the quest for an ideal motivates the action. Ainslie learned that the New Testament also belongs to the Bible, but his awakening discloses no formal manner by which society can present and

worship God. MacLennan, himself in the dilemma of his half-way stand on Calvinism resumes in his next novel his study of faith in a world in which God may be dead, where the symbols used by the church may no longer appear viable in a scientific age, and where George and Jerome, seeking salvation, find it within themselves. Non-sectarian as their discovery may be, it stresses the need for spiritual values and for imaginative sympathy (like the artist Catherine's) with the mystery and beauty of life. MacLennan recognizes the inherent dangers of creating a God according to human scale, like Dr. Ainslie's rational, Archie's physical, or Jerome's political god. For this reason The Watch that Ends the Night underscores the necessity of appreciating the "mystery" surrounding us. By falling back on the infinite as explanation of the human situation, man wins, not loses, his struggle for meaning. He is not trapped, then, in a deterministic world, but he is not free to go beyond it, to achieve salvation, without suffering. Like George and Jerome and all the other cheerless young men, he must die out one world to be reborn in another. He must pass through a conflict to learn the nature of the moral and the spiritual. Generally orthodox, this thesis emphasizes MacLennan's faith in the individual and the strength of his soul.

MacLennan's humanism lies behind all the ramifications of the theme of the quest. Throughout the novels the need to know oneself and to assume responsibility as a moral being, capable of bettering and disciplining oneself, is abundantly clear. MacLennan obviously owes much to Calvinism and

classicism for this framework by means of which he can adduce strictures and approbations in his fiction. Above all, man needs to put his faith in love and forgiveness. It is this truth that Dr. Ainslie discerned and Daniel Ainslie forgot. Only through charity can man work for the essential betterment of society. All other orderings of life are self-contained and revolve in their own orbit. MacLennan does not deny man's ability for ("The Social Themes" Lucas 7) "coherent positive social action", but insists on the indispensability of basing it on an awareness of man's individualism and an appreciation of the human spirit.

Since man lives as a social being, and since the symbols used by the church may no longer seem relevant, he requires some method to direct his attention to values that transcend materialism until he finds once again some means of objectifying God as a force in society. Return of the Sphinx suggests the values of civilization as tantamount to retaining something of that nature. Without greater values than the secular, civilization hangs over an abyss.

Beginning with romantic love in the early novels and moving in order to married love and on to parental love, finished on top rung with the triumph of spiritual love in The Watch that Ends the Night MacLennan is no more opposed to rational than to social action. It is only that he believes neither can succeed unless motivated by or based on the same elements that

help constitute personal love; namely, tolerance, kindness, compassion, and benevolence—all qualities that have little place in a purely rational ethic.

MacLennan has expanded the romance into a novel of social analysis. He has adopted modern techniques and perspectives and adapted them to his characterizations and his themes. He was not trying to produce that mythological creature, "the great Canadian novel," for, among other reasons, his view is limited to the eastern half of the country. Nor was he trying to preach Canadianism in a narrow sense, to turn the nation inward to the contemplation of its own image.

MacLennan wished to write a critique of the society he knew and to attempt to interpret it in all its moods and modes, and to see it in international political and universal human contexts. He wanted to relate his country's growth to that of his young-men heroes, passing from the subjective through the conclusion of its early years to a position where it could finally observe itself objectively.

A writer's philosophic attitude is conditioned by the very fact that he is a writer and also by the kind of writer he happens to be. For the plainly expository craftsman the problems involved in approaching the truth may be simple, since for him truth can have a single aspect. But the imaginative writer not only lives in a mental world of ambiguities, but the perception and the use of ambiguity are the conditions of his artistic success, since it is

ambiguity that enlarges statement by suggestion, and extends the factual into the symbolic.

Whatever MacLennan has written on his art and the philosophy that inspires it is couched in simple terms. He is not a writer of great intricacy and the tendencies towards naturalism and didacticism in his novels do not require the involutions of aesthetic philosophy which great experimental works demand and stimulate. In his essays and in his life, he has preferred to appear rarely in the character of the artist and most characteristically in the role of the plain man seeking the good and fruitful life.

There are many reasons, MacLennan realizes, why men write books. "One . . . . is because we are lonely, and another is that we want to come to terms with our environment by telling the truth about it. These two desires are in painful conflict in any writer who has ever lived" ("Where a man stands" Hugh MacLennan 21) The idea of truth in relation to environment marks MacLennan as essentially a social novelist. Other truths—psychological truth, spiritual truth—are by no means excluded from his work, but essentially it is the truth about man as a social being, living with and among other men, that he is seeking out. To this extent he remains under the influence of the ideas about the social orientation of literature he acquired during the 1930s, even though that orientation in his case is not directed by a political philosophy of the left. MacLennan believes firmly that a writer must

stand on his own, and perhaps this is the first important element in MacLennan's philosophy of living.

In his essay "Thirty and Three", MacLennan writes.

> In time one's profession, no matter what it is, teaches the inevitable lesson that a man must in final decisions be his own judge. Work must be for work's sake and nothing else. If one is to be unmoved by abuse, one must also be more or less unmoved by praise. In other words, one must choose between telling the truth and being liked (Thirty and Three 21).

MacLennan's description of what we have lost through the debasement of education merits quotation because it states by implication MacLennan's own view of the basis for a true and satisfying life.

> The first loss, I should say, is the virtual disappearance of the old belief that life is a coherent experience.
>
> The second loss - the result of the first - is of the collective and individual self-confidence our fore-fathers knew, and which we ourselves knew for a brief while under Churchill's leadership in the last war.

> The third loss - the result of the second - is the ancient respect for truth as something valuable and unassailable in itself, as something hard to find but precious, as something which cannot be juggled with by advertisers and politicians without regard to the final consequences, as something more important, however austere it may be, than conformity for the sake of comfort to any market place necessity of the moment.
>
> The fourth loss - the result of the third - is the old belief that education cannot be easy, that it does not lead to material security but to struggle, that at its best it is a pilgrim's progress to the heavenly city (Scotchman's Return 74-75).

In talking of "the heavenly city", as MacLennan makes very clear in his excellently argued essay, "The Classical Tradition and Education", he does not intend a mere literary metaphor, for the first thing is to "get back to the primary business of education", which is to ask the questions that must be asked, even if they cannot be answered, if society is to survive: " . . . . what is truth? What is the purpose of life? What is God's will?" (Scotchman's Return 75). And here though MacLennan expressed his willingness to use any synonym for "God" that might describe the intelligent force which

inspires life and motion, we come to the essential core of his philosophic position: that he is a religious man, a man who carries a Bible in his suitcase and reads it, yet is in revolt against the Calvinist Theology and the Puritan ethics that darkened his childhood.

MacLennan rejects the secularist view that science has removed the necessity for religion. Science, he holds, has discredited an outdated theology. But theologies are only the temporary symbolic structures which churches have invented to try to convey in finite form some conception of an infinite being. The discrediting of the symbols does not destroy the truth they seek to express - the God who, in MacLennan's words, is "at once purpose and cause . . . the cause of our existence and the purpose behind the universe" (Cross Country 143). If science cannot prove the existence of God, that is due to science's own limitations.

> Yet it is only through mystical or poetic insight that man's ultimate experience - his relationship to the Universal Spirit - can be realized. Not all the exact knowledge in the world can substitute for the state of being which the wisdom of the centuries has affirmed to be the highest state to which the human spirit can rise (Cross Country 156).

In fact, once limitations are recognized science and mystical religion can live together, and there is no need for the sense of living in that "solitude of a purposeless universe, "which is the theme of so much modern writing. It is, MacLennan declares, the Puritan tradition that has made difficult the reconciliation of religion and science and has led into the impasse of agnosticism. It is obvious that MacLennan's detestation of Puritanism is an intensely personal passion, which to an extent he exorcised by writing Each Man's Son.

Puritanism, MacLennan argues, is to be taken as an anti-religion.

> Religion can never be anything save a thing of the spirit: its values are of the spirit, its aims are of the spirit. But the society in which we live has become so materialistic that even our standards of goodness are in general materialistic ones. It is not a change in our judgement of what constitutes evil that marks the extent of our drift from our spiritual past. It is the change in our judgement of what is good (Cross Country 140).

MacLennan goes on to stress that no matter how much material goodness there may be in a society, it cannot indefinitely continue to be religious without a strong spiritual element. He agrees that people who have lost all faith may still live in the twilight of Christ's teaching as gentle

and considerate people. But, as history shows, "no civilization has long survived after that civilization has lost its religion" ((Cross Country 140)). Though MacLennan does not put in such archaic terms, he clearly means that the loss of spirituality in a culture means the coming of anti-Christ, for, as he says, "where religion is concerned nature abhors a vacuum." And that vacuum- in our age - is likely to be filled by movements like Nationalism, Fascism and Communism, which he quite correctly argues "are fundamentally neither political nor economic movements. They are, in their appeal to the masses and even to intellectuals, aberrations of the religious impulse" (Hugh MacLennan 141).

MacLennan points out, the symbols that once were significant have lost their magic, largely because Puritanism has appropriated the concept of the "practical Jesus", and has lost, the vision of God. What is needed is "a new way to express the idea of God" (Hugh MacLennan 148).

MacLennan who was highly disturbed about the spiritual condition of the world looked back so nostalgically on a Victorian past, the past when it was possible to live like the old Nova Scotian captain, Joshua Slocum. Slocum was a secure man, secure in his courage and skill, his faith in God," and this was what aroused MacLennan's admiration.

> Too many of our most admired living authors write as though fear were more interesting than courage and lust

> more fascinating than love. In a world of waste and propaganda, where the young lions are naked and dead from here to eternity, Joshua Slocum's brave happiness shines like the beam of a light house across the cold, dark water of our fears (Thirty and Three 261).

In novel after novel we see MacLennan trying to capture the now elusive beam of that old lighthouse of spiritual happiness. Without pretending to be in any way religiously inspired, admitting his unwilling lack of the power to give living expression to the idea of God, he refuses to accept the pessimism that has marked a great spectrum of modern literature, ranging from the defiant heroism before the absurd postulated by French writers Malraux and Albert Camus to the acceptance of what appears to be a total lack of meaning in human life by writers like Becket and Robbe-Grillet.

As George Woodcock observes:

> MacLennan's achievement rests, apart from his essays, on three good novels, Each Man's Son, Barometer Rising and The Watch that Ends the Night, and on the earlier half of Two Solitudes. The lessons he has tried to teach in these books will be learnt or not, but in any case will lose their relevance as times change; his portrayal of Canadian life and the Canadian land will not, and I

cannot foresee a time when he will not be regarded as Canada's best social novelist, and - for all his manifest imperfections - as one of Canada's most considerable novelists of any kind (Hugh MacLennan 118).

Chapter IV

MACLENNAN AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Britain and France had established colonies in North America since the sixteenth century, but in 1763 the French colony of Quebec (New France) fell into British hands following the Victory of General Wolfe over General Montcalm on the Heights of Abraham. This led to British control of colonies that later formed the largest and richest provinces of Canada-Quebec and Ontario. In 1783, after other British colonies in North America successfully fought the war of American independence and established a new nation -- the United states of America, the remaining colonies became reconstituted into a fresh, rather amorphous political entity known as British North America. Out of British North America, the Constitutional Act of 1791 created Lower Canada (Quebec), and Upper Canada (Ontario) each with locally elected legislated assemblies. While achieving self-government in 1867 after merely a century of imperial rule by Britain, unlike most former colonies which established nationality, Canada steered a middle course that generally avoided resistance. Canadian nationality is unique.

Influence of the United Empire Loyalists, especially in Ontario, and the presence of a large French-speaking population in Quebec were the two most culturally distinctive features of British North America. By the first half of the nineteenth century, British North America had not greatly changed from

its original structure as a nondescript assortment of remnant British Colonies, in which one striking feature was a strong colonial or American loyalist sympathy for Britain, and another the reluctant acquiescence of the French-speaking population of Quebec. It is with^in this shifting soil of uncertain loyalty, reluctant accommodation, hesitant compromise and subdued, cautious moderation, that seeds of nationality germinated and grew to register Canada's birth.

After the demise of colonial nationality a fresh concept of Canada came into focus in Canada's fiction in the first half of the last century. Neil Macrae, hero of Hugh MacLennan's first novel Barometer Rising envisages a new nation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Arctic ice cap to the Great Lakes.

Macrae's Canada is "this anomalous land, this sprawling waste of timber and rock and water where the only living sounds were the foot falls of animals or the fantastic laughter of a loon, this empty tract of provincial silences and winds and erosions and shifting colours, this bead-like string of crude towns and cities tied by nothing but railway tracks, this nation undiscovered by the rest of the world and unknown to itself, these people neither American nor English, nor even sure what they wanted to be, this unborn mightiness, this question mark, this future for himself, and for God knows how many millions of mankind" (79).

It was perhaps to be expected that the United States should subsequently follow an equally defined course of history that included a civil war. Canada, on the other hand, followed a different course, in which the initial precariousness of its nationality was to persist, until today, when it is visible in continuing debate and controversy about sovereignty, independence or separation for Quebec. But if controversy over the place of Quebec in Confederation was unsettling, what was equally disturbing was the rapid growth of the United States into a major world power that asserted hegemony over many parts of the world, most specifically over North and South America and the Caribbean.

Since Canada was a smaller nation of similar language and culture as the United States, and situated on its large neighbour's immediate northern border, the growth of American power came to be viewed with increasing uneasiness, suspicion and alarm. Many people, on both sides, believed that there was a manifest American destiny to annex Canada. In these circumstances of fear of disintegration from within, that is Quebec's possible secession and danger of annexation from without, an obvious means of security for Canada lay in its continuing association with the British empire and reliance on British military, political and diplomatic representation. This rationale for continued association with Britain is crucial to the origin and growth of Canadian nationality.

Thomas Chandler Haliburton, an influential spokesman in British North America thought of himself as a Nova Scotian rather than as a Canadian. For him a Canadian was some one who spoke French. Yet it was in Haliburton's time that the idea of a political union was conceived to bring the different parts of British North America together into a single nation. The idea was fostered partly by French Canadian unrest, which brought Lord Durham out from Britain to investigate and make recommendations. The famous Report, which Durham wrote and came out in 1840, reveals some of the main factors that he considered important in the formation of Canadian nationality. One of the Chief aims of the Report was to discourage feelings of French Canadian nationality which Durham saw as the root of discontent in Quebec.

Regionalism as a socio-psychological variable remains significant in Canada. There is no dichotomy in calling Canada "a country of regions". Regional consciousness has remained strong and highest among the young, highly educated and better off sections of society. As people develop identification, commitment and satisfaction with their 'territorial region', it becomes a potential predictor of their values, attitudes and behaviour. Under these conditions, the territorial region gets transformed into a 'social entity.'

Although MacLennan's society is a vaguely assorted mixture of cultural elements that are partly British and partly American, Macrae in Barometer Rising foresees an assimilation of these elements into a new and coherent union that would be neither British nor American, but distinctly Canadian; and he expresses the rather idealistic hope that the new Canada will be such a significant development that it would affect "God knows how many millions of mankind" (79).

In the wake of globalization, regionalism continues to put stress on the Canadian political system, and overcoming regional cleavages has been a constant preoccupation of the federal government. There is a constant demand from the poorer regions for larger transfers from the federal government, a demand not always supported by the rich ones.

Canadian federalism finds it extremely difficult to accommodate Quebec's nationalism. Initially, Canada succeeded in bringing a realignment between the major ethnic blocs-the French and the English. Quebec was able to achieve its rightful place as the second most important French-speaking society in the world. Within a short span, Quebec was able to transform itself from an agrarian society to a most modern entrepreneurial one.

Quebec now needs not only the status of a 'national' state but additional powers to meet the pressing needs of a modern society. But the Canadian constitution cannot afford greater powers to Quebec at the cost of

other regions. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Quebec's refusal to sign the charter of rights and Freedoms and the Rejection of Charlottetown reforms have amply demonstrated it. Nor is the regional discontent in Canada confined to Quebec only. In fact, the crisis in Canadian federalism extends beyond Quebec's quest for special status.

As a principle of political organization it is the coexistence of centripetal and centrifugal forces, of pressures for centralization and decentralization, of attachments to the nation and the region which are the very foundations of federalism. Federalism presumes the existence of both nationalism and regionalism. It is a mechanism through which these countervailing forces can be both balanced and preserved. If either is missing, federalism cannot survive.

It would be unthinkable to discuss provincial diversity and nationalism in Canada without mentioning the special role of Quebec. The separate identity of the power of Quebec and the subsequent nationalism has always been one of the most important issues of Canadian politics. Every decade, there is an overt conflict among supporters and opponents of an independent Quebec. The issue relates to the perception that within the boundaries of Quebec is found a society which social scientists term as ethnically plural.

The problems and grievances of Quebec as a problem of regional imbalance and economic disparity is quite common in a federal set-up. The supporters of Canadian federalism argue that in federal systems, some regions always grow more rapidly than the others. The situation can be remedied by a fairer distribution of economic resources and decentralization of political power to ensure greater autonomy to the provinces.

Generally there is a feeling that Quebeckers waste too much of their energies in defending their collective identify, culture and traditions. Instead of holding past to their outmoded practices, obsolete values and religious orthodoxy, if the Quebeckers take an active part in modern life of North America, they have every possibility of coming at par with their Anglophone brothers. On the contrary, the separatist movement in Quebec has served to revitalize those seeking politico-economic sovereignty and cultural transformation. In this sense nationalism has been a revolutionary response to longstanding injustice and inequality, which has found expression in the rebellion of patriots in 1830s, activities in the right-wing Alliance Laurentienne in the 1950s and independence movements of Parti Quebecois in the 1970s and 1980s.

Macrae's, the hero of the novel Barometer Rising, idealism was shared by Hugh MacLennan and a great many mid-century Canadians. It underlies the emergence of a world order in which Canada will play a central role.

Macrae reflects:

> But if there were enough Canadians like himself half American and half English, then the day was inevitable when the halves would join and his country would become the central, arch which united the new order (218).

Traditional nationalism, which saw its role as preserving French-Canadian culture, had given way to modern nationalism. The impact of industrialization, modernization and urbanization had altered the utility of the status quo, and convinced many Francophones of the need to control their political and economic institutions. Through out the 1970s Quebec nationalism championed political independence as the only means of attaining social, political and economic equality. It was with this platform that the Parti Quebecois swept to power in 1976. Another example of the transition from traditional to modern nationalism among the Quebecois was the shift from the earlier goal of bilingualism and biculturalism for French Canadians throughout Canada, to one of unilingualism and uniculturalism for the Quebecois in a Quebec state.

Generally scholars ascribe the growth of nationalism to Quebec to the period following the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, firstly, to the continuation of the historical phenomenon of resistance to colonialism which

was aggravated by increased Francophone interaction with the Anglophone community during this period of rapid industrialization and urbanization, and, secondly, to the realization by the Francophone majority that economic nationalism needed to be combined with cultural nationalism of socio-economic status mobility was to be attained. Finally, the rapid social change that occurred in Quebec in the last thirty years destroyed the old order, leaving in its wake a vacuum in terms of values. Some observers argue that the basic of Quebec nationalism has effectively disappeared. The grievances that gave rise in the first place to Quebec nationalism have been eliminated through such measures as Bill 101, which restricts the use of English in schools, business and government by putting the French language on the same footing in Quebec as English in other provinces, the reinforcement of Francophone presence outside Quebec, and the partition of the Constitution of Canada in 1982.

The French language continues to distinguish over 80 per cent of Quebec's population, it provides a continuing basis not only for distinctiveness, but for social and institutional separateness from other Canadians too. It is not certain that the grievances that fuelled Quebec nationalism and independentism during the 1960s and 1970s have been fully resolved. Francophones have come to assume more importance in the federal cabinets, but their presence in the upper levels of federal bureaucracy remains uneven. French has not achieved equal status as a language of work.

The defeat of the sovereignty-association referendum in 1980 gave Pierre Trudeau an opportunity to advance his constitutional agenda: ending the British Parliament's role in Canadian government, established in 1867 by the British North America Act, and adopting a "Charter of Rights and Freedoms". After contentious federal provincial negotiations, the Canadian government issued the Constitution Act of 1982, which was supported by all the provinces but Quebec. The 1982 revision of the Canadian constitution did not clearly respond to the long-standing demand of Quebecois Francophones for reinforcement of the status and powers of the Quebec government.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord had a lot more to do with the feelings of exclusion and suspicion of groups with a very different agenda than simply tidying up Quebec's place in the Constitution. What worried many people about Meech Lake was an apparent problem in Trudeau's vision for Canada and in liberalism, that is, how should a society that hold the defence of individual rights to be uppermost, deal with the concept of the collective rights of a minority group with respect to language laws? It is obvious that English needs no defence in Northern America. And it is also obvious that French needs some defences in Quebec. Many Quebec supporters of Meech hoped that the 'distinct society' clause would provide sufficient legal room for the province to defend the use of French as an

official language and to ensure that, immigrants accepted for settlement in Quebec would be 'Francophonists'.

Classifying Quebec as a 'distinct society' is not approved by rest of the provinces. The objection is practically strong in the west, and also in Newfoundland. The argument has been that all the provinces are equal and thus any new concessions granted to Quebec should also be given to the other nine provinces. Behind the claim of equity lies a smouldering fire of Anglophone resentment at bilingualism and government recruitment practices. Minority ethnic and societal groups argue that they deserve just as much constitutional protection of their right as Quebec and any accord like Meech Lake should enshrine their interests also. Trudeau and many in the federal Liberal party, who favoured a strong, centralized state feared that concessions to Quebec or the other provinces will set a dangerous precedent in weakening Ottawa.

Both the Left and the Right attacked Meech Lake Accord. The great irony is that a process intended to consolidate the defeat of separation in 1980 and reconcile Quebec has unleashed a flood of communal conflict. After the failure of Meech Lake, the federal government introduced a new set of proposals to meet Quebec's demands that could be acceptable to the rest of Canada.

Western Canadians are in favour of making the Senate 'elected, effective and equal'. Known as "Triple Formula", the proposed reforms are based on the promise that all provinces in Canada should be treated as equal. Canada's lack of elected regional representation at the federal level has been recognized as a serious constitutional flaw ever since the mid 1970s.

Most Canadians think in terms of regions, although there is no argument about the actual boundaries of Canadian regions. But the references to regions are so familiar and pervasive that these divisions are taken for granted as natural and self-evident. It is clear that the regional tensions have been an inevitable component of Canadian politics. Canada's troubles extend much beyond Quebec's disenchantment with its place in the federation. Most of the provinces disliked giving too much powers to Quebec, while Quebec wished for additional powers. Quebec has been striving hard for a special status, while the other regions have been unwilling to accept this claim.

Quebec's quest for a formal 'special status' under the name of 'two nations', 'distinct society' or 'asymmetrical federalism' represents a desire to enjoy the benefits of both federalism and independence. The rejection of the 'special status' by the non-Quebecois reflects the apprehension that 'special status' would really mean 'special' for all practical purposes. Secondly, it would affect the federal provincial relations adversely.

The on-going constitutional crisis in Canada reflects the failure on the part of Canadian federalism to provide constitutional expression to regional and cultural differences. The failure of the Central government institutions to represent regional interests has been a source of frustration among non-central Canadians. The politics of constitutional change in Canada during the past quarter century has involved a variety of issues, including the economic powers of the provinces and of the federal government respectively, the entrenchment of defined human rights, the structure of the central institutions of the government, and, constitutionalization of a system of inter governmental fiscal transfers enabling all provinces to offer roughly comparable standards of public services. By far, the most important issue, instead the one that to a significant degree has underpinned and shaped all others, has pertained to the very nature of Canada as a political community comprising of two linguistic groups, Anglophone and Francophone.

In Canadian history the problems associated with regionalism have been a recurring subject. Canada has developed more as a cluster of regional units than as a nation with one identity. From the sociological point of view, ethnicity, occupational and industrial specialization, attitudes, identity, and values are all variables that have produced and sustained regionalism in Canada. Regionalism has a political dimension that involves both a collective identity and a defence of territorial interests.

There are four clear regional cleavages, the West, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. The creation of a distinct Canadian society will depend on the extent to which regionalism, in the form of a collective consciousness, can be modified. It has been found that approximately sixty per cent of Canadians think of themselves in terms of a regional identity, thirty per cent in terms of a national identity, while ten per cent are ambivalent. Regional distinctiveness and national unity are not, however, necessarily naturally exclusive goals. It is, however, believed that a national Canadian ideology is slowly emerging. The creation of a distinct Canadian society will depend on the extent to which regions come to see the national unit, as opposed to the regional unit, as their primary identity reference. Despite all optimism, the argument holds good that regionalism in Canada is not a single story, but rather several different stories running along tracks that have tended in recent years to be parallel.

In MacLennan's novels it is easy to observe his earnest attempt to see that a national Canadian ideology is emerged. Through his novels he worked hard for the creation of a distinct Canadian society. His strong desire was to see the national unit as their primary identity reference. MacLennan's Two Solitudes seeks to exert a corrective effect upon the society it represents. The novel reveals the desire and need for a national identity, both social and cultural, a certain fear of American social, economic and cultural hegemony, an uneasiness with regard to increasing urbanization, and its effects on

Canadian socio-cultural values and perceptions. In Montreal MacLennan published his celebrated novel Two Solitudes, with its theme that Canada's two major nationalities needed to demonstrate more mutual tolerance. The Montreal Star in its Chronicle on National Unity praised highly the sincere efforts of MacLennan and said it was impossible not to note the generous and intelligent effort and the marvelous success achieved by a Canadian writer to help in solving Canada's national problems. In the novel MacLennan was dealing with one of the burning issues of his country. Canadian reviewers acclaimed Two Solitudes as a leap forward in the feverish race to assert a cultural identity.

What is envisaged is the growth and widespread application of a broad, urban industrial, technological culture and way of life which would form the basis not only of the Canadian nation but of nations all over the world. "Canada would have an open culture, exclusively its own, yet readily accessible to the wider world community" (Barometer Rising 4). But as MacLennan himself was later to realize, the new nation was unlikely to emerge as long as the problem of Quebec's satisfactory integration remained. In his sixth novel, Return of the Sphinx, Neil Macrae's buoyant idealism has vanished and is replaced instead by disillusionment and regret (5).

Leo Kennedy, the Canadian poet, reviewing the novel for the Chicago Sun, called it unreservedly 'the Great Canadian Novel'. (Chicago Sun Book

Week 21 January 1945). Merrill Denison, a Canadian playwright claimed that the subject of the novel 'is at the very core of Canada's future' (Saturday Review of Literature 28 (10 march 1945). Mason Wade, who published the first comprehensive history in English of the French Canadians insisted that the novel was 'required reading for every Canadian who is concerned with the fundamental problem of his national life' (Canadian Register 2 April 1945). The Canadian Forum was extravagant in its summing up' Canada should stage a coming-of-age party this year. We have produced two novels of the full stature of manhood, Grove's Master of the Mill and Two Solitudes.... The latter will probably have the more popular appeal. Hence is the substance of Canada, her countryside, her cities, her conflicting cultures, and, above all, her people. We move comfortably among them, knowing them for our own, yet, if it were translated into, say Russian, it could be read over there with something of the pleasure we have in reading War and Peace (Eleanor Mc Naught 'Books of the Month' Canadian Forum (May 1945).

MacLennan introduced a literary attitude that, by combining a wry view of Canada's past, a Panorama of losers uniting for survival with a sense of the grandeur of its setting, initiated a kind of geo-historical approach that dominated Canadian fiction at least until the novels of Margaret Lawrence continued to play an important role in Canadian poetry afterwards. For other writers, MacLennan offered the example of a novelist who-even if one might not choose to initiate him stylistically dared to present himself as a

spokesman for the national consciousness. Roy Daniells saw him in 1957 as more than anyone else the "representative" novelist of the period (211). Margaret Laurence described him, with Sinclair Ross, Morley Callaghan, and Ethel Wilson, as one of "the first generation of Canadian novelists to write out of their own people and their own culture, the sight of their own eyes, not taking as their models British or American writers, but developing the consciousness of their own people and culture" (Sullivan 78). As the first of MacLennan's novels, and one of the first examples of the kind of truly Canadian writing Margaret Laurence describes, Barometer Rising has its special place.

MacLennan was not parochial in spite of the strong regional awareness that emerges in his description of Nova Scotian towns and landscapes, and of the nationalism he projects in his fiction as well as his essays. MacLennan realized the importance of universal myths and accepted their guidance even though he did not accept the cosmopolitan aesthetics of literary modernism.

Renowned critic Northrop Frye in The Whidden Lectures made it clear that it was widely believed or assumed that Canada's destiny, culturally and historically, found its fulfilment in being a nation, and that nationality was essential to identify. Canadians were moving towards a post-national world and that Canada had moved further in that direction than most of the smaller nations. What was more important about the last century, in Canada, was

not that Canadians had been a nation for a hundred years, but that Canadians had a hundred years in which to make the transition from a pre-national to a post-national consciousness.

In each of MacLennan's novels, he has tackled a specific area of national concern. In Barometer Rising it is the First World War and the emergence of the problem of Canadian national identity; in Two Solitudes, it is the French-Canadian problem and the conscription crisis; in The Precipice it is Puritanism and Canadian relations with the United States; in the Watch that Ends the Night it is the effect of the Depression and the rise of Fascism in Canada; in the Return of Sphinx, the complex nature of the French-Canadian problem allied to the generation gap.

By tackling specific areas of national concern MacLennan has upheld the spirit of nationalism and his novels have gone a long way towards constituting a tradition, invaluable to succeeding writers, as much to revolt against as to follow . . . In subject matter he has journeyed alone into unknown territory of the Canadian mind.

Chapter V

MACLENNAN AND THE LITERARY TRADITION

MacLennan had always admired C.P. Snow's writing generally, but meeting him, becoming friends, intensified his admiration considerably. Both were skeptical of much modern fiction and tended to appreciate the great 'realistic' writers such as Balzac, Dostoevsky, Proust and Tolstoy.

It was to Tolstoy to whom MacLennan turned for his foremost example of how to write fiction. According to him Tolstoy was the greatest novelist who ever lived. He re-read War and Peace in 1956 with the profound admiration he had always felt for his novel and he was reading it with a kind of abstract indignation at the knowledge that if any novelist attempted to write as Tolstoy did he would be so hopelessly out of fashion that the critics would tear him apart. Comparing most modern literature with Tolstoy's masterpiece, he literally wrote himself into the conclusion that the most revolutionary course any artist can take is to be conservative. Rereading War and Peace confirmed in him the belief that the modern novel had lost its scope and its sense of life's mystery through its obsession for neatness and technical perfection. For MacLennan the best scenes in Tolstoy's novel were the very scenes which the modern critic would condemn as extraneous. The stories of his own characters, he decided, like Tolstoy's would be given their place in the historical events of time in the

most natural manner possible. Like Tolstoy too, MacLennan would not shrink from making the moral pronouncements so unfashionable in the literature of his time.

The book that MacLennan was reading as he worked on The Watch that Ends the Night was Tolstoy's War and Peace. It is thus not coincidental that Jerome links himself with Prince Andrei, and parallel can be drawn between George in the closing pages of The Watch and Pierre in Tolstoy's First Epilogue; the direct communication of joy-in-life can be felt in the pages of both writers.

Beyond similarities in characterization, MacLennan was encouraged by Tolstoy's direct intervention into his own narrative:

> . . . Tolstoy constantly commits what today's critics insist is a fictional crime. He himself whenever he feels like it, comes right out on the novel's stage and begins to talk. If the situation calls for it, he talks like a moralist, like an essayist or like a professional historian. Whenever the situation is right, he instantly regards the narrow convention that the author should not intrude physically into the stories he is telling. Hence it comes about that the greatest of all the characters in War and Peace is

Tolstoy himself ("Adam Blore's Broken Phonograph" 139).

Once MacLennan felt justified in using the Tolstoyan mode of authorial intrusion, events in his personal life began to make that choice imperative. He was at work on The Watch when his wife Dorothy was struck down by the first of a fatal series of embolisms. In the novel, George's wife Catherine undergoes a similar ordeal and, despite MacLennan's insistence to the contrary, it is clear that when he wrote of Catherine in the novel The Watch that Ends the Night he thought only of his wife Dorothy.

MacLennan mainly turned to Joseph Conrad, C.P. Snow, Tolstoy and Ernest Hemingway for his models. He had rejected so much contemporary writing as well as his earlier models, notably Shakespeare. His consideration of the history of English prose sharpened particularly his theories on Hemingway whose true genius, he came to realize, lay in his revolution in style. In Homage to Hemingway (1954) MacLennan stated: 'What Hemingway has done has been to restore order and clarity to our use of the English language. He understood that between him and his reality lay a mountain - range of hackneyed words and phrases which had crushed the evocative powers of the English language'. The only trouble for MacLennan was that Hemingway had used his powerful prose style for unworthy ends.

He stated that Hemingway portrayed only 'sensual' side ignoring the spiritual dimension (16).

Just as James Joyce used Stephen Dedalus to dramatize his own emergence as a distinctly Irish writer MacLennan presented Paul to record his own struggles in writing the first self-consciously Canadian novel, Barometer Rising. Paul Tallard was intended to be the central character of Two Solitudes in exactly the same way as was Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Like MacLennan, Paul is ambitious to become a writer; like him, too, his first attempts at fiction concern the 'great themes' whose focus is Europe. In a later scene in Two Solitudes, in a conversation that echoes MacLennan's wife Dorothy's remarks regarding the need for 'Canadian' writers, Paul's girl friend Heather, asks: 'Why didn't you set the scene in Canada?' Paul replies in words that had already come from MacLennan himself:

> Because no world trends begin here. I thought of it, but - everything that makes the world what it is - fascism, communism, big business and depressions - they're all products of other people's philosophies and ways of doing things . . . Canada was imitative in everything. Yes, but perhaps only on the surface. What about underneath? No one had dug underneath so far, that

> was the trouble. Proust wrote only of France, Dickens laid nearly all his scenes in London, Tolstoy was pure Russian. Hemingway let his heroes roam the world, but everything he wrote smelled of the United States. Hemingway could put an Italian army and get away with it because by now everyone in the English-speaking world knew what an American was. But Canada was a country that no one knew. It was a large red splash on the map. But because it used the English and French languages, a Canadian book would have to take its place in the English and French traditions. Both traditions were so mature they had become almost decadent, while Canada herself was still raw . . . The background would have to be created from scratch if his story was to become intelligible (301).

The dramatic discovery of his task as potential spokesman for the nation he has just discovered constitutes the novel's high-point:

> Out of his own life, out of the feeling he had in his bones for his own province and the others surrounding it, the theme of h is new book began to emerge. Its outlines grew so clear that his pencil kept moving steadily until

> three in the morning. He was not formulating sentences; he was drafting the design of a full novel. Outlines of scenes he would later create followed each other inevitably, one by one out of his subconscious. He picked up ten pages covered with scrawled notes, and as he reared them he found that each scene had retained in his mind the transparent clarity of still water (Two Solitudes 338).

In this self-conscious 'epiphany' reminiscent of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man can be seen similarities to MacLennan's own experience in writing his first 'Canadian' novel. There too, the novel's whole shape came to him at once. Although there are other themes in Two Solitudes, its central concern is to render the forces that go into the making of an artist. Every aspect of the novel from its beginning to its conclusion bears upon this theme: it traces all the influences - international, national and personal - on the individual who will be the one to create the first novel in the nation's cultural history. The story begins in 1917 at exactly the same time that Paul, a boy of seven, becomes conscious of the larger world of human affairs; it ends in the fall of 1939 with Paul halfway through the novel that will record Canada's 'first irrevocable steps toward becoming herself, knowing against her will that she was not unique but like all the others, alone with history, with science, with the future' (Two Solitudes 370).

As MacLennan confessed in an interview after Two Solitudes was published: Writing's an endless business . . . because I seem to see too many angles all the time. I'd like to present things simply, the way, for example, Maupassant . . . does' (Hugh MacLennan to Eva. Lis Wuorio "Man of Tremendous Sincerity" Globe and Mail 29 June 1946). What Two Solitudes really lacked was a focus that would emphasize Paul's development and throw everything else in the novel into a suitable relationship to this concern. Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man does this successfully by centering on Stephen's point of view at each stage of his growth. Much later, in The Watch that Ends the Night and in Voices in Time, MacLennan found the angle of vision that might have given Two Solitudes the focal point it so badly needed. He came to see that the drama of spiritual growth, such as Paul experiences, is best illuminated from within. Had he centred his story on Paul's consciousness, either in the third person as Joyce had done with Stephen Dedalus, or in the first person as he himself was to do with George Stewart in The Watch That Ends the Night and John Wellfleet in Voices in Time, the fascination of Paul's inner growth could have been felt by the reader.

Four years after the publication of The Watch That Ends the Night, he decided he should wait no longer to take up the offer the Canada Council had so generously made him; to finance a year away from his duties at McGill. Partly because he felt himself too close to the political upheaval in

Quebec, but more in imitation to James Joyce who had fled Ireland to gain perspective, he decided to spend the year in France. Unlike Joyce, he had not formulated an aesthetic and national stance which had only to be written out; he admitted that he was setting off for France in the hope that his perplexing dryness of spirit would disappear.

In Two Solitudes Paul becomes a victim of the Depression as well as being isolated from both English and French cultures. As he tells Heather later, 'it's a tribal custom in Canada to be either English or French. But I'm neither one nor the other' (61). Like Stephen Dedalus at the conclusion of Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Paul is sufficiently detached to observe the nation as a whole.

As Stephen Dedalus is Joyce's fictional recreation of himself, in Paul Tallard MacLennan intended his own fictional recreation. Critics opined that MacLennan was not so successful in making the character of Paul real. The New York Daily Worker voiced a similar objection: 'Well educated, sensitive, athletically constructed, and interestingly mated, Paul does not live up to the task the author set for him. Even when one reviewer perceived that Two Solitudes revolved round Paul Tallard he criticized author's failure to make the character of Paul real.

Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus is highly imaginative and sensitive. So is Paul, MacLennan's hero, well educated and highly sensitive. When Dedalus

finally realized that Ireland was a trap for him, and that he must escape the bonds of family, religion, and country if he wanted to create, he left Ireland. MacLennan left Canada for France to make a detached observation of his country.

MacLennan was highly influenced by a book on psychology. It was G.Rattray Taylor's Sex in History. Taylor had applied Freudian psychology to the study of history. Briefly, he saw history as moving in cycles between the two extremes of 'patrist' and 'matrist' societies, two forms of human culture taking their names from alternate methods of dealing with the classic Oedipal situation: the 'patrist' identifies with the father, assuming his authority and supporting his arrangements and laws; the 'matrist' clings to the mother in rebellion against the father, concentrating his energies on maintaining the comforts of life his mother represents. These two patterns are the extremes, he emphasised; when society is changing from patrism to matrism, or vice versa, there will be an intervening period in which the patterns will become confused. Moreover, there may be some happy periods in which people succeed in interjecting both parental figures in harmonious balance- but owing to the pressure of the Oedipal conflict, there is a natural tendency to fall off the fence on one side or the other.

Taylor discussed a number of eras in Western history to demonstrate his theory that history as moving in cycles between 'patrist' and 'matrist'

societies. He cited Elizabethan England, a matriarchal society; Calvinism, a patrist reaction to matrism; Romanticism, a matrist period; and so on. The book ended with an analysis of contemporary society called 'Modern Morality' in which Taylor maintained that the world was becoming more and more matrist in reaction to the patrist society that was Victorian England.

For the most part Taylor's theories provided a meaningful framework for a number of separate views MacLennan already held: the cyclic view of history that had originated in his classical studies and was best expressed in Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and Spengler's Decline of the West. It was the view that had lain behind MacLennan's thesis Oxyrhynchus.

MacLennan had a general feeling, mainly derived from his father, that the First World War had been one of the cataclysmic turning points in human history. He maintained a persistent notion that the technological advances of the twentieth century had thrown the times out of joint, diverting energy into destructive outlets like the neutron bomb while man's moral, humanitarian side lagged far behind. His conviction was that Calvin had been one of the most evil men in Western history. He held Oedipus complex as the key not only to individual development but also to society's evolution.

In MacLennan's article "Reflection on Sex in History" written in 1962 on Sex in History for the Writer's Diary series in the Montreal Star and syndicated papers, he praised Taylor's book and agreed that his own society was galloping hard towards matrism.

In the novel Return of the Sphinx MacLennan's purpose was two-fold, and can be traced back to the two primary influences on him at the time he was writing. First, he adapted Taylor's theories from Sex in History to 'use Freud as an art structure'; second, he used the Oedipus at Colonus phase of the oedipal myth to give dramatic qualities and structure, as well as universality, to his novel. He agreed with Daniel Schneider that no art had a chance if it ignored scientific discoveries. In the most basic sense he was trying to incorporate, the Freudian theories which by the fifties had filtered down into common parlance and were falling into disfavour among most intellectuals. But it was really Sex in History that had shown him how Freudian dynamics could be seen to structure all history. If man's reaction to the Oedipal situation could inform whole eras of human history, the same dynamics could be applied to the structure of a book, especially if that book dwelt explicitly on a historical period which Freudian theory could explain. MacLennan was already well on his way to formulating a similar view of human history.

In the novel Return of the Sphinx MacLennan illustrated that the current age was, as he had already put it, 'galloping hard towards matrism', to do so he simply took the theories in Taylor's last chapter 'Modern Morality'. The present matrist era, as he depicted it, began as a reaction to the extreme patrism that had culminated in the two world wars. Thus, the earliest point of reference in the novel is the First World War, an event to which one of the characters, Tarnley, traces the beginning of all the current trouble: 'it was in the first one that it all started. I mean when it all started'(5). Tarnley's statement comes back to haunt Gabriel Fleury as he tries to make some sense of the present age: 'What had started then was surely the rebirth of a kind of man who had perished two thousand years ago, a man who knew there was no escape from his own nature into religion or politics or science or even into his own skill. That was certainly when it began for himself, and he was not even six years old when he understood it as final and absolute facts"(Return of the Sphinx 170). The First World War has broken the spirit of Gabriel's father, leaving him nothing to believe in or live for; the ideals and authority of the patrist era that was Victorian England which had been exaggerated to an extreme that no human could tolerate.

As for Gabriel and his slightly later generation, the Second World War remained the last gasp of a patrism that was being modified already by matrist influences. . In one of the earliest scenes drafted, Gabriel recalls the

sinking of his ship en route to Kolkatta just before Pearl Harber; the strange dreamy atmosphere he remembers as he drifts in a lifeboat afterwards illustrates the hiatus that follows the end of an era. "All responsibility was gone. Without a single thing left to which he could sensibly attach his loyalty, with nothing he could even imagine himself doing to help anyone or anything. Gabriel felt a mysterious peace" (Return of the Sphinx 34). The shark that hovers by his drifting hand is reminiscent of the monsters of the unconscious that Captain Yardley glimpsed at sea and that George Stewart experienced as the ocean of the unconscious threatened to overwhelm him after the structure of his identity temporarily disappeared. For MacLennan, under the influence of Taylor, this was the state of mind that resulted when the super-ego, even as bullying one as that which expressed itself in two world wars, dissolved.

The novel, Return of the Sphinx, is full of such images as the Western World moves further and further away from the too aggressive patrism from which it is in revolt. Most dramatic is the image of the storm at sea, in which MacLennan so forcefully illustrated that 'hurricane which is the twentieth century' he believed was taking place. This storm rises out of the depths of the sea and knocks over Alan Ainslie, terrifying him with its violence: 'Then something loomed at him, something absolutely enormous came at him out of the dark shaped like Kilimanjaro with snow solid on a long, humped crest.

A huge, soft-muscled something alive scooped the ship up, held her an instant, trembling, then threw her over on her starboard side with a roar of water and a crash of breaking gear'. This creature, at once the 'id' of Alan and all men, is also those forces MacLennan always imagined as being 'under the surface' of the ship of human progress and responsibility -- the 'super ego'. Here is the mysterious sphinx who returns periodically to puzzle man with the old, difficult questions to which man himself and the stages of his life are the only true answers. In this central symbol he had in mind also the writing of W.B. Yeats, whose cyclic view of history corresponded in some respects at least with Taylor's. 'Things are, falling apart, the centre cannot hold' (Yeats 18). Ainslie quotes from Yeats on one occasion, and indeed the great beast slouching towards Bethlehem to be born a part of that huge 'something alive' which ushers in MacLennan's new cycle of human history.

The decade of the fifties represents a time when the oncoming forces of matrism are temporarily in balance with the declining patrist values. The two world wars represent the final extreme of patrist era in Return of the sphinx. Members of society are weak-willed consumers for whom personal pleasure is a dominant aim and whose education consists of advertising propaganda from the United States. Typical of this era -- indeed personifying it -- is the character Marielle, the older woman with whom

Ainslie's son Daniel has a semi-incestuous affair. With a past history of several lovers, this luxurious Mediterranean woman is completely at home in the current matrist society, enjoying thoroughly the sight of so many young people having fun. For both Chantal and Daniel, Ainslie's children, the Oedipus complex is a motivating force: each one has an affair with a parental substitute. In an earlier draft of the novel Chantal comments explicitly that 'this (is a) female age we live in now'; altered in its final version, the remark more specifically is applied to Quebec as "behaving like a woman in the menopause" (23). MacLennan demonstrated on every level -- individual, provincial, national and universal -- that the accelerating excesses of a matrist age were resulting in the kind of confusion, the inability to form any kind of super-ego, that Taylor had said was likely to follow as any historical cycle drew to its close. And as Gabriel comments, also in one of the earlier drafts: "I don't know much about history, but from the little I do know I have the idea that the termination of all regimes has the same symptoms. Everybody knows that the jig is up, but at the same time hardly anyone can accept what this is going to mean to himself personally" (Return of the Sphinx 43).

In a senseless accident, Constance Ainslie, wife of Alan Ainslie, is killed. Ainslie's family is consequently without a centre -- things fall apart, and one of the novel's dramatized statements is the series of entrances and exits from the Ainslie apartment as Alan, Chantal, and Daniel Careen in and

out like random molecules, bumping into each other now and then as if by chance. One such symptom of a matrist phase is the break down of the family. This is represented in the novel symbolically by the death of Constance. Thus, MacLennan deliberately chose for the novel's present the last segment of the matrist era he believed was occurring throughout the world.

His son Daniel is a separatist who increasingly moves towards the Quebec nationalist ideals and even towards violence. Like his separatist compatriots, he is a patrist. Being furious at the decadence of the Americanized consumer society all around him, enraged at his father's ineffectual behaviour and his absence from home, disillusioned with Marielle for sleeping with him, disgusted with his sister and his 'Uncle Gabriel' for their affair, he finds in the separatist movement a 'cause' with the direction, ideals and sense of responsibility so clearly lacking in modern life. In its rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church and against the Queen -- both 'mother' symbols and hence representatives of matrism -- the separatist movement promises a clean sweep, a new honesty, and male leadership. As Ainslie puts it in Parliament. "Canada is in terrible danger, and the danger comes from what well may be a change in its personality" (266). In his desperate hatred of the "stinking world of cheating, corrupting, lying,

selling-out and excusing themselves by telling you this is human nature"(258).

In a letter to Gray, MacLennan later explained his concept of Daniel. "The tragedy of the western world today can be expressed pretty simply -- the inability of the young men to identify with a father -- i.e. with a creative superego, on account of what the patrists did in 1914, repeated in 1939 and now are attempting to do in Vietnam, big business and advertising . . ." Applied to French-Canada, Mother Church took the place of Father France for two centuries. "Need one look any further than that for the rapprochement between that supreme Father-Image, De Gaulle, and the youth of today's Quebec which has rejected Mother-Church" (Return of the Sphinx 293).

MacLennan used Freudian theory to focus his individual, national and universal themes. But Oedipus at Colonus gave him the tight dramatic structure and character patterns by which he could economically illustrate these Freudian views. In the arithmetical 'equations' to which he often referred when discussing the book -- 'a symphonic harmony of individual characters, background, situation and story developments' ("Hugh MacLennan to Keith Gilley", 16 june 1967). Alan is roughly similar to Oedipus, his wife senselessly dead; Chantal, his daughter, resembles Antigone, Daniel, his son, resembles the traitorous Plolynices; Gabriel Fleury

is similar to Theseus. In his depiction of Alan, however he changed his mind about, following the pattern in Oedipus. Although Alan resigns from the government and for a time Chantal worries that he may kill himself, he does not die, as Oedipus did. At the outset Ainslie was supposed to have been killed, in fact the riot with which the book opens originally featured the burning of Alan Ainslie in effigy. At some later date, however, MacLennan added the character of Moses Bulstrode, based in part on John Diefenbaker, and had him burned in effigy at the riot instead. He made certain changes because of his theory that art must affirm, that it must offer 'compensation for the human condition.' Where as Sophocles could have the gods forgive Oedipus, and honour his place of death as a sort of shrine, no such option was open to MacLennan, and he resorted to an inner rebirth in Ainslie similar to that of George Stewart at the end of The Watch that Ends the Night.

MacLennan's Return of the Sphinx makes it quite clear that responsible leadership, good breeding, and good sense are central to nationalism. His sphinx evokes images of bewilderment, anarchy, and terror associated with its classical archetype. It's more recent predecessor is W.B. Yeats's The Second Coming.

Various *personae* for the author MacLennan himself like Alan Ainslie, Gabriel Fleury, and to a lesser extent by Herbert Tarnley espoused values

that are in fact the very values upon which Yeats based his nationalism. Not only is MacLennan's nationalism very similar to Yeats's, but his articulation of it depends significantly upon his presentation of a socio-political milieu roughly similar to that which Yeats knew, and upon his manipulation of types and myths and antitheses that are remarkably Yeatsian.

MacLennan's motives and methods are likewise similar to Yeats's; a conversation between Tarnley and Fleury in Return of the Sphinx illustrates this.

> Fleury: If you want the real reason why Alan Ainslie's in politics, I can tell you. He's terrified that unless English Canada wakes up pretty soon, things in this country will drift into civil war.
>
> Tarnley: Tell me - am I right in believing that he's trying to use French-Canadian nationalism as a lever to make English Canada do something before it's too late?
>
> Fleury: Yes, I think that's about right (Mclean's 84).

MacLennan had treated national unity and the problem of two cultures before, most notably in Two Solitudes, of which he was later to write:

> Its genesis came in a dream in which I saw a tall, angular blond man arguing noisily with a stocky, darker man. They were shouting at each other in fury and a voice in the dream said to me, "Don't you see it? They are both deaf ("Two Solitudes that Meet and Greet in Hope and Hate" Mclean's 84 no. 8 [Aug 1971] 20).

How was it possible to make both sides act sensibly to effect political unity without civil war and without sacrificing the dignity of minority groups? The answer is that national unity is possible only when two peoples put aside their prejudices (or "race legends" as MacLennan calls them in Two Solitudes) and cherish and promote the best of each culture; when, symbolically, they are distinct individuals while at the same time members of the same family who "protect and touch and greet each other" (Rainer Maria Rilke 3). This is the message of Two Solitudes, and this is the message that MacLennan would have us hear amidst the darkness of his later novels.

For example, Joe Lacombe, R.C.M.P. Officer and a representative of what may well be the majority of French Canadians - the "psychological" separatists who genuinely yearn for greater self-determination but within the federation - puts the issue squarely before his long-time friend, Alan Ainslie:

> Suppose we want to work in our own *milieu* - what then? . . . Why can't we be free and clean and proud of

> ourselves? Why can't we succeed as French Canadians and not as imitations of the English and Americans? Why should they be the ones to judge whether we're any good or not? Why can't we judge that ourselves? ("The Fourth Separatism" 7).

As Federal Minister of Cultural Affairs, Ainslie attempts to get acting Prime Minister, to take remedial and exemplary measures. "If we insist on bilingualism on the recruitment level of the federal civil service, it will be taken as a touch stone in Quebec and everywhere else that we accept that Canada is the home of two cultures and that the majority wishes the minority culture to survive and prosper. If this happens, we will have one of the happiest and most stable nations in the world. It's that, or disintegration" (Return of the Sphinx 26). Ainslie reasserts this conviction in a parliamentary debate: "Canada is, and must remain, a single country . . . it can remain a single country only on this condition - that it be universally accepted that this single country is the home of two different cultures" (Return of the Sphinx 32). MacLennan may have had Yeats's Senate speeches in mind, or the similarity might be a case of coincidental good sense. In any event, Yeats, speaking in the Irish Senate, on October 17, 1924 had stressed the necessity of tolerance and justice in the effecting of national unity.

> I have no hope of seeing Ireland united in my time, or of seeing Ulster won in my time; but I believe it will be won in the end, and not because we fight it, but because we govern this country well. We can do that . . . by creating a system of culture which will represent the whole of this country and will draw the imagination of the young towards it ("The Senate Speeches" 87).

The local is but a symptom of the universal for MacLennan and Yeats. Yeats wrote that the Easter Rising "has been a great grief. We have lost the ablest and most fine-natured of our young men. A world seems to have been swept away" (Letters on Poetry 94). In Return of the Sphinx, Ainslie regards Canada as "the psychic centre of the world"; Fleury senses that events in Quebec are a result of "the mysterious emotion" which is "sweeping the world" and the riot which young Daniel Ainslie participated inis described by Tarnley as "an explosion of mass emotion". Fleury's metaphor is akin to Yeats's more powerful images of anarchy: "the blood-dimmed tide" of "The Second Coming" and "the irrational streams of blood (that) are staining earth" in "The Gyres". Both the images of violence and the frustrations behind the violence meet in Daniel Ainslie, Alan's son (Letters on Poetry 94).

Alan Ainslie seems curiously naïve in his beliefs that the problem in Quebec is not economic but psychological, that Quebec nationalism can be

explained as "a surrogate religion," and "that all revolutions have neurotic roots." "The only revolutions that matter," MacLennan has said, "are psychic, somewhere in the human soul," and that what happened in the 1960's was "a fantastic break in the human psyche" ("The Tennis Racket is An Antelope Bone" 7).

Ainslie claims during the parliamentary debate that the "world crisis," of which events in Quebec are but local symptoms," came when humanity lost faith in man's ability to improve his own nature. . . ." He continues: "When people no longer can believe in personal immortality, when society at large has abandoned philosophy, many grow mad without knowing why. They rack up . . ." (Return of the Sphinx 32). He maintains that people crave recognition and immortality and that when they no longer believe in good they seek things in evil. Yeats likewise believed that the problem of modern times began with a retreat of humanism. "The mischief began at the end of the seventeenth century when man became passive before a mechanised nature . . . ." (The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 11). MacLennan, however, gives a later date the modern world, he has said, began "at the end of 1914." In Return of the Sphnix, Herbert Tarnley claims "it all started" with World War I; and Gabriel Fluery, reflecting upon the suffering of his wounded father and the impact which that suffering had upon his own psyche, comments: "that was when it all started." He muses that "what had started then was surely the rebirth of a kind of man who had perished two thousand

years ago, a man who knew there was no escape from his own nature into religion or politics or science or even to his own skill" (40). Fluery's reference to an epoch which ended "two thousand years ago" points to the end of the Pre-Christian era which Yeats characterised by coldness and objectivity and symbolized by the Sphinx. Fluery's musing about an unfortunate "rebirth" is clearly reminiscent of Yeat's prophecy in "The Second Coming" that the "twenty centuries of strong sleep" which had been "vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle" were about the come round again (4).

Through Daniel's affectionate patting of the hood of his powerful car, and in his reckless driving; and in the senseless killing of Alan's wife, Constance, MacLennan symbolizes dehumanized, mechanized world in various ways.

Total and permanent despair is alien to MacLennan and Yeats. MacLennan puts his trust in traditional institutions to preserve and nurture those humanistic instincts which will repel the Beast. Alan Ainslie believes in good government; and a chastened Tarnley puts his trust in liberal education. Near the end of the novel Return of the Sphix we learn that Tarnley's son has committed suicide. In a letter that is distinctly Yeatsian in its comments on modern education and political democracy, Tarnley attributes his son's death to the youth's inability to cope with modern mechanized society.

Eminent critic George Woodcock has noted that Return of the Sphinx is almost obsessively involved, not merely in the fathers-and-sons pattern of antagonisms, but also in a cross-generational pattern of sexual conjunctions (Hugh MacLennan 115) and has suggested that, in Daniel, these patterns symbolize national and generational revolt. Alec Lucas speculating on MacLennan's love-scenes, states that the Daniel-Marielle affair "sums up on a psychological basis a plot in which a son, measuring swords with his father politically, asserts his deeper and Oedipal antagonism towards him through what both accept as symbolically incestuous when Daniel sleeps with Marielle, a mother surrogate, in his father's bed" ("Types and Myth" 54).

MacLennan dramatizes and emphasizes a myth which he has repeatedly objectified through the diversity in age, experience, and ethnic origins of his fictional families: namely, that youth and vigour and desire must be tempered with wisdom, discipline and love. This myth figures in all of MacLennan's novels, and a remark by Marcia, in The Precipice - "Father was crude, but . . . . I guess his energy was no more use to the Massachusetts blood of Mother's family than a truck running downhill with no brakes"(214) is clearly seminal to symbols of uncontrolled power in Return of the Sphinx. In yet another instance MacLennan has written: As there is power, so must there be love. Unless civilization achieves this union, there will be no civilization. Unless art is able to record it, there will be no art" (Yeats) too knew that power without wisdom is bound to be destructive. He objectified

this knowledge in his poem "Leda and the Swan", and issued an emphatic warning in the conclusion: "Did she put on his knowledge with his power?" ("The Present World as seen in its Literature" 18).

Constance, later Ainslie's wife, had given herself at the age of fourteen to a man considerably older than herself. But this did not adversely affect her either psychologically or morally. Constance's youthful experience provides a precedent for the more thematically and dramatically important relationship of Chantal and Gabriel. And the Quietude, tenderness, and affection which they share after their love-making, together with Alan's blessing of their impending marriage suggests a love-relationship which symbolizes energy directed into constructive ways, and which stands in marked contrast to the Daniel-Marielle affair. Contrasts in age, ethnic origin, experience, and emotional response are significant in the "sexual conjunctions" of this novel.

Marielle's seduction of Daniel is no facile escapism sanctioned by some make-love-not-war cliche. Rather, it is her earnest attempt to rid him of his Jansenist inhibitions and to direct his youthful energy and vitality into constructive ways: "You are afraid of loving a woman, and if a man fears that, then it is very natural for him to talk and dream about bombs and war" (Return of the Sphinx 51). She points out to him that in every century there have been those who ruin their lives for political ideas; and, through the

story of her father's death and the liberation of her country men to "candy bars and Coca Cola," she cautions him of what Yeats knew only too well; that political autonomy without culture is valueless, and often vicious.

Belief in cyclical history is the another myth which MacLennan and Yeats seem to share. Yeats believed, or pretended to believe, that history comes round in two-thousand-year cycles, and that each historical reversal is accompanied by violence. In his poem "The Second Coming" Yeats anticipates a reversal of the "gyres" and records his horror at the prospect. "While Yeats is not fond of Christianity, and regards his suppression of individual personality as having led to the present anarchy, yet at the end of the poem he envisions something far worse" (The Identity of Yeats 12).

Gabriel Fluery in Return of the Sphinx alludes to "another cold cycle", and to "violent changes". MacLennan novels, suggest that he does subscribe to the largely deterministic view of cyclical history. Gabriel's references to "a rebirth of a kind of man who had perished two thousand years ago" has been mentioned above; and, at another point, Alan Ainslie reflects that "some, like himself, had been driven to do irrevocable things not out of any fate created by their characters . . . but because such things had come with the nations of the epoch into which they had been born" (61). But dreams or myths, or "shadows", as Gabriel calls them, sometimes betray us, and near the end of the novel Alan's dejection seems complete: his political career has

been ruined, his son is in prison, and Canada is still on the brink. The cause of this collapse is implicit in a repudiation MacLennan had earlier made of political "isms".

> Nationalism, Fascism and Communism . . . . are aberrations because their dogmas are founded on hatred not on love, and it is this quality of hatred which makes their hideous creations so destructive and dangerous that they will bring about the extermination of the human race unless their growth is stopped (Cross Country 22).

Yeats, despairing of his "fool-driven land," and of the inability of political systems to cope with events in Europe, had written: "Communist, Fascist, nationalist, clerical, anti-clerical, are all responsible according to the number of their victims" (The Letters of W.B. Yeats 850).

MacLennan's belief in cyclical history, and his myth of the land combine in the Epilogue as he asserts once again his cautious faith that Canadian unity - and civilization itself - though threatened, will endure. This faith is implicit in the final paragraph of Two Solitudes:

> even as the two race-legends woke again remembering ancient enmities, there woke this time also the felt knowledge that together [Canadians] had fought and

> survived one great war they had never made and that now they had entered another . . . that even if the legends were like oil and alcohol in the same bottle the bottle had not been broken yet (412).

Through his choice of title, MacLennan clearly alludes to ancient anarchy and to Oedipus's answer to the riddle of the Sphinx. But the real immediacy of MacLennan's message comes from his concert of nationalism, and from a horror that the prophecy of "The Second Coming" might indeed become the reality. Return of the Sphinx is a political and social novel where, despite its occasional lapses from psychological realism and some impediments to the narrative flow, "life is greater than the cause" or, as both Yeats and MacLennan might rephrase it, "life is the cause" (Canadian Literature No. 89, Summer 1981).

MacLennan maintains that fiction depends in no small way on its power to use the symbols of its trade to mediate between men and the corrosive forces of their undefined emotions. Through his symbols, in both title and text, MacLennan is desperately cautioning mankind against impending tragedy. It is in no way reductive of his genius that he reshapes classical and Yeatsian mythic structures to articulate the nature of these forces and the dimensions of the tragedy.

MacLennan, in his novel Voices in Time took on a task as daunting as the one Milton had attempted in Paradise Lost: he, too, set to justify God's ways to man! As his religious faith deepened and his perspective expanded through time and space to survey man's entire history, now that the lives of others seemed to hold lessons as significant as his own, he had come to see that life is not unplanned. There is a God of evolution who works through all life to create even disorder. There is, in other words, a purpose to even the most purposeless human behaviour.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

It is evident from an indepth reading of his celebrated novels that MacLennan derived the theme of his novels essentially from historical events and episodes. However he has no direct literary descendants and he is a lone Canadian myth-maker, original in his choice of matter and the content of his novels. He was always keenly aware of the Canadian situation around him and he provided to Canadian literature a distinctive literary style and form which makes him unique as a Canadian writer.

He reveals strong sense of place, moral ponderousness and interest in conflict of generations and socio-historical situation. No wonder he has received expressions of appreciation and commendation from writers as diverse as Robertson Davies, Margaret Lawrence, Leo Kennedy, F.R. Scott and Gabrielle Roy. He was innovative in his documentary and social focus but conventional and even old-fashioned in his choice of form. He adds a new dimension to a distinctly national literature through his rendering of the contemporary social scene and thereby he becomes a role-model for later writers in Canada. He showed to later writers how to be a writer in Canada and how to be a Canadian writer.

It was to Tolstoy to whom MacLennan turned for his foremost example of how to write fiction. According to him Tolstoy was the greatest novelist

who ever lived. The stories of his own characters, he decided, like Tolstoy's would be given their place in the historical events of time in the most natural manner possible. MacLennan, like Tolstoy, did not shrink from making the moral pronouncements so unfashionable in the literature of his time. Beyond similarities in characterisation MacLennan was influenced by Tolstoy's direct intervention into his own narrative.

Being a realist MacLennan held that the romantics overlook the fact that society has an integration and character of its own and the naturalists ignore that the individual is a great deal more than the product of the social and economic conditions. Like Galsworthy and Bennett, he works within the tradition of the realist novel, meticulously recording the details of ordinary middle-class life. Like H.G. Wells, George Orwell and Arthur Koestler MacLennan also indulges in socio-political analysis. His work focuses on that point, as he approvingly quotes D.H. Lawrence, "where the soul meets history" (Hugh MacLennan 152). Character is less central in his novels than in many realist works, his attack on naturalistic reductionism not withstanding. MacLennan's training in the classics is another modifying influence on realism.

There is a distinctly lowbrow strain in MacLennan's fiction which further strengthens this emphasis on action and plot, despite a violent effort in the novel The Watch that Ends the Night to substitute inner life for

external action. Documentary, drama, and romance, then, all colour MacLennan's realism.

The philosophical core of MacLennan's fiction is moral conservatism. Though sympathetic to the modernist reaction against Victorian sentimentalism and response to the social collapse of 1920s and 30s MacLennan objected to the waste-land vision of modernist poetry and fiction. Further, he deplored the spirit of "middle-class chic" he found in modern fiction.

MacLennan defended his own work, not with aesthetic arguments, but with reference to subsequent historical developments validating his judgements. He had stated for example, that Barometer Rising was a book with something of a contrived plot, though the plot turned out to be almost dead accurate.

As a non-fiction writer, McLennan is indebted to an older tradition of the personal or familiar essay. His standards of non-fiction can be inferred from his approval of Francic Bacon, Joseph Addison and Charles Lamb as the three supreme British essayists.

Critics, particularly in Canada, have assumed MacLennan's importance as a major Canadian novelist. Important early criticism of MacLennan includes Roy Danielles' suggestion that MacLennan emphasizes religion and not class struggle as Canada's problem and George Woodcock's

characterization of MacLennan as a social novelist, using his central myth the Odyssey to demonstrate the underlying universality of the personal and national experience he recreates. Edmund Wilson in his work O Canada characterizes McLennan as secretary of society. Ronald Sutherland describes MacLennan as one of the first writers in the emerging mainstream of Canadian literature; a mainstream characterized prescritively and uncritically by an awareness of the co-existence of the two main ethnic and language groups in Canada.

The Watch that Ends the Night is commonly considered to be MacLennan's great achievement, with its profound theme and emotional power dwarfing its weakness. Each Man's Son does have some defenders as MacLennan's strongest novel and Voices in Time recently has been proposed for that accolade. In non-fiction work Seven Rivers of Canada is indeed admirable.

MacLennan stated in 1970 that the essence of man's fate was the dying struggle of the brave and able individual against the force of disintegration inherent in technology. Eschewing perfection and turning in his novels to Canadian experience, MacLennan analyses meaning and meaninglessness, power and powerlessness, through a simultaneous exploration of personal and public worlds. The search for meaning is the focus of middle novels; the study of power is the focus of the early and the later novels. MacLennan

argued that the tragedy occupying British and American writers had been the gradual wearing away of the importance of the family.

The novels are diverse, and structurally they comprise three main types. First, MacLennan chooses tight, chronological narratives covering short time periods, such as the nine and eight-day narratives of Barometer Rising and Return of the Sphinx for immediate drama, both personal and national. Second, more diffuse chronological narratives, like twelve year chronicle of Two Solitudes or the seven-year narrative of The Precipice provide more documentary overview, more attention to psychological and social development. Each man's Son, a three-month chronological account, with half the novel devoted to the first and final days of the sequence, falls somewhere between these two types, closer to the former. Third, MacLennan combines the strengths of both forms in his retrospective novels, which survey even longer periods—fifty years in the Watch That Ends the Night, one hundred and thirty years in Voices in Time - but create a focus through present-time sequences developing chronological over a short period.

In characterizing his novel Barometer Rising as an experiment, MacLennan has acknowledged its melodramatic plot and improbabilities. The novel follows the formulas of romantic comedy, with young lovers Penelope Wain and her cousin Neil Macrae reunited despite the machinations of Penny's father, who has unjustly court martialled his

nephew Neil during World War I. The lovers' triumph marks a shift of social centre from the old to the young, from a Canada still in bondage to Britain to an independent nation coming of age with its own identity.

It is MacLennan who for the first time uses Canada as the setting of his novel, and, because of his geographical, historical, and political explicitness and the sociopolitical symbolism of his characters' lives, Canada becomes his subject-matter as well. He realized that his reader's ignorance of essential Canadian clashes and values presented him with a unique problem. The background would have to be created from scratch if his story was to become intelligent. In his first novel Barometer Rising he provides topographical descriptions of Halifax, complete with reference to Ice Age glacial activity; celebrates the promise of the sprawling Canadian landscape attacks the dangerous stupidity of militarists, reflects on the impact of urban technology upon rural communities and traditional values; and analyses Canada's shift from a British colony to a mediating power in the world community. The characters and actions parallel in allegorical details the stages of Canada's development articulated in the novel, with World War I shown as painfully but constructively destroying Canada's subservience to its mother country and catapulting it into independence. Part of the realistic orientation of Barometer Rising is Penny Wain's transformation from the traditional, passive heroine of romance to the role of protagonist, sharing the action equally with Neil Macrae. Penelope is moreover established as a New

Woman, working successfully in the male profession of ship design and bearing a child outside marriage.

In Two Solitudes MacLennan's aim is an ambitious and, for its time, original one. Through the stories of Athanese Tallard, a rural Quebec land owner and member of parliament caught between dreams of social and economic progress for his province and the conservatism of his people, and his son Paul, half-French, half-English, an aspiring writer in the years before World War II, MacLennan is attempting to dramatize relations between French and English Canada within Quebec.

Both Barometer Rising and Two Solitude develop the theme of power and powerlessness, presenting Canada in the grasp of an ageing plutocracy with a vital younger generation restless over its confinement. History supplies MacLennan's structure. Just as the novel opens with the conscription crisis of World War I, which touches off Athanese's conflict with father Beaubien and, nationally, intensifies French and English-Canadian tensions, so it concludes symbolically with the declaration of World War II which forces familial and racial cooperation, however reluctant:" And Almost grudgingly . . . the country took the first irrevocable steps toward becoming herself . . ." (Two Solitudes 370)

In keeping with MacLennan's broader social interest he uses historical events as structural markers. The ending of Part I coincides with

Chamberlain's averting of World War II. Part II, in which Lucy's Ontario neighbour Bruce Fraser finally begins to appreciate her, is tied to larger world affairs by being placed in the context of his 1940 leave from wartime training. Part III, a transitional interlude summarising five years of development for a number of characters, spans at the same time the war years from 1940 to 1945. While Stephen's emotional nadir and Lucy's redemptive return to him in Part V coincide symbolically with the American bombing of Hiroshima and the beginning of a new era. The Precipice devotes most of its attention to the two opening and closing periods of 1938 and late 1945, the moments of interpersonal crisis and decision, choice and consequence, and, at the same time, the period immediately preceding and following the war.

The novelist's decision to challenge the novel's romance structure in its second half, to scrutinize marriage, the symbolic resolution of earlier novels, is a bold one, though not ultimately successful. In the novel The Precipice, MacLennan begins to explore more directly the breakdown of the family which he has defined as the subject haunting British and American writers of the last century. Ironically the forces of Puritanism from which Lucy is fleeing in her marriage are shown to be embodied, in different form, in her deliver, Stephen, tormented by guilt and relentless expectations of achievement. The reconciliation between Stephen and Lucy grows as much from MacLennan's sense of what an eager, post-war Canada can offer the

jaded, guilt-ridden United States (as articulated by Bruce Fraser in the novel) as from the couple's needs.

Unlike the earlier novels, Each Man's Son presents MacLennan's familiar and hopeful theme of rebellion against an older tradition (British Colonialism, English-Canadian exploitation of Quebec or Calvinist repression) without recourse to the genre of romantic comedy and its triumphant lovers. Cape Breton Doctor Dan Ainslie's search for meaning - for a God, as his friend Dougald MacKenzie tells him, but a God of loving - kindness not a damnation - expresses itself in the quest of a son. Ainslie is the illustration of an idea about the pernicious effects of loveless religion upon an entire people. MacLennan is an intellectual and analytical, not a psychological, novelist. The conclusion of the novel Each Man's Son emphasizes Ainslie's transfiguring discovery of the value of a loving human being.

The Watch that Ends the Night is one of MacLennan's most ambitious novels in the grandeur of its theme—the accommodation of the human being to an apparently indifferent or unjust universe - and in its fusion of microcosm and macrocosm - the personal life of George Stewart and the international drama of the depression, the unrest of the 1930s, the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the apolitical rebound of the postwar period. This novel more directly than his other novels focuses on the aimlessness and

solitude of an individual severed from sources of meaning. MacLennan has described this novel as a lament for the world wide failure of the idealism of the1930s and as a tragedy. Its conclusion is a stirring repudiation of George's earlier despair, an acceptance of the beauty of the passing moment as a gift in itself . . . to be able to love the mystery surrounding us is the final and only sanction of human existence (The Watch that Ends the Night 372).

The image of a small boy in a canoe at the mercy of a vast watercourse becomes a repeated metaphor for the political vulnerability of modern civilization and for the threat to personal identity posed by anarchic primal emotions. Part of MacLennan's aim in The Watch that Ends the Night is to provide a multilayered depiction of a single, universal experience. Each character's life story is presented as an individual version of a basic human dilemma. The political developments of the novel appear as manifestations of a collapse of old certainties. And the stages of Catherine's marriages and illness serve as an allegory of the historical events reported in the novel. Although a vehicle for MacLennan's historical and philosophical ideas, George exists more fully on the personal level, with intrinsic individual and psychological interest, than some earlier protagonists.

MacLennan presents Quebec as the psychic centre of the world, representative of a world crisis precipitated by loss of faith in human nature. Ainslie's happy marriage in the novel to a French-Canadian functions as an

allegory for the cultural marriage of English and French Canada. "No wonder", one character remarks to Daniel, "with a marriage like that, your father should think that this country could have a wonder future" (Return of the Sphinx 152).

It is surprising to see that, MaLennan began his novel Voices in Time as science fiction. However in this novel, as in his earlier work, the influences of the well-plotted story prevails over theories of inner conflict or simple verisimilitude. Crisis of history (including MacLennan's fictional future history), familiar coincidences, disclosures of personal secrets, and violent confrontations shape the form of the novel. Even though, apparently different from his other work, this novel is in fact the logical sequel to MacLennan's earlier fictional warnings about the vulnerability of civilization, the moral bankruptcy of technology and commerce, and the impotence of intellectual and political leaders to avert social collapse. The novel concentrates, not on the imagined future world, but on two voices from the past, two men whose documents have unexpectedly been preserved.

Thanks to the nature of the task he has set himself—the fictional delineation of a nation's odyssey—MacLennan assumes a largeness of a kind rivalled by few writers in Canada. The odyssey was the product of a people in the process of becoming aware of themselves. The theme which MacLennan uses to illumine is the growth of a Canadian national

consciousness. No novel by MacLennan is, at least, more than a flawed masterpiece. Yet so many grand imperfects add up to a body of work which makes most Canadian critics agree, uneasily and often against their will, that MacLennan is the most significant of Canadian novelists, and that he is so not because of the originality with which he has handled the art of fiction but rather because of the original way he has presented his vision of the Canadian condition to his fellow countrymen and to the world at large.

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