MORLEY CALLAGHAN AND THE NEW COLONIALISM: THE SUPREME INDIVIDUAL IN TRADITIONLESS SOCIETY

Robin Mathews

Morley Callaghan is one of the first major prose writers of The New Colonialism. His work marks the shift of one kind of writer away from a growing sense of Canadian identity and even away from a British influence towards the influence of the power and culture of the U.S.A. Such a shift has an effect on the handling of the major dialectic in Canada — as we will see. The movement of some writers into the U.S. sphere of influence was not a simple shift from colonial-mindedness to colonial-mindedness on a single level. There are differences in the psychological manifestations of the two colonialisms. When the people of Canada moved "from colony to nation" between 1760 and 1931 under British government, the rhetoric of the country was one of evolutionary growth and change, of a strong lad growing up by his mother's side to independence. However annoyed they may have been by particular grievances and betrayals, Canadians began to grasp an idea of a truly sovereign and self-determining future. For those who held back or who wanted some kind of continuing tie with the Empire, the phrase "the larger Britain" described the complexity of their loyalty.

Because a genuine sense of evolution developed, and because many of the immigrants came from or willingly gave loyalty to Britain, spokesmen and writers were willing to declare their allegiance — and the quality of their allegiance — to "the old country" quite openly and without need to disguise or equivocate. The nature of loyalty in The New Colonialism has been quite different. Colonial status within the U.S. Empire cannot be seen as evolutionary or progressive, even to those who give their whole loyalty to the condition. Instead of moving to a growing sense of self-determination, Canadians have moved to a growing consciousness of impotence and subservience in political, economic, and increasingly in cultural terms as the U.S.A. has become a visible imperial power manipulating Canadian life. Canadians must, moreover, relate their condition to the historic fear of U.S. expansionism and the custom of using the British connection to hold off the U.S.A. Paeans of praise for the U.S., parallel to those sung through the decades for England, have not been produced often. Expressions of loyalty to the new imperium have been guarded, hedged, or expressed in terms of

"partners." In the nineteenth century a brotherly image was created, the image of Jonathan and John. But hard reality has made it disappear. Most Canadians, nowadays, wouldn't know what the names are intended to mean. But the image of the "partners" — maintained in public propaganda — was accepted by many Canadians especially from the nineteen-twenties to the nineteen-sixties. During that time the U.S. economic takeover in Canada grew to monstrous proportions, and the U.S. cultural influence became oppressively heavy. Individual poets in the early decades of that period and whole groups of poets and other writers in the later decades declared the strong influence of U.S. writers and U.S. culture upon the formation of their own creative imaginations. They did so openly or by the flattery of imitation. Canadian readers are familiar with the declarations of loyalty to the U.S.A. made by novelist Mordecai Richler:

> Returning cousins swore they had heard a cop speaking Yiddish in Brooklyn. There were the Catskill hotels, Jewish soap operas on the radio, and above all, the earthly pleasure grounds, Florida. Miami! No manufacturer had quite made it in Montreal until he was able to spend a month each winter in Miami.
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> We were governed by Ottawa, we were also British subjects, but our true capital was certainly New York. Success was (and still is) acceptance by the United States.[1]

Morley Callaghan's relation to the U.S.A., three decades earlier, was more subtle. In the 1930's the sense of imperial connection with Britain was stronger than in Richler's heydays, the fifties and the sixties. By the time of the later writer — and for a short time during his blossoming — Canada's move into a colonial position in relation to the U.S.A. became visible and unequivocal. Adoration of the New Imperium became — for a short time — an acceptable activity. The fifties gave us Mordecai Richler, Bruce Hutchison, Marshall McLuhan, and Pearson "internationalism." Ironically, the hundredth anniversary of Confederation marked the end of unblushing acceptance of U.S. domination in Canada. Takeover has not abated; sell-out goes on; but since 1967, English Canadians have divided into two camps: "independentists," drawn from a wide range of political persuasion, and "continentalists" — those who believe in or submit to the integration of Canada's wealth and population into U.S. designs for the continent. The "continentalists," too, are drawn from a wide range of political persuasion: left, right, and centre.

The shift of emphasis in the general Canadian mind was mirrored by a shift of the same kind in literary expression. In the period of British domination and during the time when British influence remained strongly visible, Sara Jeanette Duncan (*The Imperialist,* 1904), Hugh MacLennan (*Barometer Rising,* 1941), and Robertson Davies (*A Mixture of Frailties,* 1958) wrote novels which deal at one level with autonomy, in which the Canadian

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[1]Mordecai Richler, "The North American Pattern," *The New Romans,* ed. Al Purdy (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1968), p. 13.

personality is described as quite different from the English (and European) personality. The turning away from the U.S.A. is so recent and so much a matter of an awakening in which Canadian governments and financial powers have not taken part that the modern literature of the rejection of and resistance to — and finally the liberation from — U.S. domination of Canada has only hesitantly begun. In the literature of the British period, the resolution of conflict was toward reconciliation based upon an integration of history and tradition with the power of the energetic individual and creative initiative. In the blind portion of the U.S. period, conflict became in one manifestation totally individualistic and self-regarding — in accord with a dominant U.S. ideology. The individual, in that case — bereft of, rejecting totally, unrelated to, or exploiting history and tradition entirely for personal ends — effects no resolution in community terms, or he effects a resolution which bends community totally to his terms. Most of Mordecai Richler's work is visibly in that pattern, as is Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* (1966) and Graham Gibson's *Communion* (1971). The shift is not simple, monolithic, or unmixed, but it is clearly visible. Another indication of U.S. cultural domination is the development of the ideas of Harold Innis by Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye. Innis developed concepts of culture and empire, of communications and domination, and of the need to balance immediacy and tradition, time and space, technology and culture in order to provide sane, sovereign, creative communities. McLuhan and Frye dissolved and denatured the political, economic, and historical implications of the ideas Innis had fathered. McLuhan created the image of the "global village," an electronic community based on total immediacy (and flying the U.S. flag). Northrop Frye offered a vision of a literature (and culture) "Americanized" in which all Canadian expression is "post-everything except the world itself"[2]— Americanized, however (and flying the U.S. flag).

Callaghan's work is a step in that direction. By his own admission his chief influences were U.S. writers: Crane, Anderson, Hemingway. Two of Callaghan's literary contemporaries, Grove and MacLennan, consciously rejected U.S. influence as either irrelevant or repugnant to their views of literature and reality. The meeting of Ernest Hemingway and Morley Callaghan, then, in the Toronto of the twenties is highly symbolic. Hemingway is a writer totally in the U.S. tradition. Callaghan met him at the time when Canada was nominally moving to its final stage in the achievement of political independence. In fact, the country had been drifting economically towards and was on the verge of rushing headlong into total subservience within the U.S. empire. 1929, the year after the publication of Callaghan's first novel, saw the economic crash and the move towards the creation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's power, the "leadership" of the U.S.A. in the Western World, and the escalation by U.S. and Canadian interest in economic "cooperation" with the increasingly rapid "sell-out" and "takeover" of Canada. Callaghan's

[2]Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," *Literary History of Canada* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 848.

development as a writer grew from his meeting with Hemingway, a convert to Catholicism. Callaghan was born a Catholic in 1903 in Toronto and attended St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall. St. Michael's College is a "North American" Catholic college and always has a heavier proportion of U.S. undergraduates than any other college at the University of Toronto — perhaps a heavier proportion than any other degree granting institution in Canada. The Roman Catholic Church has long denied — and indeed fought over — the implications of national boundaries. It is, in one sense, one of the first multi-national corporations. Like the more familiar multi-national corporations, it has denied the relevance of mere national boundaries and has spurned the parochialism of local claims of authority. The U.S. multi-national corporation is supported in its parallel attitude by the expansionist propaganda and rhetoric of the U.S. State.

Morley Callaghan, then, was not an unlikely candidate to be one of the first major prose writers of The New Colonialism. His story is now a familiar one. Working summers with the *Toronto Star,* he met Ernest Hemingway who encouraged him in his writing. Through U.S. contacts he appeared in "international" little magazines and in book form published by Scribners. In 1929, he married and spent some months in Paris, during which time he met a number of literary people and knocked Hemingway out in a sparring match recorded in his 1963 recollection of the time, entitled *That Summer In Paris*. The accident of interest and acquaintance helped to shape Callaghan's major influences and early publications. But he was also the child of his time. A Canadian consciousness had been growing through the nineteenth century and crystallized with the publication of *Orion, and other Poems* by Charles G. D. Roberts in 1880. Archibald Lampman remembered the publication as a major incentive to young Canadians "to be up and doing." The work of the Confederation poets and Roberts' internationally acclaimed and influential prose work as well as the appearance of the Group of Seven in Painting began to give Canadians a sense of unembarrassed identity. Writing of a consciousness of Canadian tradition in 1931, Roberts recognizes the English influence but insists on a Canadian character in poetry. Of the poets, he writes: "They kept one hand, as it were, on the Victorian tradition while they quietly stepped aside and in advance of it."[3] Turning to prose writing, Roberts says:

> Mr. Morley Callaghan is reported as having declared himself a humble disciple of Mr. Hemingway — as having learned his art from Mr. Hemingway. If this be so, the disciple has on many counts excelled the master. Compare the two novels, *Strange Fugitive* and *The Sun Also Rises.* The latter is marred by eccentricities in the vogue of the moment. You find yourself skipping whole pages of conversation whose only purpose is to display the reiterant vacuities of the drunken mind. Able as it

[3]Charles G. D. Roberts, "A Note on Modernism," *Open House,* eds. William Arthur Deacon and Wilfred Reeves (1931), p. 22.

> is in many respects, the book will hardly, I think, survive a change of fashion. It carries too great a burden of mere words. Mr. Callaghan's story, on the other hand, carries no such burden. There is not a superfluous word in it. The style is clear, bare, efficient. It is modernism — the subject matter is very "modern". But it has sanely avoided the modern fault of striving after effect. It does not date iteself; and it may well appear as readable a hundred years hence as it does today.[4]

Roberts sees a strong difference between the disciple and the "master." And he is unaware of The New Colonialism. At that time Callaghan had published one novel and one book of short stories. But his early novels taken together reveal that he deals with individualistic conflicts in a way that is more characteristic of U.S. fiction than of Canadian fiction. That may not make him a writer in the U.S. tradition, as has been suggested by at least one critic, because Callaghan's use of the Catholic Church, paradoxically, ties him ineluctably — though in a loose and non-dogmatic way — to the idea of the presence of institutions, however flawed, as mediators between the person and the forces usually rather imprecisely described as "external" to him: the past, class values, legal and social structures, and philosophical concepts. Very often Callaghan's treatment of institutions is coloured by the U.S. individualistic rejection of all authoritative otherness. *More Joy in Heaven* (1937), a novel inspired by the story of a notorious gunman, Red Ryan, deals with the desire of a reformed convict to participate fully in community life and even to assume semi-judicial powers in it. Though society is revealed to be blinded by rigid conventional assumptions, in part Kip Caley is shown to be making demands that are a product of unreasonable, individualistic pride as much as they are a product of a genuine desire to serve others. The Catholic priest who worked with Caley during his time in jail seems to understand the ex-convict, to see his need for a kind of retreat — for a temporarily calmer existence and for a sorting out of values. But Caley won't listen to the thoughtful, selfless image of a traditional wisdom. And so he undertakes the engineering of his own inevitable demise.

In his first novel, *Strange Fugitive* (1928), as in *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (1934), Callaghan's characters are responsible for actions in which society traditionally claims an adjudicating role. But Callaghan makes the murder and manslaughter which happen in those novels relevant to the psychological and spiritual destinies of the protagonists only, not in any way to the health or quality of society in which they live, except by the most exiguous implication. In fact, Callaghan's use of the criminal, near-criminal, or especially holy man makes possible a heightened examination of individualistic claims to moral integrity, to responsibility for one's own criteria of virtue. Callaghan complicates the claim by placing it in relation to a branch of Christianity that has always claimed that the saint may by-pass the demands of institutions. In *Strange Fugitive,* the police, aldermen, and other city officials

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[4]Roberts, "A Note on Modernism," pp. 23-24.

are involved with major crime casually, almost incidentally, and they are never permitted to intrude upon the personal spiritual odyssey of the protagonist. In *They Shall Inherit the Earth,* the external world as a meaningful extension of and an inspiring influence upon the protagonist doesn't really exist. No action — not even the drowning of Dave Choate — has serious relevance socially, except to strip Andrew Aikenhead of worldly power and prepare him for spiritual salvation. The drowning doesn't shape, modify, or affect the community. Indeed, the question whether the Choate family or society at large has any serious interest or adjudicating role in the death of Dave Choate is summarily dismissed. Nor is there any sense whatever that the participation in or absence from the larger community of any of the characters is of the slightest importance.

In *Strange Fugitive,* Harry Trotter's world is as limited as his own social intelligence. That fact may be evidence of Callaghan's "realistic" philosophy and technique. But there is no reason why Trotter should not be aware — or partly aware — of the meaning of the most anti-social of crimes, murder. Callaghan chooses to exclude consideration of the community in Trotter's crimes and to isolate him in a personalist world bounded only by his physical relations and his involvements as a bootlegger. In *They Shall Inherit the Earth* Callaghan has very much the same attitude to society's involvement with the death of Dave Choate. The author chooses in both cases to write stories in which major anti-social acts are seen merely — or mostly — as events in a personal biography. The technique makes possible a fiction that can avoid the implications of social order. In the case of *Strange Fugitive,* Harry Trotter wants success, seeks it through crime, achieves some power and no insight, murders, and is murdered. The novel dwells in the realm of the immediate, spatial, mobile, sensational, broadly ahistorical world often associated in Canadian literature with the individualist and with the character of the U.S.A. The method of writing such novels may appear to present a view of character which, in some cases, is more real than a method which involves a greater insistence upon traditional values and custom. But Callaghan is saying, really, that the events are more important to a personal reading of experience than to a reading of experience historically viewed. As a result there is a shift in importance of the immediate and the sensational.

Harry Trotter expands a personal empire by violence and coercion. Harold Innis says of planned violence, writing of whole societies, "The use of armed forces in conquest and defence emphasized the spatial concept and organization of society in terms of space rather than time and continuity."[5] The increased sense of physical power, violence, and anti-institutionalism in U.S. literature — and the literature it influences — is a proclamation of anarchist individualism as a criterion of human meaning. Harry Trotter is destroyed

[5]Harold A. Innis, "The Problem of Space," *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1951), p. 106.

because he extends what is, in effect, political power into a territorial preserve considered the prerogative of his competitors. His desire for power is untempered with any traditional or social values. Violence, therefore, is an acceptable instrument of his will. One of Harry Trotter's critics calls him "a natural man, somewhat of a dumb ox."[6] But that is to judge him rather as Thomas Chandler Haliburton might, from the point of view of one who gives assent to liberal, individualist, capitalist democracy and then describes its most definitive type as undesirable, abnormal, aberrant, or monstrous. In that regard, Vera's intuition that she would like to become a Catholic is quite understandable. For the Catholic Church offers an opposite to the choice made by Harry Trotter. Harold Innis affirms that for a part of Western history the Catholic Church gained "control over time,"[7] which is a way of saying that it came to represent tradition, history, cycle, community, and culture as wisdom rather than sensation. It means, also, as Harold Innis would describe it, that Catholicism exerted a monopoly of knowledge which would tend — as Callaghan employs that Church in his novels — to be seen as having fixed upon values of time rather than of space.

In *Strange Fugitive* Harry moves from the horse-drawn vehicles to the automobile — except when he returns to his parents' graves. The image of technology as machine is present to mean mobility, immediacy, ahistory, and physical sensation as it is used in Haliburton, Grove, and Ringuet. In fact the novel closes with the image. Harry Trotter may be in part a victim of the mill world which is fastpaced and dehumanizing, but he does not complain. His reactions are directed at individuals as such. In a sense he is the human symbol of the dehumanized force in the novel. He doesn't revolt against it; he is it. The final lines of the book bring him directly into relation with the symbol of his philosophical milieu: "Harry dropped his gun, hit in the neck, his head dropping down slowly till his forehead rubbed against the pavement. He saw the wheels of the car going round and round, and the car got bigger. The wheels went round slowly and he was dead."[8]

Callaghan adopted U.S. gang warfare for the action of his novel. One editor discusses it in relation to Al Capone and to *Bonnie and Clyde.* In fact Callaghan accepts the concept of the U.S.A. implied in Capone and *Bonnie and Clyde* as the fitting philosophical milieu for his work of that period. The United States image of traditionless immediacy becomes a fundamental part of his settings. As one of our first major prose writers of The New Colonialism, Callaghan uses the word "American" to mean North America. The distinctiveness of Canada becomes submerged in the U.S.A. The reality of Canadian place is defined by existence in the U.S.A. Such a position was rejected by F. P. Grove, a writer contemporaneous with Callaghan's first

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[6]Robert Weaver, ed., *Strange Fugitive* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1970), p. ix.
[7]Innis, "The Problem of Space," p. 131.
[8]Morley Callaghan, *Strange Fugitive* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1970), p. 266. Page numbers of all subsequent quotations will be noted in parentheses.

decade and a half of publishing. Grove wrote, "America is a continent, not a country."[9] He meant that the U.S.A. should be called the U.S.A. and should not appropriate the name of the continent to describe its national identity. Callaghan's sense of "America" is the opposite of Grove's. For Callaghan the U.S. is so totally present that there is little point in distinguishing Canadian place. Instead of moving powerfully towards a sense of Canadian character and self-determination during his maturing years as a writer, Callaghan absorbed U.S. sensibility. As the concept of "the larger Britain" waned in Canada, he was one of the people to foster a new sense of colonialism in which many Canadians began to define their place as a portion of "the larger U.S.A."

Strange Fugitive is set, quite clearly, in Toronto. Callaghan names areas and streets without hesitation. But the characters relate to U.S. places and regions: "Vera Trotter had known Harry at school, but had gone away to Chicago. . ." (p. 9). "Instead he talked of an old friend of Vera's, who had interested him, Grace Leonard, who had gone away to Virginia" (pp. 17-18). "Harry was telling how he had often dreamed when a boy of owning a houseboat, sailing up and down the Mississippi" (p. 37). Such references are usually placed before Callaghan reveals that the setting of the action is in Canada. The choice to send characters to the U.S.A. is, of course, wholly the author's. That Canadians should travel from a Canadian city only to the United States is not in any way natural or realistic. Characters in Callaghan's novels rarely travel to other Canadian cities, because Canadian reality, Canadian history and experience, *does not mean*. The Maritimes and the West hardly exist in Callaghan's fiction. He chooses, instead, to integrate Upper Canada, imaginatively, into the United States. The integration is complete by the publication of *They Shall Inherit the Earth*. The novel seems to be set in Toronto, though the place is never named; it is only referred to as "the city." A calculated choice not to name the city had to be made by the author. Of the characters in the novel, Michael Aikenhead, the protagonist, is from the unnamed city in which the action is set. But Nathaniel Benjamin is from Detroit. Anna Prychoda and her people are from Detroit. The firm with which Andrew Aikenhead's firm does a lucrative business is a "cheese manufacturer from the Middle West."[10] None of those facts is necessary to the action or working out of the novel, and yet they are specified. When Ross Hillquist is going to become a medical specialist, he is going to New York. The description of the country place to which the characters go leads "to the lake ports and the boats carrying grain to Chicago and Cleveland" (p. 30). The novel is — as far as internal evidence determines — set in the U.S.A. Of Anna Prychoda, Callaghan writes: "Her father and mother had come to America at the beginning of the Great War and had settled in Detroit. Her father had been

[9]F. P. Grove, "The Happy Ending," *It Needs To Be Said. . . .* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929), p. 85.
[10]Morley Callaghan, *They Shall Inherit the Earth*, New Canadian Library, ed. F. W. Watt (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), p. 125. Page numbers of all subsequent quotations will be noted in parentheses.

a carpenter in his own country, but in Detroit he had got a job with good wages in an automobile factory. Anna had been their first child born in America" (p. 120). The place of settlement of her parents and Anna's birthplace have no bearing whatever upon the action or the resolution of the conflict. When Michael teases her about her origins, she says, "and anyway, I'm not Russian."

> "You little Litvak, then."
> "You're ignorant. I'm not a Litvak."
> "You little round-cheeked Pole."
> "Yah, in my father's country they hated Poles. Listen, Mr. Mike. This is my country just as much as it is yours." (p. 147)

Finally, when Anna is about to give birth to their child, the nursing sister asks Michael: "What nationality is she?" He replies: "She was born in this country. Her parents were Ukrainians" (p. 231). Anna Prychoda was born in Detroit. She tells Michael that this "is my country. . . ." He tells the nursing sister, "She was born in this country." The country, then, is the U.S.A. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Callaghan's decision to make those points in the novel is that they apparently have nothing whatever to do with action, conflict, theme, or resolution in any discernible way. They have simply to do with a compulsion on the part of the author to erase or confuse the Canadian sensibility in the novel and replace it with visible declarations that the events are occurring in the U.S.A. F. W. Watt says the novel "is rooted in an unnamed North American city, which is not necessarily Toronto, but which Torontonians will perhaps recognize."[11] In fact Watt is wrong. The novel takes place in an unnamed U.S. city.

The significance of the fact cannot be minimized. For Callaghan's sense that "America" means North America comes down to the unproclaimed consciousness that North America means the U.S.A. It comes down to a state of colonial impotence in reaction to Canadian place. Callaghan cannot believe, it would seem, that a character would go — except perhaps in Summer to Barrie — to a Canadian place. The colonial who becomes hypnotized by the imperial culture rejects, almost biologically, the legitimacy of his own identity and place. Evidence exists that Callaghan vacillates in his idea of both Toronto and the "U.S.-ness" of North America. In *The Varisty Story,* in fact, he suggests some distinct Canadian characteristics; but neither of those facts changes his historical position in relation to The New Colonialism.

In *They Shall Inherit the Earth,* Anna Prychoda is the figure of grace, as her name indicates, in the lives of Michael Aikenhead and his father, Andrew. Michael is "a modern man" with "no hope in anything, no faith in anything. Just immersed in matter" (p. 89). He is full of pride. And he expresses deep anger at the class injustices he sees around him. He is an engineer who will not

[11] F. W. Watt, "Introduction," *They Shall Inherit the Earth,* p. vi.

compromise his desire to create and build usefully; but he is unemployed while his step-brother, using Andrew Aikenhead's influence, is employed in the bond business. Michael's brother-in-law-to-be, Ross Hillquist, has become a medical doctor with "some kind of a collective notion in his head that had made him reject his father's vigorous individualism and all his ideas and ready catch phrases about human liberty and personal rights" (p. 69). Ross Hillquist has made a détente with power as it is expressed in the world of the novel, and he tries to live his ideal of service without strongly challenging the system his father represents. Michael Aikenhead, however, is intransigent. He dislikes both of the partners — his father and Jay Hillquist who live by an advertising firm, the symbol of capitalist values at their worst: consumerism based upon a false understanding of reality. Michael dislikes his step-brother, too, partly for Freudian reasons, partly for economic reasons, and partly, as the novel unfolds, because he makes a crude attempt to force Sheila Aikenhead's interest in him. Dave Choate is the ultimate individualist, who has "a lust for self-indulgence" (p. 61) and who Michael says, "never believed in anything but your balls and your belly" (p. 62). During a dispute on the lake in which they argue about Sheila, Dave Choate drowns, partly because of Michael's treatment. Michael has a hand in Dave's death, though he is not directly responsible.

The rest of the novel works itself out around the implications of that event. Andrew Aikenhead is blamed for the death, though he isn't charged legally. He is destroyed materially and is brought to meekness and a level upon which he can meet Michael spiritually. He is partly responsible for the death because of his failings as a father and a man, but in no other way. Michael refuses to face his guilt, blames his father, and seeks a source of meaningful virtue. He has rejected his father's individualistic capitalism. He rejects the institutional Catholicism of the Jewish convert, Nathaniel Benjamin. He rejects Communism though he is attracted by the selfless dedication it can evoke. The terms upon which he rejects both Catholicism and Communism are thin. He tells Benjamin that Christians are "never happy" unless they "have someone to pity" (p. 88). He rejects Communism because William Johnson, the Communist, apparently won't react personally to the impending sexual exploitation of Anna Prychoda but sees her as "an illustration of a larger issue" (p. 104). Michael reacts, saying, "If you're as hard-hearted as all that I'm proud to be your political enemy" (p. 105).

The final philosophical position the protagonist takes is a position of individualistic, sentimental, Christian religiosity devoid of institutional and, therefore, of historical basis, and connected to an uncomfortable concept of social Darwinism. Michael possesses "good" individualism as distinct from his father's and Dave Choate's "bad" individualism. The novel does not reconcile the necessities of community and the desires for the expansion of individual energy, creativity, and initiative. It provides the victory of "good" individualism over "bad" individualism, and to that degree it adopts a major

theme of U.S. culture and literature. In theological terms — which the novel uses throughout by metaphor — Michael Aikenhead has sinned. He realizes he has sinned the sin of Pride: assuming God's power. "I bring life into the world. I send life out of the world" (p. 235). He takes upon himself a quasi-murderer's role when he permits Dave Choate to drown. He takes — in theological terms — the power restricted to God. Michael repents. He becomes truly meek, wanting mercy and being willing, finally, to leave the meaning of justice wrapped in God's mystery. "My God," he exclaims at the point of his salvation, "have pity on me. I don't want justice, I want mercy. Have pity on me" (p. 235). From his new place as a spiritually reclaimed man, Michael effects a reconciliation with his father. The novel ends with Anna, their baby, and Andrew Aikenhead — the reclaimed community — climbing together up the stairs to the apartment where Michael (whose name means "he who is like God") has lived throughout the novel.

But the reclaimed community, as Callaghan gives it to us, possesses a few disturbing features. In the first place both Anna and Andrew Aikenhead dismiss Michael's sense that he should confess to the police his involvement with Dave Choate's death. Anna says: "Mike, you want to be just. Giving yourself to the police doesn't mean anything to anybody. It's stupid. It's meaningless. It's a senseless gesture" (p. 246). His father says, "We mustn't let him do anything foolish. . . I won't stand for it, Michael" (p. 254). The small spiritually reclaimed individualistic community becomes, then, the arbiter of justice in the world. They render unto God what they believe is His, but believe Caesar can be hoodwinked. In effect, Callaghan is saying that personal spiritual salvation transcends worldly concepts of justice and freedom. That is, of course, a sentimentality, as the novel reveals. For Dave Choate is dead, sacrificed to the spiritual reclamation of the small community. His mother has been irreparably wounded. Their hurt, moreover, is really less important than the social hurt implied by the ending of the novel, for Callaghan is saying that justice in the world is a matter of individual conscience, which, of course, it never can be short of chaos. He is saying, too, that the death of a Dave Choate (whose name sounds like "chaos") is acceptable as a sacrifice for the salvation of Michael Aikenhead and his relation with his father.

That conclusion has dangerous implications because it implies (U.S. Western-style) that the individualist "bad guy" can be erased without social adjudication since the individualist "good guy" who has found "value" is superior to mere human institutions. Canadian literature doesn't usually present that reading of reality, though the figure of chaos-individualism-exploitation is often sacrificed to make possible necessary reconciliation out of which creative community can grow in Canada. Where the death is accidental, no one is, apparently, punished. Geoffrey Wain is blown up in the Halifax explosion in *Barometer Rising,* permitting Neil and Penelope to begin the new Canada. In *Wacousta,* Wacousta is killed, but Colonel De Haldimar dies of strain releasing, unimpeded, the forces of

reconciliation. Abe Spalding appoints his very young son to deliver grain in *Fruits of the Earth.* The vehicle tips on a bridge and the son, Charlie, is crushed by the wheel. His death is catalytic in Abe's spiritual regeneration, but he has no direct hand in the boy's death. Judith West, who bears Philip Bentley's illegitimate child in *As For Me and My House,* dies in childbirth, thereby being sacrificed to the ambiguous beginning of community in the Bentley family. Where characters have a hand in the sacrifice necessary to the liberation of truly creative forces of positive construction, they must pay the social price. When Colonel De Haldimar finally brings about the death of Wacousta, he, too, must die because his guilt is of equal or greater kind. When Neils Lindstedt in *Settlers of the Marsh* murders Clara Vogel, his prostitute wife, he must do a long jail term before he can return to a reconciled relation with Ellen, the woman he wanted before her coldness and Clara's lust changed his direction. When Abraham in *The Sacrifice* kills Laiah, the promiscuous woman in the novel, he confesses, goes mad, and lives out his life in an institution. The effect of his sacrifice of Laiah and his own sanity and virtue works in his grandson, teaching him humanity. But when Michael Aikenhead is seriously implicated in the death of Dave Choate, the step-son who is sacrificed to the spiritual regeneration of the male Aikenheads, Michael pays no social price because he is superior to the social order. The anarchist individualist always believes himself superior to the social order, and is the typical hero of U.S. culture. Dave Choate's death is put aside by Anna and Andrew Aikenhead in relation to a claim of spiritual meekness, a sense of God which makes their personal idea of reality greater than any social structure.

The result of the ideology Callaghan accepts for his novel is to make impossible class analysis and a serious consideration of the social order in historical terms. Though the character, Michael Aikenhead, considers institutionalized Roman Catholicism and Communism as possible opposites to the rapacious capitalism of the system in which his father works, he never at any time is serious about any form of social order other than what can be created momentarily from a small group of individuals who create, themselves, the terms of their relation. Michael Aikenhead doesn't realize that his individualism is of the same order as his father's. It is for that reason the death of Dave Choate can be brushed aside, though it is done so on the basis of spiritual purity and Social Darwinism at the level of argument in the book.

Class injustice, which Michael is concerned with at the beginning of the novel, like the personal injustice in which he is involved, is rationalized by Social Darwinism expressed through the parable of a wolf hunt. Ross Hillquist, Michael Aikenhead, and an Indian guide make the hunt. Michael Aikenhead dislikes wolves who have, as Ross Hillquist suggests, "a bad reputation":

> "A wolf is an individualist," Mike said. "They kill out of sheer lust of killing, and they kill without sense. . . If you want to be clear that a man is ruthless and an enemy of society, you call him a wolf, don't you?" he went on. "Any

> enemy of the race you call a wolf because he knows no moral law, and that's why you can't organize society, because it's full of wolves, and they don't know justice, and don't want it. The financial brigands and labour exploiters and the war profiteers and the Wall Street sharks and nearly anybody who tries to put his head up in a world of private profit, what are they? Wolves I tell you." (pp. 189-90)

But Callaghan assures us that Michael is not making a serious political analysis; he is confused and psychologically insecure. Callaghan continues:

> While Mike talked like this, he was really crying out against the meaningless confusion of whatever he had known of living, and his search for peace, and he wanted most of all, even without quite knowing how much he wanted it, to justify his preservation of his own bit of happiness and his own life. (p. 190)

During the wolf hunt, Michael's problems are solved. When the men discover a number of deer, killed and only slightly used as food, Jo, the Indian guide, explains that they leave food for other animals, but especially for the female hidden nearby, who is littering and must have accessible food later on. Michael is overwhelmed. Justice becomes something new for him: "Is it justice for the wolves when the deer are slain? Is it justice for the deer to wait and be slain. . . ?" He works his way through to a conclusion that permits his eventual humbling:

> "Maybe justice is simply the working out of a pattern," he thought. "The deer and the wolf have their place in the pattern. . . . And there would be justice for all things in terms of the things themselves. There would be justice in art, the justice of form, and there would be social justice, the logical necessity for preserving the pattern of society. If society was what it was today, and there was class striking at class, it was like a jungle, and there was no pattern, no unity, and no justice. . . (p. 197)

Dave Choate's death is explicable in relation to "social justice, the logical necessity of preserving the pattern of society." Even if that were so, Callaghan is willing to take the act outside of the social order so that human sacrifice or the rationalization of it might be the result of individual choice! There is an even worse implication in the novel, though Michael claims that, "If society was what it was today, and there was class striking at class, it was like a jungle and there was no pattern, no unity, no justice." Despite his modification, we are left with the image of the wolf and the deer, and we are left with the equation between the wolf and "the financial brigands and labour exploiters and the war profiteers and the Wall Street sharks. . . ." And so the deer (the unemployed and exploited) and the wolf (the exploiters) "have their place in the pattern." Social unrest is not desirable, but when society can be quieted the wolf and the deer can continue to describe the meaningful pattern. The religiosity Callaghan presents as desirable — the feeling without form or discipline — can make mankind content with the pattern, anaesthetizing the

population to class injustice and greed. As Michael walked on, "closing his eyes against the biting snow, he became very humble, and he thought, 'I know everything will have some meaning if I stop passing judgement on other people, and forget about myself, and let myself look at the world with whatever goodness there is in me' " (p. 197). By denying the institution and discipline of Christianity, Michael Aikenhead can describe his own soggy moralistic urgings as a basis for truth. By denying the relevance of the Marxist analysis of class made by William Johnson, he can reject any responsibility for or even recognition of social injustice.

Callaghan doesn't define the appropriate social role of the wolf and the deer. Michael Aikenhead simply decides to be good and to stop judging other people. He is to learn of his own sin and to judge its meaning without recourse to the social structure. But, on the other hand, he is not to judge evil and injustice in the social structure. Michael is unique, an island, not responsible to or for the rest of society. He begins to see a pattern which he believes describes justice, but he does not articulate it clearly, and he withdraws from the burden and responsibility of judgement. His rejection of institutional, historical modes of determining value releases Michael Aikenhead into an anarchist, individualist structure based upon undefined concepts of love and grace. The small group as creator of values — apart from the larger social order — is repeated in the later works of Richler, Atwood, Gibson, Cohen and others.

Callaghan tries to present an idea of a possible, reconstituted society, a reclaimed community, but the reader must accept its anti-intellectual, introverted, and anarchistic basis. It sanctions the injustice of the status quo and claims for itself the right to decide the meaning of human life: "They went in and began to climb the stairs, and there was no sound but the scraping of their own feet on the stairs, and they could say nothing on the way up, for they all felt a little shy with each other" (p. 254). Callaghan, as I have suggested, rejects the Canadian dialectic in which the demands of individual energy and passion confront the demands of social order and history to eventuate in a reconciliation. Callaghan shifts the dialectic into one which is a major part of U.S. intellectual history: the struggle between "good" individualism and "bad" individualism. Good individualism wins in the novel but without any other sanction for the reader than the suggestion that the ravening wolves appear to have some foresight about the security of their own offspring. The adoption of a highly questionable "individualistic" morality takes Callaghan firmly into the New Colonialism. That move is reflected, moreover, in an unnecessary and structurally irrelevant shift to a U.S. place. None of the indications of U.S. place in *They Shall Inherit the Earth* has any bearing upon the action. It is almost as if — one might say — Callaghan moves into U.S. philosophy and theme and is drawn to situate the reader in the U.S. as much as possible because he knows there is no tradition in Canadian philosophy and theme for the action he presents. *They Shall Inherit the Earth* becomes an especially

important novel because it can be demonstrated to be set in the U.S.A., and, with other Callaghan novels, it can be shown to be a novel which avoids the major dialectic of Canadian fiction up to that time and fixes upon a major U.S. dialectic as the reality it chooses to demonstrate and examine.

Carleton University