

1.4.2 Second Phase

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, after the confirmation of Canada's status as a separate nation state, a new sense of national consciousness was reinforced. This spirit was a kind of desire for a truly Canadian art and literature which would confirm the Canadian identity. *The Canadian Bookman* in 1919, *The Canadian Forum* in 1920 and The Canadian Authors Association in 1921 gave a genuine expression to this desire as their aim was "to trace and value these development of art and letters which are distinctively Canadian." In a limited sense, the same expression was applicable to the modern Canadian poetry which was to be written. The artists and poets made conscious efforts lest the poetry in Canada should be an echo of poetry in England and America, lest it should be merely a development of the parent trunk. Rather it should be unique and original in itself. For that matter, the artists like Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald and Varley, who made the Group of Seven and the poets like E.J. Pratt, F.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith and W.W.E. Ross, concluding that art is international, accommodated the developing modern movements in England and the United States "to the desire to find subjects and technique that were genuinely Canadian." They found answer in the fusion of a distinctively Canadian landscape and imported modernist technique.

There were two factors that shaped the artists' response to the landscape : the post-Darwinian evolutionary sense of the land as the source of life and the "northern fact" of Canadian geography. The former, the evolutionary concern, so much a part of the poetry of the Confederation Group was still an important intellectual issue in Canada in the 1920s to judge from the debates in *The Canadian Forum*. The latter, as Carl Berger has indicated, was a reflection of the dominant political myth of the 1880s that attributed Canada's distinctive political identity to her northern geography. In the words of Robert Grant Haliburton, Canadians were "The Northmen of the New World," characterized by their love of liberty, strength and moral rectitude. This new world, was "the true north, strong and free." In poetic terms, as late as 1916 in Duncan Campbell Scott's transitional poem "The Height Land" it was "The lonely north Glimmering all night / In the cold arctic night." Just as the poets influenced by the

Canada First movement has viewed Canada's "northness" as an indication of a distinctive national character, so the artists of 1914, encouraged by the possibilities of a national Canadian art based on landscape fell heir to the same concept.

For many Canadians returning from the Great War, including W.A. Irwin who was to become editor of *Maclean's Magazine* and for some of the returning artists, Lawren Harris, Frederick Varley, and A.Y. Jackson, the hope for the future centered in the Canadian land which distinguished Canada from Europe. Besides the above mentioned artists, there were four more artists, Franklin Charnichael, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer and J.E.H. MacDonald. All these seven artists formed a group which was known as the 'Group of Seven'. They were pondering over the question of subject of poetry which could be distinctively Canadian. For these artists, there was a sense of leaving behind the wasted lands of the battlefields of Europe for the fresh, clear northland of Canada. To them it was the northern environment that shaped the vision of Canadians and especially the vision of the artist. The Group was a romantic and nationalist movement. In 1919, MacDonald believed that "the Canadian spirit in art is just entering on possession of its heritage." But as Harris was to point out, in Canada as distinct from Europe, the inspiration for art was to be found in the wilderness.

The new vision of the Canadian landscape generated by the Group of Seven – vast, strong, lonely, northern – was centered in the Pre-Cambrian Shield. Primarily a response to the wilderness of northern Ontario and Quebec, it also reflected the rugged coastlines of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and later, by 1930, the arctic shores of Baffin Island. This vision gave an outgrowth of an older social Darwinism now. In Canada, this strain was particularly associated with the north by the popular verse of Robert Service. "This is the Law of the Yukon, that only the Strong shall thrive : / That surely the Weak shall perish, and only the Fit survive." Perhaps this Darwinian inheritance accelerated the emergent nationalist sense of a youthful "new" Canada. Although immeasurably old in geologic time, because the land was unpeopled it was seen as "young" and "virile". Canada was a country whose face was yet to be painted, whose voice was yet to be found, whose history was yet to be written. The typical Group of Seven landscape of the rock, trees, and rivers of the pre-Cambrian Shield displays the characteristics of this essentially northern land. MacDonald had described some of these characteristics in 1919 when he wrote that the Canadian spirit in art was opening a new world, "not often so softly beautiful as ruggedly strong, large, homely, free, and frankly simple in colour."

A. F.R. Scott

F.R. Scott (1899-1985), a distinguished Professor of Constitutional Law at McGill University, was one of the poets who brought the forces of modernism to bear on Canadian writing. He was one of the most important catalyst of modernist Canadian poetry. Scott's poetry has always reflected his social consciousness. As early as 1928 F.R. Scott joined other writers in helping to found the *Canadian Mercury*, a literary magazine that gave voice to three members of the 'Montreal Group', Leo Kennedy, A.M. Klein and Scott himself. Each member of this group wrote distinctly different poetry and as a group they all wrote about the present in new ways that freed them from traditional forms. With Smith, Scott edited an anthology of this 'new' poetry, *New Provinces* (1936, reissued 1976), which served as a public manifesto that Canadian poetry was indeed changing. Over the years Scott continued to be interested in helping to provide a public outlet for new voices, often by his support of literary magazines. He helped to found *Preview* in 1942 which, like the *Canadian Mercury* and the *McGill Fortnightly Review* before it, gave a new generation of writers a public forum.

Scott's poems have been collected in *Overture* (1945), *Events and Signals* (1954), *The Eye of the Needle: Satires, Sorties, Sundries* (1957), *Signature* (1964), and *The Dance is One* (1973). His *Selected Poems* appeared in 1966, and his *Collected Poems* in 1981. He also got published a volume of found poems, *Trouvailles: Poems from Prose* (1967), and translations of French-Canadian poetry. In another collaboration with A.J.M. Smith, Scott compiled a popular anthology, *The Blasted Pine: An Anthology of Satire, Invective and Disrespectful Verse: Chiefly by Canadian Writers* (1957; rev. 1967). Scott's reputation as a modernist rests mainly on his use of Imagist techniques in the landscape nature poems in which he rejuvenated poetic language – these can be accurately be described as "modernist". Scott's poetry has evidently a development. His own career exemplified the tradition from Victorian romanticism to the modern. In the late 1920s he wrote northern landscape poetry influenced by Imagists, by Eliot's "Fertility Myth". In 1930s, in response to the depression, he wrote basically socialist often satiric program poetry. Later in the 1940s and 1950s both strains were fused into a more philosophical structure as it is obvious in his poem "A Grain of Rice" in which his humanist reflections move from cell to man, to the larger movements of physical universe. F.R. Scott is one of the main promoters of modernist techniques. As a modernist poet, he employed imagist technique in his poetry, particularly in landscape poetry. It is worthwhile to make a statement here that it was not only Scott who started concentrating on landscape but before him there were poets like Lampman, Roberts, Carman and D.C. Scott who had already written landscape poetry. Their ideals were Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and, to some extent, the Victorian poets like Arnold and Tennyson. It is interesting to note that the subject he turned to is the same Canadian landscape of the Confederation poets but the style he chose is the imagist style used by Pound and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) in their poems.

This view of a strong, rugged nature, that demands equally strong inhabitants, was being developed as an artistic program by the Group of Seven. F.R. Scott and many others right from the beginning were associated with this program. F.R. Scott himself said in an interview in 1975 that he was introduced to the new art by 1925. He had an encounter with the Group of Seven which he, in turn, discussed with A.J.M. Smith. Besides this artistic encounter, Scott had also tasted *The New Poetry* (1917), an influential modernist anthology through which imagism was to return to Canada. Thus he, having been exposed to the main stream, was responding variously to the Canadian landscape. Besides this treatment to Canadian landscape, his poetry also reflects social consciousness. Scott's poetry can be divided into 'public' and 'private' poems, or grouped into the predominating modes and subjects of nature, satire, social and humanitarian idealism, and love. However, even a poem as personal as "Overture" is not without its larger context, nor is the public satire in "The Canadian Authors Meet" without a personal voice. In his poetry we find the best aspects of modernism: a penetrating vision expressed in a spare and precise style. To this Scott adds his own special qualities of grace and wit, so that his treatment of such subjects as social injustice or the artifacts of popular culture are given force and memorability by means of elegant diction and sharp satire. His is a comprehensive poetry that unites the mythic nature of the land with the reality of personal experience, that scrutinizes the trivialities of a cellophane-wrapped society while also seeing a lake shore with the eye of a visionary. He writes of man's mediocrity as well as of his ultimate promise.

B. A.J.M. Smith

A.J.M. Smith (1902-80) is another leader of the modernist movement in Canada who too, like Scott, contributed to this movement and affected twentieth century Canadian poetry, introducing modernism into Canada through the influence of the "little magazines" movement and by adapting

modernism to Canadian context. Poet, teacher, critic and anthologizer, A.J.M. Smith was the leader of the young Montreal poets in the late twenties who challenged literary nationalism and argued for the cosmopolitan values of the modernist movement. In the 'Preface' to *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, Smith made controversial distinction between cosmopolitan and native verse. For him the cosmopolitan poet responded to what Canadian life had in common with life everywhere while the native poet concentrated on what is individual and unique in Canadian life. Historically, Smith saw the native poet as trying to come to terms with an environment that is only now ceasing to be colonial. As far as a cosmopolitan writer is concerned, he from the very beginning has made a heroic effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing culture of ideas. For him, colonialism was a threat to Canadian writing.

Smith was a catalyst for introducing modernist poetry in Canada along with F.R. Scott, A.M. Klein and Leo Kennedy. Their combined affiliation to many literary journals and their companionship resulted in new styles and attitudes in Canadian poetry. Smith's encounter with modernist poetry took place in 1917 when as a teenager he came across Harriet Munroe and Henderson's *New Poetry: An Anthology* (1917). It is about London where he continued to immerse himself in the work of British modernists. His poetry bears the influence of the symbolist poetry of Yeats and Wallace Stevens, the Imagist verse of Pound, Eliot and H.D., and the Metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century. In the thirties, Smith and Scott compiled *New Province*, an anthology of 'new' Canadian poets. This anthology, which contained poems by four members of the new dispersed 'Montreal group' (Scott, Smith, Klein and Kennedy) and by E.J. Pratt and Robert Finch of Toronto, can be now seen as the volume that announced the existence of Canadian modernism. Although Smith published his own verse steadily—most of it in periodicals such as the *Canadian Forum*—he refrained for many years from collecting it in book form. His first volume of poems, *News of the Phoenix* which won a Governor General's Award did not appear until 1943. These followed *A Sort of Ecstasy* (1954), *Collected Poems* (1963), *Poems: New and Collected* (1967), and *The Classic Shade: Selected Poems* (1978).

Smith makes his clearest distinction between the popular poetry he rejected and the difficult poetry he valued. The first kind is "social and communal" and relies on the emotional stock response. The second type is what Smith took to be characteristically modernist. Most of Smith's poems are imitative in one way or the other of the style of other modernist poets. They sometimes sound like Eliot, sometimes like Yeats, sometimes like Sitwell or Donne. They have various shades like metaphysical, imagist, romantic and social. "The Lonely Road", the most famous poem, is the meeting point for the imagist, the metaphysical and the romantic sides of this multifaced poet. Smith has also written poems of social concern but his social poems unlike those of Scott are not of social engagement. While Scott's focus is on specific events, individual or institutional criticism, Smith exposes the impact of the modern world on an individual, a persona who may or may not be identified with the poet himself. Smith's "News of the Phoenix," is one of his best poems of social concern. It satirizes the propensity of modern bureaucracies to suppress unpleasant news: Smith's poems of social concern also include his poems on the subject of death which were published in the '50s and '60s. These poems are "Metamorphosis", "The Dead", "Speaking about Death: Blues for Mentor Williams", "The Wisdom of Old Jelly Roll", "On Knowing Nothing", "My Death", and "Watching the Old Man Die". Smith's love of paradox emerges in his view of death as both thing and nothing or negation. In "On Knowing Nothing", he speaks of "... the wound within - / As deep, as nothing, as the grave", while in "My Death" abstract nothingness is replaced by solid inevitability; death is a seed nurtured by life, and finally

"a felt want within": Smith's confrontation with death in his later poetry replaces the pessimism of the '30s and '40s with an optimism not prompted by religious faith, but by a mature belief in the rightness of the natural order of things.

1.4.3 Third Phase

Like the *Fortnightly* group years before, the poets associated with *Preview* and *First Statement* offered Klein an opportunity to engage more closely than he might have otherwise done with contemporary poetry. However, Klein's response to this opportunity in the mid-forties was very different from what it had been in the late twenties and early thirties. This introductory account shows that Klein's poetry passed through two stages. The first comprises poems published between 1929 and 1944 – most of which were collected in *Hath Not a Jew* (1940) and *Poems* (1944). These draw heavily on his Jewish background and are written in a style that owes something to Biblical rhetorical on the one hand and to such varied English influences as the Renaissance poets and T.S. Eliot on the other. In 1944 he also published, the *Hitleriad*, a satire on Nazism written in form and style derived from Alexander Pope. The second stage of Klein's poetry coincided with the emergence in the forties of a new and vigorous poetry in Montreal, centring on the Journals *Preview* and *First Statement*. The influence of the poets of these groups – which included F.R. Scott, P.K. Page, Patrick Anderson, Layton and Louis Dudek – and his appointment as Visiting Lecturer in English at McGill University, encouraged Klein to experiment with a more broadly based poetry and a somewhat simpler style. A collection of this new poetry, *The Rocking Chair and Other Poems* was published in 1948 which won a Governor General's Award in 1974. Two years after his death, *The Collected Poems of A.M. Klein* was published. Klein's work, as a whole is characterised with the voice of an alien. It is also to note here that in his poetry he is the voice of three separate cultural traditions : Jewish, English and French Canadian.

A. A.M. Klein

Klein's *The Rocking Chair and Other Poems* is his final collection of poetry which belongs to his modernist phase. Here he has moved away completely from his Jewish themes. Now two changes took place in his poetry - the concrete realities of the immediate world of Montreal and the language and words forms. It is aptly observed by the poet Miriam Waddington that in *The Rocking Chair* Klein gives up archaic language and Elizabethan rhetoric in favour of a rich use of metaphor. Waddington further says that Klein was no longer so interested in evoking the past as he was eager to discover new realities and meanings through the metaphorical possibilities of language. David Stouck states that Klein has turned away from the influence of the Elizabethans and T.S. Eliot and turned to poets like Hopkins and Auden for models. This phase of modernism found expression when in 1945, Klein began a series of poems which mark the return to community. The representative poems of this phase are, "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape", "Indian reservation : Caughnawaga", "*The Rocking Chair*", "*Political Meeting*" and "*For the Sisters of the Hotel Dieu*". In these poems the subject is not the Jewish community but the French-Canadian community of Quebec. There are obvious parallels between Klein's portrayal of community in the Quebec poems of the late forties and in the Jewish poems of the late twenties and early thirties, but there is a radical difference between them as well. The Jewish community as Klein had portrayed it was essentially unchanging, unified by a continuous tradition but here Quebec community is seen as a community embroiled in change.

Though the modernist leader - poets imported a truly modern image to Canadian verse and a distinct national style and imagery to it, yet the growth and development of Canadian poetry has not been in a simple and direct manner. C.J. Vincet has identified two main lines on which Canadian poetry has developed. Writing in *The Encyclopedia of Literature*, he says :

Contemporary Verse has developed along two main lines. There is the verse of social consciousness in which the poet is trying to make some adjustment to difficult political and economic conditions. To this group belong Dorothy Livesay, A.M. Klein and Anne Marriott Then there is the verse that seems to derive its inspiration partly from the 17th century metaphysical and partly from Pound, Eliot and later Yeats. Generally speaking, this verse is cryptic and difficult in its rebellion against the subject matter and form of the immediate past. But it has variety, with its subjects drawn not only from the contemporary social world but also from the mental and emotional life of the individual.

Rebellion against the style and the subject matters of the past has not been an exercise in egoistic aggrandizement. It has actually been compelled, subconsciously and imperceptibly perhaps by the irresistible pressures of the spirit of the age. Such rejections and quests were being undertaken everywhere, especially by the European and American writers. The loss of faith, the failure of the conventional ideas and the bleakness of future that haunted the writer after First World War and ever for the three following decades in the following way :

Despair is universal over the question who everyone is. It is necessary to know. We have got ourselves into a position where perhaps this is possible. Disillusion is irreducible; the inherited past is totally questioned. Now something is happening. So radically have protest been lodged that the negations are proving no longer sufficient. We are in the midst, or as at the beginning of the recreation. The dialogue of the new Canadian poets is of the greatest interest. The burden is testamentary By those who want disillusioned affirmation, these fresh sensibilities are not to be ignored.

B. Al Purdy

Al Purdy has instilled the true Canadian spirit into his poetry. He, born in Wooler, Ontario, is known as the poet of rural Ontario. David Stouck holds that "as Ontario is central to any conception of Canada as a nation, so Purdy's work has assumed a central position of importance in the growing body of Canadian poetry since the Second World War". Purdy has been one of Canada's most prolific poets. His first volume of verse *The Enchanted Echo* was published in 1944 where he appeared as a traditional and derivative poet influenced largely by Canadian late romantics like Roberts and Carman. Purdy began to find a sure and distinctive voice, publishing *Poems for All the Annettes* (1962) and *The Cariboo Horses* (1965) . In 1968 *Poems for All the Annettes* was reissued in an expanded edition, in which Purdy collected and revised all the poetry upto 1965 that he wished to preserve. He has published some twenty more collections since then, including three more retrospective volumes: *Selected poems* (1972) *Being Alive : Poems 1958-1978* (1978) and *Bursting into Song : An Al Purdy Omnibus* (1982). His recent book of new poems *The Stone Bird* (1981), published when he was sixty three, was felt by many readers to contain some of his best work.

One strange and yet quite real characteristic of the typical Canadian psyche is an overpowering tendency to examining the two opposite sides of an issue and conclude this examination directly or indirectly. W.H. New holds that this feature is prominent in Eastern and Western attitude in Canada. But this feature is not a geographical concept rather it is a persistent feature that explains viable literature

in both form and content in Canadian literature. Purdy's poems articulate the various components of this quest and show how Al Purdy seems to reach a destination in continuous search for stable values. Purdy's quest is to find a "basis for man's transcendence of his own earthly life, without ceasing to embrace it." He does it by putting together various oppositions and concentrates on the reality of the past and the present, or the historical, mythical roots and the present experiences of an individual. In "Cariboo Horses" the present or the physical time is a gray morning at 100 mile house, a town in the interior of British Columbia, where "the Cowboys ride in rolling" into town to pick up supplies at the grocers. Their horses "are waiting in stables" "standing at down/pastured outside the time with/jeeps and fords and chevys..." As has already been referred to, the scene is in present but for the poet it evokes a panorama of history wherein horses played a vital role in human affairs.

Purdy combines a strong sense of place with deep awareness of the past pressing upon the present to produce a kind of geographical poetry which marvellously projects the nature of Canada and of other places. In his poem, "*The Country North of Belleville*" expresses this tension of the past and pre-sent. Here the heroic but futile labour of his ancestors who tried to turn a poor stony land into rich farm country is expressive of the past and the poet's response to his own attitude underlines the present. The poet is uneasy to note that he has abandoned the struggle of his ancestors. He is perturbed by this sense of denying the significance of the ancestors' lives although he still feels their claim of loyalty and kinship on him. Here the tension or the opposition between the past and the present is expressed and is sought to be resolved through a juxtaposition and telescoping of chronological time. He says:

Apart from these contrasts and opposites that are such persistent characteristics of his poetry, Purdy has also written realistic yet poetically beautiful descriptions of the charms of the vast Canadian land especially of the Northern parts of his country. In "North of Summer" he presents a charming literary portrait of the stern, uncompromising and cold landscape. Here the North stands for a new frontier and also becomes the symbol of another polarity in his poetry because most of the settlements and hubs of modern civilization are located along the Southern border of Canada.

The most striking feature of the poetry of Purdy is his interest in the past and present which seem to explain his dynamics of discord. The juxtaposed worlds which take place in his poems, tend to move from present to past and back again, seeking to restore lost continuities. He struggles to understand the vanished era and finds vestiges of a more primitive era, prehistoric past in the present. For him past is a living thing, carried within us all, and a source of strength. Because we often lose sight of our past, he attempts to recover and respond to it by bringing together the contrary worlds. In a word it can be said that in his poetry it is the past and the present which are embossed with various contrary and opposite patterns instilling true Canadian spirit.

1.5 Postmodernist /Contemporary Period

Canadian poetry of the eighties has been given considerable space by Margaret Atwood in the anthology *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English* (1982). Her description of Canadian poetry as "spiky, though, flexible, various and vital" in the Introduction to the anthology is very appropriately applicable to the recent verses by the young contemporary poets of Canada. The poets who are born after 1940, continuously experiment with the form of poetry to achieve an original medium of expression, and thus offer a verbal rendering of the Canadian expression which, by the virtue of its contexts is unique and engrossing. Atwood insinuates that it is only in recent times that

Canadian poetry has come of age, and has become abundantly productive. She accords the Canadian poetry of today a place among the great: "Canadian poetry like Canadian statesmanship or something of the sort, was finally becoming 'International' and taking its rightful place among the great."

The first recurring feature of much of the contemporary Canadian poetry is its attempt to be simple, lyrical and at the same time, magical both in its music and imagery. However, the Canadian poets of today do not aim at the prismatic images of colourful romanticism. They aim at a clarity of expression and a vividness of vocalization that produces, through its consistent refusal to wallow in any verbal mess, a magic of silent evocation.

The constant effort of the poet to achieve a sparseness in diction and lucidity of lyric exposition of the idea does not, however, debar him or her from exploring the underworld of the subconscious stream of thoughts. The Canadian poet arranges images and metaphors in a harmonious structure that bodies forth the depth of the poet's dreams and subconscious desires. Much of the Canadian poetry of today is transfused with the light reflected from the subconscious, the credit goes to the Canadian poet for his success in exposing the subconscious through an arabesque of translucent images and verbal felicities that stir the imagination and intellect of the reader with an immediacy that speaks of the level of achievement of the contemporary Canadian poets. For example:

This land like a mirror turns you inward.
And you become a forest in a furtive lake;
The dark pines of your mind each downward,
You dream in the green of your time.
Your memory is a row of sinking pines.

("Dark Pines Under", Gwendolyn MacEwen)

Contemporary Canadian poets aim at achieving a language of lyricism and a language of the subconscious: in the process they endow the language with metaphorical suggestiveness that satisfies the imagination of the reader as it widens its range through a paradoxical use of consciousness and terseness in the graphic evocation of the suggestive image. Thus the language of the contemporary Canadian poetry acquires a fecundity in style and expression.

While, on the one hand, the language in contemporary Canadian poetry is acquiring a lyric fluidity, a suffusion of the strange light reflected from the underworld of the subconscious and a metaphoric suggestiveness of wide ranging effects on the other hand, it gains in vitality and in an inescapable sense of sensuous physicality through the frequent use of sexual imagery chosen with fresh, feeling and uninhibited and emancipated perception of the relationship between man and man and man and woman. Canadian poetry acquires a vitality, a freshness, an immediacy and an all-pervading touch of the intimate and the everyday by drawing freely upon the liberated attitude towards sex in life. Sexual motifs and imagery are placed very naturally in the body of contemporary Canadian poetry about human family; thus the poets remove from their references to sex the roughness and crudity generally associated with it under the influence of its categorization as a social taboo. Here, the credit goes to the Canadian poet for his sensitive and imaginative manipulation of language for

expression of emotional and imaginative attachment to the essential things of life without any social inhibition.

The language of psychological tension and psychological strife also marks contemporary Canadian poetry. Hence, the language of contemporary Canadian poetry becomes tense and alive with the perception of the dualities and antagonisms in the young poets' psychological reactions to the facts and events of life.

However, contemporary Canadian poetry cannot claim to be free from the puzzling frame of obscurity. Many a poem by the Canadian contemporaries will sound bewitching and even, rhythmically and photographically, enticing, but will bedevil the reader's head as to what may be the meaning of its content. The obscurity is, however, not the last word in contemporary Canadian poetry. There is definitely a wide range of linguistic experiments going on in contemporary Canadian poetry. Experiments – both formal and verbal – predominate, but these experiments lead to fresh arrangement of words which result in fresh evocations. The contemporary Canadian poets are performing their functions dutifully by creating new sets of words and images for poetic effects.

The experiment in language also provides room for witty exposure of the modern situation. In an interesting poem entitled, "*Wayman in Love*," Tom Wayman very interestingly portrays a dramatic situation where two lovers cannot go into bed and make love peacefully as Freud and Marx haunt their conscience and will not let them caress each other like spontaneous lovers.

Ultimately, of course, the impression left by contemporary Canadian poetry is that of intense passionate humanism. The intense humanity of the young Canadian poets permeates the poetry created by them: and that is the final hall mark of great poetry. And in that respect, the contemporary poetry of Canada transcends the barrier of the local, and attains a universality of appeal.

Canadian poetry has come a long way from its early stage of imitation and directionless search for new paths; it has achieved a unique style, which the young Canadian poets can call their own, that marks it out from the English poetry written in the other countries of the world. Still the ultimate hall-mark of humanity gives contemporary Canadian poetry a universality in appeal that removes from it the stigma of the local. It can be and will be enjoyed and appreciated by any poetry-lover anywhere in the world.

1.6 Let Us Sum Up

Thus Canadian poetic culture is a continuous growth from its first stirrings of poetics culture to contemporary poetic culture, going through the emergence of a national poetic culture, transitional poetic culture and modernist poetic culture. The pre-Confederation period had the first stirrings of a poetic culture before Canada became a nation. The first stirrings of the poetic culture took place in the farthest west. Though this phase includes poets such as Robert Hayman, Joseph Stansbury, Standish O'Grady, Oliver Goldsmith, Charles Heavysege, Charles Sangster and Charles Mair, the beginning of importance was made by the three Charles. The second phase of Canadian literature which marked the Confederation period brought the emergence of a national literature. Near the Confederation, Canada gained poets who were national. Charles G.D. Roberts, his cousin Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman and D.C. Scott are often called the poets of the Confederation. Despite the fact that they were influenced by both British and American models, they evolved styles and attitudes, which gave

rise to more nationalist literature. These continued the themes of the pre-Confederation literature and endeavoured to investigate the experience the early settlers had. These experiences of the early settlers gave a consciousness of exile and isolation, a sense of inchoate identity and ambivalent feelings about nature that seemed hostile and indifferent. The third phase started in the first quarter of the twentieth century, after the confirmation of Canada's status as a separate nation state, when a new sense of national consciousness was reinforced. This spirit was a kind of desire for a truly Canadian art and literature which would confirm the Canadian identity. *The Canadian Bookman* in 1919, *The Canadian Forum* in 1920 and *The Canadian Authors Association* in 1921 gave a genuine expression to this desire as their aim was "to trace and value these development of art and letters which are distinctively Canadian." In the contemporary phase the poets experiment with the form of poetry to achieve an original medium of expression, and thus offer a verbal rendering of the Canadian expression which, by the virtue of its contexts is unique and engrossing. The recurring feature of much of the contemporary Canadian poetry is its attempt to be simple, lyrical and at the same time, magical both in its music and imagery. They aim at clarity of expression and a vividness of vocalization that produces, through its consistent refusal to wallow in any verbal mess, a magic of silent evocation.
