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Université de Montréal

The Montrealer and Canadian Short Stories

par

Maria Taaffe

Département d'études anglaises

Faculté des arts et des sciences

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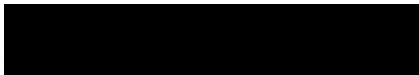

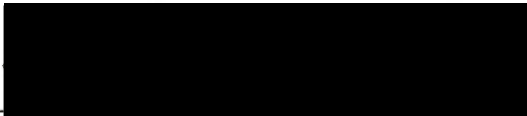


Université de Montréal  
Faculté des études supérieures

Ce mémoire intitulé:  
The Montrealer and Canadian Short Stories

présenté par  
Maria Taaffe

a été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:

	président-rapporteur
	directeur de recherches
	membre du jury

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## **Abstract**

The Montrealer was a magazine published in Montreal between 1926 and 1970. It was modelled on The New Yorker, first published a year earlier than The Montrealer in 1925. Like all magazines with a certain longevity The Montrealer evolved gradually, keeping abreast of trends and fashions and reflecting its social and cultural milieu.

The main focus of this paper is The Montrealer's contribution to the development of a specific form of Canadian literature, the short story. Although short stories were regularly but sporadically published in the magazine, it was only under the respective editorships of David Hackett and Gerald Taaffe that the short story came into its own as an important part of The Montrealer's content. It was their responsibility to choose the short stories that would best suit the tone and style of the magazine.

The introduction situates the magazine in its general social and cultural context. In the years that the magazine was published, Montreal was the most important city in Canada. The Montrealer's content was geared to the Montreal readership but it can be said to have been of national interest because what happened in Montreal affected and interested the whole country.

The first chapter is an overview of The Montrealer. It also unravels its complicated ownership and publication history. Its whole run is compared to The New Yorker. Significant issues of each magazine are compared to each other to try to get a general idea of how The Montrealer evolved and what it was trying to achieve throughout the years. Points of similarity as well as points of difference between the

two magazines are used to help us imagine what the magazine was like. Covers, cartoons, editorials, features as well as fiction are elements of comparison.

The second chapter is about David Hackett and the short stories published in the magazine while he was editor from 1957 to 1959. In this chapter, there is a short biography as well as a summary of an interview with David Hackett. Themes were culled from the interview to study these particular short stories. These themes are the role of Hugh MacLennan, the setting-up of a network of Canadian talent, an example of encouraging emerging Canadian talent (Mordecai Richler) and the importance of Canadian culture and identity. It was possible to deal with all of the short stories published under David Hackett.

The third chapter is about Gerald Taaffe and the publication of short stories from 1960 to 1965 while he was editor of The Montrealer. The chapter follows the same pattern as the preceding one. A short biography is followed by a summary of the interview with Gerald Taaffe. Choosing the themes to study the short stories published while he was editor was difficult because of the number and the range of styles and topics of the short stories. Short stories that expressed a wider range of points of view and perspectives as well as being innovative became an important element for publication in The Montrealer. The publication of women writers was another feature of Taaffe's tenure at the magazine. Having a short story published in the magazine was a definite plus in a young writer's career. Alice Munro is a writer who exemplifies this. She had six of her stories published in the magazine from 1961 to 1965 well before she became a megastar of Canadian literature.

The conclusion reasserts the importance of The Montrealer and of its editors in the development of the Canadian short story, an important aspect of Canadian literature.

## **Résumé de synthèse**

The Montrealer était une revue publiée à Montréal entre 1926 et 1970. Son modèle était la revue The New Yorker qui a commencé sa publication un an avant The Montrealer en 1925. Comme la plupart de revues ayant une certaine longévité, The Montrealer a évolué graduellement suivant les tendances et les modes pour refléter son milieu social et culturel.

La contribution de The Montrealer au développement de la nouvelle littéraire, une forme spécifique de la littérature canadienne, est le point central de ce mémoire. Quoique la revue ait toujours publié ce genre littéraire, ce n'est que sous la tutelle des rédacteurs David Hackett et Gerald Taaffe que la nouvelle est devenue une partie importante du contenu de The Montrealer. C'était leur responsabilité respective de bien choisir les nouvelles qui mettraient la revue en valeur.

L'introduction du mémoire situe la revue dans son contexte général, social et culturel. Durant les années que The Montrealer a été publié, Montréal était la ville la plus importante du Canada. Son contenu visait les lecteurs montréalais mais c'est aussi possible de dire que c'était une revue d'intérêt national puisque ce qui se passait à Montréal affectait et intéressait le reste du pays.

Le premier chapitre est un survol de la revue. Il démêle l'histoire assez compliquée de sa publication et de ses changements de propriétaires. Son ensemble est comparé à The New Yorker. Des numéros significatifs de chacune de ces deux revues sont comparés pour dégager l'évolution du The Montrealer et les objectifs de la revue à travers les années. Les points de ressemblance ainsi que les points de différence nous aident à imaginer ce que la revue était. Les couvertures, les

caricatures, les éditoriaux, les chroniques ainsi que les nouvelles littéraires étaient tous des éléments de comparaison.

Le deuxième chapitre concerne David Hackett et les nouvelles qui ont été publiées pendant qu'il était rédacteur de la revue entre 1957 et 1959. Dans ce chapitre, on trouve une courte biographie de David Hackett ainsi qu'un résumé de l'entrevue faite avec lui. De cette entrevue, des thèmes ont été choisis pour étudier ces nouvelles particulières. Ces thèmes sont le rôle de Hugh MacLennan, l'établissement d'un réseau de talent canadien, un exemple de talent canadien émergent (Mordecai Richler) et l'importance de la culture et de l'identité canadiennes. Au contraire des nouvelles publiées sous Gerald Taaffe, toutes les nouvelles publiées sous David Hackett ont été étudiées. Ceci n'était pas possible avec les nouvelles publiées sous Taaffe parce qu'elles sont trop nombreuses.

Le troisième chapitre est à propos de Gerald Taaffe et des nouvelles publiées entre 1960 et 1965 quand il était rédacteur de The Montrealer. Ce chapitre suit la même démarche que le chapitre précédent. Une courte biographie est suivie d'un résumé de l'entrevue avec Gerald Taaffe. De cet entrevue, les thèmes dégagés pour étudier les nouvelles publiées quand il était rédacteur sont plus complexes parce qu'il y a beaucoup plus de nouvelles. La publication de nouvelles exprimant un grand éventail de points de vue et de perspectives était un élément important de The Montrealer. L'innovation dans les nouvelles était aussi importante. Les femmes écrivains étaient bien représentées dans la revue pendant que Taaffe était rédacteur. Publier dans la revue était un atout pour la carrière d'un jeune écrivain. Alice Munro

est un écrivain exemplifiant ceci. Elle y a publié six fois entre 1960 et 1965, bien avant qu'elle ne devienne une grande vedette de la littérature canadienne.

La conclusion réaffirme l'importance du The Montrealer et de ses rédacteurs comme éléments du développement de la nouvelle canadienne, un aspect important de la littérature canadienne.



## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my gratitude to David Hackett and Gerald Taaffe who both accepted to be interviewed quite extensively about their respective tenures as editor of The Montrealer.

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I also would like to thank Gabrielle Boivineau, Melvin Charney, John Fry, William Roberts, Patricia Shanahan, Peter Taaffe, Sam Tata, Robert Weaver, Lorne Webster and William Weintraub for their time and their interest in this project.

## **Introduction**

The Montrealer was a magazine published in Montreal from 1926 to 1970. Originally, The Montrealer was a “carriage trade” magazine whose main readership was almost exclusively residents of a then very Protestant English-Canadian Westmount and adjacent areas. It was modelled on The New Yorker, which had first been published in 1925, a year earlier than The Montrealer. Like all magazines with a certain longevity The Montrealer evolved gradually, keeping abreast of trends as well as fashions and reflecting its social and cultural milieu.

Before the 1950's, the magazine irregularly featured written material that could be considered literary, that is to say fictional. There is ample evidence of a high standard of writing in The Montrealer before 1950, but not very much interest in fictional work. The 1950's are often identified as the beginning of Canadian cultural nationalism. Just as Canadian culture itself started to affirm its individuality, The Montrealer was developing a wider range of content by adding more left-leaning artistic and intellectual elements.

Short story writers, and particularly Canadian ones, have always lacked outlets for their creativity. The Montrealer played an important role by publishing the works of writers such as MacLennan, Levine, Munro, Purdy, Spencer and Hood, amongst others. In the 1950's and even more so in the 1960's, The Montrealer contributed to the emerging national Canadian identity by publishing Canadian short stories on a regular basis. The main focus of this study will be The Montrealer's contribution to the development of Canadian literature. A particular emphasis is put on the editors' work in relation to short stories. It will also try to situate the magazine

in its context as well as give a description of its content throughout the years it was published. The general description of the magazine is necessary because no academic work has ever been done on this Canadian publication. As for the editors, this thesis will study in more detail the short stories published when David Hackett was editor-in-chief of The Montrealer from 1957 to 1959 as well as the tenure of Gerald Taaffe from 1960 to 1965. These two editors were chosen because of the length of time they edited the magazine and the general coherence of it under their respective tutelage. Also, both Hackett and Taaffe had a stronger literary connection than some of the other editors. David Hackett had been a student at McGill and later met Hugh MacLennan who later became a friend and collaborator. Gerald Taaffe was a journalist as well as a writer of fiction.

In the years that The Montrealer was published, Montreal was at the centre of Canada's political, economic and social life. It was not a regional centre but was truly the centre of Canadian life. Because of this, The Montrealer can be thought of as a national magazine in the sense that it was a magazine with a content geared, at first, to the group in whose hands rested most of the power in the country. It was also a national magazine because it was interested in national questions and was far from being exclusively focused on questions and events concerning Montrealers. If The New Yorker is a national magazine then so was The Montrealer, albeit on a different scale.

The magazine also documents the social and cultural shift that occurred during

the 1950's and 1960's in Montreal. Power was slowly being transferred from Wasp hands to that of other English-speaking groups who did not necessarily have English as their mother tongue. Attitudes towards French-speaking Quebecers were evolving, becoming less patronising and acknowledging a resurgence of French-Canadian nationalism. During this period of time, Montreal was still the dominant economic force of Canada even though the slow inevitable shift of economic power towards Toronto was already in progress. This did not really change the attitude of Montrealers towards themselves or their position in the world. Montreal was a city with an international reputation. We could say that it had the aura of a city which was "the place to be." It attracted young talent from all over the world. It also shifted from having a monolithic culture which ignored socio-economic and religious minorities to a multicultural milieu with a definite international perspective.

The Montrealer reflected what Canadian society was like as a whole. It also documented the social shift from Wasp-dominated monarchical society to a more open one. It was also influenced by international trends such as the struggle for autonomy of former colonies, a certain innocent post-war optimism and the renewed value given to artistic expression characteristic of prosperity or major social change. The Montrealer was always a sophisticated magazine. Just as the notion of sophistication changes so did the content of the magazine to reflect a new kind of awareness and chic.

The general overview of the content of the magazine looks at the different types of content as well as their development throughout the years. Some types of

content were in the magazine from the beginning in 1926. Others were dropped and replaced by more modern ones. These elements are analysed to give a general idea of the content of The Montrealer: editorials, articles (aesthetic, social and political), society pages and gossip columns, literary and artistic reviews, interviews, fashion columns, special features, photography, advertisements, covers and cartoons. Short stories are treated in a more detailed way apart from the general overview of the content since they are the main subject of this study.

The editor of a magazine has a central role in the publication of a magazine since he is essentially responsible for all the decisions pertaining to the tone, the content, the presentation of the magazine as well as its distribution. The choice of short stories is a particularly difficult task. What are the criteria used in accepting one piece of fiction and not another? Many well-regarded magazines, such as the Saturday Evening Post, the New Yorker and Saturday Night, sustained their reputations in part by the quality of the short stories they published. The Montrealer published most of its short stories under the editorship of David Hackett and Gerald Taaffe. The reasons for their choice of short stories to be published were aesthetic, but also social and political. These choices had criteria that were objective but also personal. They also somewhat revealed the particular personality of the editor. Just as all choices are based on criteria, diverse criteria are also elements in every decision made about a magazine, not only about short stories. From a literary point of view, the ones made about short stories are more significant than others.

Some short story writers were only published by Hackett and others only by Taaffe, while others were published by both editors. To discern the editorial criteria of choice of short stories, the thesis first looks at all the short stories chosen by each respective editor. There is then a structural and thematic analysis of some of the short stories, using the work of the writers the editor favoured. The general overview of The Montrealer's non-fiction content is also used as a means to see what influence this content had on the selection of fiction for the magazine. Personal interviews with editors David Hackett and Gerald Taaffe contributed greatly to the discernment of the reasons for their editorial decisions and the short stories they published in The Montrealer. They were also questioned about other subjects such as the role of the editor and his relationship with other contributors to the magazine. Other Montrealers were also interviewed on this subject and others. Criteria can sometimes be very explicit; at other times, they are neither clear nor obvious.



**Chapter 1**  
**Overview of The Montrealer**

Montreal was described in a 1942 novel as a city that

...lay spread out below ...enchanted in the sunlight of a late afternoon in June, mile upon mile of flat gray roofs half hidden by light, new green of the trees; a few scattered skyscrapers, beyond the skyscrapers the long straight lines of the grain elevators down by the harbour, further up to the right the Lachine Canal, and everywhere the gray spires of churches, monasteries and convents... (Graham 17)

This beautiful description is very much the portrait of Montreal as seen from the heights of Westmount. It is interesting that the writer has us gazing at two places much involved in the making of many 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon fortunes. The harbour was where merchandise was received, and furs, timber, and other natural resources were exported; the Canal was where Montreal's first industries were often established. There is something pastoral about the whole scene despite its "few skyscrapers," "grain elevators," and "gray spires." This relative tranquillity was all to change in the fifties and sixties. Montreal then became a place where

Des quartiers neufs surgissent, avec des usines, des résidences, des écoles, des hôpitaux; l'administration aménage de nouveaux parcs; des colonnes d'automobiles défilent sans arrêt; on calcule que 20,000 véhicules et 73,000 piétons traversent chaque jour l'intersection de la rue Peel et de la rue Sainte-Catherine. (Rumilly 135)

Jean Drapeau was a young man when he was first elected mayor of Montreal in 1954. He called Montreal a place where "se rencontrent et s'associent l'Ancien et le Nouveau Monde." (II) For him, Montreal was also "une grande ville cosmopolite où les groupes ethniques les plus divers oeuvrent et vivent harmonieusement" (II) and also "la seule ville du monde où les cultures française, américaine et britannique se

manifestent sensiblement dans la même mesure” (II). This is another beautiful portrait of Montreal, sophisticated and generous.

David Hackett expresses similar ideas about Montreal when he said that he had been

very proud of that city. I think it was unique, it was a pleasure, it was fun...(it was also) one of the most fascinating cities in the world...part of an international circuit.

For Hugh MacLennan it was “like no other on earth” (7). These comments are obviously from people who loved Montreal but they also express the fact that Montreal was then what is called a “first-rate” city. Even if Montrealers feel very strongly about their city now, they probably do not consider it to be a top-ranking one on the world scene. The fifties and the sixties in Montreal was a time when the St-Lawrence Seaway, Place des Arts and Place Ville-Marie were being built. The Seaway could have been a disaster to the Montreal economy but “Montreal did not sink in significance ...due to its internal transformation” (Cooper 174). Prosperity and its people pulled it through (174).

“There is also intellectual ferment to a degree that I had not expected” is what Edmund Wilson had to say about Montreal when he visited at the beginning of the sixties. Along with the economic and intellectual life, there was also a very active social scene, and The Montrealer was part of it. People liked being associated with the magazine or having their picture in its cultural or social pages (Shanahan). The editor of The Montrealer was very often automatically invited to a great variety of events (Hackett). Even though this paper concentrates on the fifties and the sixties, a

general overview of the magazine will give us a better idea of how the magazine situated itself in Montreal society and how it held its readers by “developing as (an) indigenous product(s)” (Peterson 320) instead of completely imitating another.

Fraser Sutherland’s The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines, published in 1989 and documenting two centuries of magazine publishing in Canada, is a major contribution to our understanding of the development of the Canadian magazine. Unfortunately The Montrealer does not fare too well in The Monthly Epic. It does mention The Montrealer but its index also lists hundreds of magazines with such diverse titles as B.C. Outdoors, Canadian Nurse, Coup de Pouce and Mad Money. From the general index, Sutherland chose 26 magazines as “Principal Magazines Consulted” (325), among them Saturday Night, Maclean’s, Liberty and Mayfair. The Montrealer is significantly absent.

Fifty pages of The Monthly Epic’s total of 355 pages are devoted to Saturday Night and another fifty to Maclean’s, Liberty and Mayfair, at opposite ends of the readership spectrum, had life spans comparable to The Montrealer’s. Liberty (1932-1964), populist and heavily invested in by multimillionaire Jack Kent Cooke, gets five pages in The Monthly Epic. Mayfair (1927-1961), somewhat elitist with general objectives resembling The Montrealer’s, is explained and situated historically in ten pages. It should be said that both Liberty and Mayfair’s circulation numbers were much more impressive than The Montrealer’s. This was most likely a factor in The Monthly Epic mentioning The Montrealer in only five lines of text, two of which concerned the fate of its subscription list when it folded in 1970.

About The Montrealer Sutherland writes:

Though not primarily a humour magazine, Alvah Beatty's *Montrealer* (1924-70), a pale approximation of the *New Yorker*, was another symptom of the jazz age. (123-4)

He gives 1924 as the founding year of The Montrealer. This is far from certain despite being the same year given in McGill's library catalogue. La Presse québécoise des origines à nos jours 1920-1934 gives 1926 as the beginning of The Montrealer. In the fifties, the magazine itself printed 1926 as its founding year. According to the earliest still available issue of The Montrealer, Alvah Beatty, a close relative of Sir Edward Beatty of the CPR, was the magazine's general manager in 1931. Also, the April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935 issue of The Montrealer has this interesting announcement on a full page:

The Montrealer and The Canadian Passing Show  
are now  
One.

These two magazines which, for some ten years, have served separately Montreal's men and women of affairs and Montreal's best stores, will now serve both of them together. (5)

It is therefore most likely correct to assume that in 1935 Beatty acquired The Passing Show (or The Canadian Passing Show), first published in 1926 as was The Montrealer, and incorporated it into one magazine. He also added four other magazines to it: Fashion, Gossip, Trend and Book Chat. These five magazines were all annexed to The Montrealer. It is interesting to note that none of them are in The Monthly Epic, except of course for The Montrealer. William Roberts, Leslie Roberts' son, reports in an interview that Beatty did in fact start the magazine and that this was

most likely in 1926. For a long time, until February 1953, The Montrealer was usually called “The Montrealer with The Canadian Passing Show” or “The Montrealer (at the top of the cover page) with Fashion and Canadian Passing Show” (at the bottom).

This is how Alvah Beatty handled the integration of different magazines into one. It is also not really surprising that Sutherland would call The Montrealer “Alvah Beatty’s” since Beatty ran it for three decades from 1926 to 1956. His widow sold it in 1957 (Webster). He was a hands-on owner asking that all manuscripts be addressed to him, the publisher. The publication was an “on and off imitation of The New Yorker and not really intended to be a profit-making magazine” (William Roberts). It was only expected to break even. Beatty had a few long-time collaborators who were also “drinking buddies” (William Roberts): Leslie Roberts, Joseph McDougall and Jefferson Chapleau. He was also helped by a staff which included an editor, a subscriptions secretary and an advertising manager. Leslie Roberts wrote a monthly editorial called “Unpopular Editorial.” He made his living primarily as a magazine writer, with pieces in Collier’s, The New Yorker and Life for example, although he also wrote approximately thirty books. Another regular contributor was Joseph McDougall, mentioned in The Monthly Epic as having been involved in a magazine of college humour with a national circulation, The Goblin, published from 1921 to 1930 (123). He went on to be creative director of a major advertising firm in Montreal. Often using an anonymous byline, he wrote for many years a feature in The Montrealer called “The Talk of the Town.” Jefferson Chapleau, a commercial artist and cartoonist, did many of the covers for Beatty’s magazine. It is interesting to note

that Roberts, McDougall and Chapleau continued contributing to the magazine into the editorships of David Hackett and Gerald Taaffe.

In 1956, the ownership of The Montrealer passed from the Beattys to a group of young Montrealers which included Lorne Webster. About a year later, Charles Bronfman would join their ranks. The new owners hired David Hackett as their editor. This group sold the magazine in 1960 to the Wallace family, of Wallace Shoes. It was then that Gerald Taaffe became the magazine's editor. Asked respectively if they were influenced by The New Yorker, Hackett and Taaffe had two very different reactions. For Hackett, The Montrealer was meant to be completely Canadian and therefore not at all an imitation of The New Yorker. Taaffe answers that he was surely influenced by The New Yorker since he started reading it as a teenager and had always considered it to be the model of all this type of magazine. Hackett's view reflects the mandate that the young owners gave him to promote Canadian talent and to show that it was possible to produce in Canada a magazine just as good as that published anywhere else (Hackett). By the time Taaffe took over the editorship of the magazine this idea was a given. While respecting David Hackett's point of view, a comparison of The New Yorker and The Montrealer should nevertheless contribute to a better understanding of how The Montrealer evolved.

Particular editions of the two magazines will be used as reference points for this comparison. They will be the 1926 editions of Gossip and The New Yorker; 1928 editions of The New Yorker and The Passing Show before it belonged to Alvah Beatty and was integrated into The Montrealer; 1932 editions of The New Yorker

and The Montrealer; 1942 editions of both magazines during World War II; two editions of The Montrealer (in 1957 and 1959) when Hackett was editor and two (in 1962 and 1965) when Taaffe was editor will also be compared to respective editions of The New Yorker.

Even though The Montrealer and The Passing Show existed in 1926, unfortunately neither is now available for study. The earliest issue of the first magazine available is dated 1931 and is in McGill's library; as for the second one, an issue published in 1928 is also available at McGill. We will therefore compare the first edition of Gossip in April 1926 and a 1926 number of The New Yorker, whose first edition was in 1925. These two magazines are entirely different. Gossip has a very small format (5" x 9") and consists of 16 pages. It is printed on a paper like newsprint. A simple line drawing of a parrot whispering to a giraffe, probably representing gossiping, is on its cover. Miss Molly McGee was its editor. The whole purpose of the issue seemed to have something to show potential advertisers, a nice selling tool. Its objective was

Of the unusual. This is the first issue of a little book to be published weekly, telling of the Social Club activities, the Important Events of the Week, and the interesting offerings of the Exclusive Shop. (3)

Every piece in the little magazine is not longer than a short paragraph. The tone is that of a very busy young woman interested in social and cultural events but more interested in dressing up and shopping. There are announcements of social events such as McGill's Red and White Review (3), the Canadian Women's Liberal



Club executive meeting at the Windsor (9) and a card and tea party to benefit the Franciscan Fathers of Rosemount (12). This last event had an organizing committee of both English and French names. More cultural-type events are also announced such as a concert at the Imperial by Lady Oden-Pearse, who has given many “command performances” (16), and a piano recital at the Ritz Carlton Hotel given by Miss Virginia McLean (9). Books are also mentioned in passing. Miss McGee particularly recommends Manhattan Transfer (5) to her Gossip readers, leading to the impression that she may have been a bit of a “live wire.” She also mentions Anita Loos’ Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, P.C. Wren’s Beau Geste, Martha Ostenso’s Wild Geese and Willa Cather’s The Professor’s House. Most of the little magazine is paragraph after paragraph of what is in the shops: Fox furs, gloves and French underwear at Holt Renfrew (5, 10, 13), orange diamonds and opals at Birk’s (6, 10), shoes with spike heels and contrasting appliqués at Surpass Shoes (11) for example. Despite this modest beginning, Gossip did grow into a full-fledged magazine within a few years.

The New Yorker, on the other hand, already had the sophistication which made its reputation. It had about the same format as it has today (7" x 10 1/2"). Its cover is an Art Deco illustration of flappers. Full-page advertisements with illustrations and some with photos are evident throughout the magazine: Saks Fifth Avenue department store, the Crillon restaurant and Luxury Apartments to Rent on Park Avenue for example. Many of its well-known features were already there. “Goings-on about Town” subtitled “The New Yorker’s Conscientious Calendar of Events Worth While” listed music, art, theatre, after-theatre and motion pictures for

the well-heeled class. The "Talk of the Town" with the classic Eustache Tilley gives a gossipy comment on what was happening in New York, mentioning, for example, Mayor Jim Walker, a colorful character of the 1920's. "Profiles" was about personalities in the news. In this particular issue, "Profiles" is about a temperamental girl tennis star complete with an attractive action photograph. Another feature is "A Reporter at Large," which covers business receptions and conferences, including that of the Banker's Club. "London Notes" features a kind of review of social and artistic events in London of interest to New Yorkers. There are also already many cartoons, one about an avant-garde Greenwich Village group that included Eugene O'Neill. Another thing that The New Yorker is famous for is its reviews. Already in 1926, it was doing short reviews of books, "New Books", as well as reviews of the theatre, musical events and art galleries.

The 1928 The Passing Show is more readily compared to a 1928 issue of The New Yorker. Two years into its publication history, the magazine has 48 pages and a more standard format for the time (9 1/2" x 12 1/2"). The cover has a color illustration of Beaver Hall Hill. Other issues would have covers with themes such as The New Harbor Bridge (Jacques-Cartier Bridge) and Yuletide in Philips Square. Its tone is very proper and gives the impression that every Montrealer is living a life of happiness and ease. The New Yorker of the same year is snobbier, referring frequently to European aristocracy. Its cover is of a group of adoring and bovine society matrons surrounding a very sensitive-looking musician in a tuxedo. This issue of the magazine is more cutting and sarcastic than the 1926 one. This can be seen in

its cartoons as well as in its general tone. The New York it portrays is a later version of Edith Wharton's 400 families seen through the cynical eyes of some of its penniless younger members.

The Passing Show conveys more of an interest in appearing to be doing the right thing: coverage of society events, balls, débutantes, marriages and beautiful children. There are also a lot of upscale sports covered such as golfing, horseback riding and hunting. Its advertisements, like those in The New Yorker, are often for luxury objects from London or, more typically, from Paris. Montreal's magazine seemed interested in quality that is durable, New York's in what is amusing and impresses others. In 1928, The Passing Show also had a definite interest in technology not evident in The New Yorker. In "Observations - But Without Scissors or Paste Pot," there are comments about the first Montreal-New York air mail flight and a bear cub, sent by Mayor Houde to Mayor Walker, which was in a very bad temper when it arrived in New York after the plane trip (5). Another article about automation wondered "Are We Becoming Unnecessary?" (7) Both magazines were interested in drinking. In The New Yorker, "Speakeasy Nights" and "A Cocktail is a Lovely Drink" were about the very American preoccupation with Prohibition alcohol. In The Passing Show it was more ambiguous:

There is a modest fortune awaiting the man who will invent a palatable drink to be called "Ye Olde Habitant Cocktail," and to contain as its chief ingredients maple syrup and whiskey blanc. (6)

Many other elements of both magazines resemble each other. Both are interested in

the theatre though The New Yorker is much more serious on the subject, listing different plays with a brief review sometimes. This is what The Passing Show had to say about a play:

They say that many of Montreal's theatre habitués found George Robey's show so "different" that they didn't quite know what to make of it. The shows we have been accustomed to lately have been more dis-robey, so to speak. (5)

The same thing happens about literature. While The New Yorker lists 12 books in "New Books" and has an article on reading and the different types of writing and publications, The Passing Show has a long interview with Martha Ostenso (11-22), a Canadian writer of Scandinavian origin. This seems to be an encouragement of literary issues but the magazine also says that an idea, in England, for advertisement on the side of railroad cars could have

literary possibilities in Canada. One may imagine a series of short stories, of say ten car lengths each... interlarded with advertising appeals... Fancy the excitement in Toronto and other Ontario centres ... when... flashes the announcement 'Bright bits of fiction in short story form just pulling out of Montreal on a fast freight for the West'. (5)

While keeping all the features such as "Talk of the Town" and "Profiles" The New Yorker added two features to its magazine, "Paris Letter" and "Current Cinema."

The Letter would not always be from Paris in subsequent editions but it often had a short story tone to it, being less about events in the particular place than what the writer was living and thinking. The Passing Show has features about out of town places but they are about social events in Quebec City referred to as "Society in the

Ancient Capital.” Movie reviews have been a part of The New Yorker from nearly the beginning of its publication. In 1928, there was no interest in the movies in The Passing Show. This came later. About fashion both magazines are of one mind with photos of gowns and day clothes as well as advice on how to be stylish.

It is a bit surprising how much a 1932 The Montrealer was like The Passing Show in 1928. Both had what we now consider an old-fashioned tone to them. The New Yorker, on the other hand, was losing this attitude of social snobbery and superiority. Its cover was of a group of mothers with baby carriages surrounded by tall brick walls, no sky or trees in sight. The Montrealer's was by Chapleau, signed Jeff, and illustrated a window dresser with a lady's hat on his head struggling to put clothes on a mannequin. The New Yorker published more and better cartoons. It had two short stories with modern themes of social change and shiftlessness; no short stories were in the 1932 The Montrealer. Also, The New Yorker's well-established interest in literature continued with book reviews and a list of suggested reading in a piece called “Also Out This Week.” Its “Paris Letter” about Louis Aragon was written by Jean Genet. Other departments of the magazine had longer pieces than they used to; “Profile” about Art Young, a humorist, was four pages long as was a piece in “Reporter at Large” on gambling. Robert Benchley wrote on American culture. The Montrealer is definitely interested in more mundane matters. There is, for example, an elaborate review of a favorite lunchtime restaurant frequented by members of the Montreal Stock Exchange. A bit of the general mood of the magazine is reflected in this comment about the financial situation:

The return of Morgan's dining room to the fifth floor...  
is looked upon by some Montrealers as an event  
heralding the return of prosperity. (9)

as well as by what was said about neighbors in Haddon Hall:

Primarily, your Haddon Hall neighbors will be ladies  
and gentlemen moving about in their own particular  
plane of existence, which is yours; much the same  
as yourself in likes, habits and pet aversions. (30)

"All Around Town" was about where people spent their weekends if they could not go to Bermuda or Florida. Photographs of Governor General and Countess Bessborough, movie stars (courtesy of public relations firms) as well as of debutantes and children of Westmount and Notre-Dame de Grâce are featured. A serious piece by Leslie Roberts was part of a series of six articles on investment in mining.

In 1942, Canada and the United States were at war. This influenced very much the content of The Montrealer and The New Yorker. The Montrealer's cover was not very attractive, a mix of photos and illustrations of the different departments of the magazine. Its format was 10" x 14". An editorial comment wondered "what the world will be like the day after the Armistice is signed"(5).

Leslie Roberts wrote that

Meighen and Chaloult, (were) the heavenly twins  
of Canadian destruction (and that) we do not appear  
to nurture any desire to enjoy the respect of our allies. (7)

These were fighting words that conveyed the wartime atmosphere prevalent in Montreal, and particularly in English Montreal. "Trends and Topics" is about the

plebiscite on conscription and how

we are probably the least qualified to pontificate on the recent rift between the English and French speaking citizens of Canada...arrogance and condescension by the (English) have also made their contribution and have bred in him (French) a feeling something akin to suspicion. (9)

“The Spectator” piece asked for more help towards the war effort. The society photos are of young men in military attire getting married to society girls and of McGill University’s Annual Convocation. Even the cartoons had a military theme. One by Chapleau showed a man, with his wife nearby, saying while getting his uniform from the warrant officer: “Muriel always chooses my suits.” Hotels, clothing stores and distilleries advertised. Many advertisements for different beers were in expensive color. Seagram advertised V.O. Canadian whiskey “By Appointment to His Excellency the Earl of Athlone, the Governor General of Canada.” An interesting little notice at the bottom of the ad read: “Please save the bottle! Canada needs glass! Save ale bottles. Your Salvage Committee will collect them,” demonstrating that the war effort was truly on all fronts. “Interior Decoration” was a new item as well as “Bride” and “Have you Heard?” about recently heard jokes. The tone of the magazine was becoming much less blueblood. The “Fashion” feature was also different because it featured, instead of European clothes, clothes with Quebec theme prints (flowers, animals, decorative elements) in colors with names such as “Voyageur Red,” “Portage Green” and “Maple Sugar.” A different attitude towards French Canada was the *mot d’ordre*. The meaning of

the reference to maple sugar became very much different from what it had been in 1928 in the recipe for a cocktail. Hand-in-hand with this more liberal tone was the appearance of a short story, "Guaranteed," written by what may have been a couple, Alma and Paul Ellerbe. The short story, only a page and really nothing spectacular, was published under the very modern and serious sounding heading "Fiction" and not something like "Fantasy" or "Writer's Corner." The heading gave the piece some importance and specificity in relation to the rest of the magazine.

In 1957, Steinberg's outstanding cartoons are an integral part of The New Yorker. Much more space is devoted to "Goings On", about what was happening around and in New York City. Interviews have a more narrative tone as does a piece on travel. The New Yorker does not want for advertisers who most likely pay top dollars for space in a nationally distributed magazine. Despite all this, the magazine's tone seems listless, as if it was "looking for itself".

David Hackett became the editor of The Montrealer in April 1957. That same year, the magazine looked like a much more vigorous product than The New Yorker. Its 48 pages sold for 25 cents. "The Month Ahead" listed theatre, music, art and sports events. There was also a listing of summer events such as the Stratford Festival and things happening in Toronto. Old collaborators were joined by new ones. The Montrealer had an editorial board which included people in London (Mordecai Richler) and Washington (James Minifie). The magazine also had a deal with an English magazine named Queen, owned by Lord Rothchild, to exchange articles once in a while (Webster). A journalist named John Stevenson



wrote about Senate reform in “The Unpopular Editorial.” David Hackett, in a discreet aside on page 3 listing the contents of the magazine, explained the idea behind a cartoon feature like this:

Now that definition of the essence of Canadianism has become an official obsession, we claim little originality for the idea of four pages on The Canadian Symbol; however, they provide a platform for our regular cartoonists and some newcomers to express their ideas on this country-ideas which, one entry apart, lean to derision and acknowledge a multiplicity of loyalties. (3)

The feature “The Passing Show” gave definitions, such as one of authors as “deep types, the review of whose books should be committed to memory: exit cocktail sausages”(14). Creativity was perhaps acceptable and maybe even admirable but not to be taken too seriously. He was equally sarcastic about European patrons of Canadian social events. This cocky attitude may be attributed to Canada’s reaction to being on the winning side of the war and, at the same time, being more independent from England. The American attitude demonstrated in The New Yorker is more like a hangover; everything about the magazine is tired, as if Americans reluctantly realized that their country was a world power and maybe even an imperialistic one. McDougall of The Montrealer also made fun of Montreal calling it “the Paris of America; recently saved from ruin at the hands of pinball machine operators” (14).

The New Yorker is getting back, in 1959, its tone of “gentle satire, subtle humour, of shrewd and witty comment on the passing scene” (Wood 246) with pieces like Peter De Vries’ “A Walk in the Country or How to Keep Fit to Be

Tied.” In 1959, The Montrealer’s editorial board has added Constance Beresford-Howe and Doreen Day as well as Sam Tata as its Photography Editor. David Hackett is a member of the board of directors as well as editor. “Highlights” has an interview with Miss Edgar who ran a blue-blood girls school and whose father was the Speaker of the House under Laurier, a conversation with Vincent Massey and something about radio and its new competitor, television. Leslie Roberts’ “Unpopular Editorial” is about Eisenhower and American policy in Europe, particularly Berlin and the Russians. He writes that his opinion “leaves your reporter in the class of Don Quixote, with his editor cast as Sancho Panza” (13). “The Passing Show” tells us about Louis Trudel who spoke about the “Professional French-Canadian” at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Public Relations Society in Toronto. There is also mention of the professional French-Canadian counterpart in English Canada, the man educated in Toronto and living in Montreal who is the perfect francophile and who

reads from the French language side of the menu ...  
when he is in Ontario he defends everything French  
Canadian to the edge of nationalism, gesticulating with  
his hands in the Latin manner. (15-6)

There is also something about the strike at CBC and two short stories, one by Mordecai Richler and the other by Vernon Hockley. Gerald Potterton has a cartoon in three parts about a cargo ship getting caught in the new Seaway. A cartoonist named Absens does small delicate cartoons with an edge such as the one of a man with a big book in front of him entitled Spinoza. His head faces the book but his

eyes are completely to the left watching a girl pass by. Peter Newman contributed a long piece on Sir William Van Horne.

A basic difference between The New Yorker and The Montrealer in the fifties and sixties is the way fiction was treated in each of them. The New Yorker, even though it often had classic short stories, also had a kind of fiction that was introduced little by little in its basic departments such as Travel, Medicine and Crime. They used the best writers available who then put their own spin on the pieces they wrote for a particular rubric of the magazine. The perfect example of this is Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood", first published in installments by The New Yorker. It was a "true crime" story as well as one about American society, but it was also a literary masterpiece because it was written by Capote and could not have been written by somebody else. This probably is the basic difference between a journalist and a writer. Any journalist can write about a particular subject but only the writer can produce what is in fact unique. The Montrealer never developed this attitude towards fiction, maybe because it did not have the financial means available to The New Yorker but also because it did not really do anything resembling investigative reporting as The New Yorker did. In this, The New Yorker was much more sophisticated and contributed to bringing about a new mode of fictional expression.

The editors of The Montrealer were more interested in fostering Canadian literary talent working in traditional genres and giving it a place to be published. In this particular issue in July 1957 there were two short stories, one by Mordecai

Richler and the other by Norman Ward, an essay by Hugh MacLennan and literary reviews by Constance Beresford-Howe. She was particularly interested in Canadian humour. Three other particularities of The Montrealer were its emphasis on quality photography, not really evident in The New Yorker, a continual interest in fashion, a subject practically abandoned by The New Yorker in the 1950's as well as the social events of Montreal's Old Guard (debutante and military balls, Trooping of the Colours and Black Watch parades).

As for 1962, The New Yorker's tone is less sarcastic and its cartoons are much tamer than in earlier years. There are two very long pieces taking up most of the magazine. The first is a ground-breaking investigative article on DDT, incorporating such subjects as leukemia, Hiroshima, Bantu tribes and food additives. At the time, this article caused quite a stir in business and government circles. The second long piece is titled "Letter from Coventry", a long musing about the aftermath of the war. There is also a continual interest in reviewing movies, this done by Brendan Gill, and of encouraging reading with a column titled "Books Briefly Noted."

Gerald Taaffe became editor of The Montrealer in May 1960 and continued in that role till December 1965. One of the 1962 issues of The Montrealer has an amusing colour cover by Gerald Potterton. The cartoons are less the type "silly girl or wife and older well-off gentleman" but more modern about, for example, a mother asking an intellectual-looking child, reading a book, if she and his father can watch television. An interview piece with photographs by Sam Tata is with a young

prima ballerina of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. There are short stories by Leo Simpson and Mordecai Richler as well as quite long book reviews by Edward McCourt and the editor, Gerald Taaffe. A “Man of Action” has an ink drawing by Normand Hudon. It is about a man of theatre, radio and television named Rupert Caplan. There is also a fashion spread with photographs taken around the CJAD radio studio and Canadian air force helicopters at the Cartierville Airport. A few years later, The Montrealer would sometimes have as many as three short stories. In 1962, The Montrealer shows signs of having less financial means for its production. This is apparent in the number of colors used in its printing as well as a lesser number of paid contributors to fill its pages with articles of interest to its readers.

In 1965, some editions of The New Yorker are more than 200 pages long. Many of its pieces are report and commentary about the national and international political situation. Its content shows a renewed interest in the world with “Letter from Washington,” “Letter from Vatican City,” and “The World We Live In.” There are also long short stories by Mary Laven and Gene Williams. That same year The Montrealer’s cover shows Mayor Jean Drapeau overflying the Eiffel Tower distributing leaflets on Expo ‘67. The contributing editorship has lost some members but has gained the well-known Norman Levine, the fashion guru Iona Monaghan and Ted Wood. It has also been able to keep the political commentator, James M. Minifie. There is a “Month Ahead in Montreal” as well as a “Month Ahead in Toronto.” Theatre and Music in Montreal covers Gilles Vigneault, the Moscow Music Hall and the Ballets Africains. The latter caused quite a scandal in

Montreal; there was a classic *descente* by the police morality squad because of the costumes worn by the dancers. Leslie Roberts complains about politicians' executive assistants interfering in the "Great Debate" (about Confederation) (9). "The Passing Show" comments about an American friend's bewilderment about the names of Quebec towns such as St-Adolf de Dudsville, St-Hyppolyte de Kilkenny, and, of course, St-Louis du Ha Ha. The editor writes a piece called "The Naked Seaway," "probably the biggest private film venture ever undertaken in Canada" (14). The issue also has a short story by Hugh Hood called "Educating Mary." "Books" reviews, among others, Jean-Paul Desbiens's Sous le Soleil de la Piété and Edward McCourt's The Road Across Canada. Different categories of records are also reviewed. In the Jazz category, Nick Ayoub's Quartet is singled out. There are also big advertisements for radio stations, CBC, CJFM and CKGM.

Under Hackett and Taaffe The Montrealer became a serious outlet for Canadian literary talent. Outlets for fiction in Canada were relatively few compared to the United States. It could be said that with Hackett and Taaffe The Montrealer assumed a serious place in the evolution of English-Canadian literature. A random sampling of the names of those published, like MacLennan, Richler and Beresford-Howe, attests to this fact.

The Montrealer ceased publication in January 1970. Its demise came after a period of gradual decline, beginning with the departure of Taaffe in 1965. After that there really was not any continuity because of editors being frequently replaced. No short stories were published and there were very few photographs. Towards the end

of its publication history, the magazine was being put out sporadically. Its owner, Joseph Wallace, did not put any money into it and wanted to sell it. He finally managed to sell its subscription list to Saturday Night.

## **Chapter 2**

### **David Hackett and Canadian Short Stories**



David Hackett was born in 1926 in Boston. He went to a private boys' school where he met his life-long friend, Robert Kennedy. He volunteered as a paratrooper during World War II. In correspondence between them at the time, Kennedy addressed him as "Mr. David (the Brain) Hackett" and "Mr. David the Draftdodger Hackett" (Schlesinger 992). After the war, he came to Canada to study at McGill and graduated as an English major in 1950. He also worked on a student humor magazine called The Floating Rib with friends John Fry and Lorne Webster. The latter would later become part owner of The Montrealer.

In 1957, David Hackett became the editor of The Montrealer. He left the magazine in 1959. Robert Kennedy had asked him to come to Washington to manage part of his brother John Kennedy's campaign for the American presidency, telling him that he remembered how good he was in English at school and that he could be in charge of all the candidate's political correspondence (207). When Robert Kennedy became Attorney General, David Hackett was a member of his inner circle. He contributed to the development of Kennedy's ideas concerning the War on Poverty, on racial discrimination and on juvenile delinquency. In 1968, he was in charge of the organizational centre, known as the "boiler room," in by then Senator Robert Kennedy's campaign for the Democratic nomination for the presidency of the United States. After Robert Kennedy's assassination, he was in charge for many years of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial. He is now director of a think-tank on social questions in Washington. His papers are in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston.

The interview with David Hackett about The Montrealer was conducted in Washington at his offices at the Youth Policy Institute on October 6, 1997. What follows is a summary of the interview (particular expressions used by Hackett are in quotations marks).

The editorial policy established for The Montrealer was that it had to be 100% Canadian. This was a point of “great pride,” particularly among the younger people working at the magazine. This new policy coincided with the new ownership of the magazine and represented a definite “shift from what the magazine was like before.” They were to concentrate on developing Canadian talent. In this, they were greatly influenced by Hugh MacLennan’s ideas about Canadian culture. Even as an American, Hackett had great sympathy for the idea of a Canadian cultural identity.

David Hackett had a very close relationship with Hugh MacLennan and had “great respect” for him. He often sought his advice. He also considered that “his writing was very good” and that, month after month, he “always produced something that was published.” He was what Hackett calls a “figure,” very well-known and widely respected. MacLennan was interested in everything and knew a lot of people in the United States, since he had studied there for many years.

David Hackett considered Montreal to be a unique and fascinating city where there was, at the time, a great, active and “fun” social life even though he was really too young to matter much to the socially prominent people he may have come across as editor of The Montrealer. He would have been more a member of what was

referred to as the “young set.” In Montreal, he lived downtown at the top of Mountain street. The Montrealer’s offices were then also downtown on Bishop street. The Montreal that counted was still Anglo Montreal and The Montrealer was a publication which reflected that fact. Later, many of his friends and colleagues left Montreal. The city was very civilized and it “would stop when someone was killed,” unlike many American cities. In other words, violence was rare. His friends spoke French but relations between English and French were not that well developed.

They took their jobs seriously and “did the best they could.” They wanted to compete against American magazines on all fronts because, among other reasons, the American magazines got a large share of Canadian advertisement money. It was very important to go “after the best we could find in Canada.” The magazine had a “small staff” and they “had to deliver”; it was “gratifying because we had to produce.” Hackett and his staff “had to do everything” though somebody did come in to help with the layout of the magazine because he wasn’t “very good at that.”

The diversity of the editor’s job was something which attracted Hackett. In his opinion, Canadian talent was “as good as anybody’s.” It was also important to be original. He took “creativity” as being essential in anything of interest. As in later life, Hackett’s way of working was to consult, coordinate and encourage expression. While at The Montrealer, he worked on setting up a network of Canadian freelancers able to show “Canadian talent in many aspects.” Mordecai Richler was a great example of this idea of encouraging “emerging talent.” Hackett did not think of

himself as a journalist; the way that he and others worked was just “very straight ahead.” When, during the interview, he was given a complete copy of an issue of the magazine as well as color copies of some of the covers when he was editor he said:

What is rather interesting is that, in hindsight,  
it was not bad at all.

From the interview, four themes or criteria for analysis of the short stories emerge: first, the role of Hugh MacLennan in influencing David Hackett as editor; secondly, the setting-up of a wide-ranging network of Canadian talent; thirdly, an example of the promotion of emerging Canadian talent, Mordecai Richler; and last and most importantly, the great importance of Canadian identity and culture.

Promoting what was Canadian was foremost in Hackett’s understanding of what it meant to edit The Montrealer. All the published writers of short stories were, of course, Canadian. A few were published in The Montrealer before Hackett’s editorship: Mordecai Richler and Margerie Scott in 1956. Quite a few kept on appearing in the magazine after David Hackett’s departure: Norman Levine, Hugh MacLennan, Joyce Marshall, Mordecai Richler, and Norman Ward. Being Canadian can be expressed in a variety of ways; it can simply be a matter of place, of awareness of climate, of historical context but also a

matter of consciousness: social and cultural determinants  
of a specifically Canadian kind... (Regan 108)

We should also keep in mind that:

The impression that the short story has something  
of the indefinite and infinitely variable nature of a

cloud is one which sooner or later must be forced on anyone who not only reads, but attempts to break down analytically, the work of writers differing so vastly... (Bates 75)

In her introduction to Hugh MacLennan's last book of essays published in 1978, The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan: Selected Essays Old and New, Elspeth Cameron wrote that:

When Edmund Wilson first encountered Hugh MacLennan's essays in Scotchman's Return (1960) he was astonished to discover "a point of view surprisingly and agreeably different from anything else I knew in English." There was, the essays revealed to him, "a Canadian way of looking at things." (IX)

The essays which reflected this particular Canadian point of view, were mainly published in The Montrealer between 1954 and 1960. That is to say that 26 of a total of 29 essays published in Scotchman's Return were originally in The Montrealer. Of MacLennan's four books of essays, the only one without The Montrealer essays is the first one, Cross-Country, published in 1949. This is not very surprising since MacLennan himself wrote in the preface of Thirty & Three, his second book of essays, that he started publishing essays in The Montrealer in 1951 (viii). He said that he tried out his temperament on the short essay and "found it fitted my needs and pleasures very well" (viii). He was also asked to write about "whatever I choose to talk about" (viii). This must have been perfect for a man with such a wide range of interests. MacLennan's third collection of essays was Scotchman's Return and Other Essays and his last one was of course The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan.

MacLennan's essay subjects in Scotchman's Return were varied but some of them were most likely of particular interest to David Hackett, like the ones examining American culture or Canadian culture. In "Rebels Against the American Dream," MacLennan felt that Americans are at their best when they are lucid and truthful enough to deny the legitimacy of what is called the American Dream:

Never is the American greater, never more  
lovable or worthy, than when he gives a  
good swift kick to the American Dream. (30)

MacLennan disapproves of the cupidity and the materialism of an out-of-control American capitalism. He also points out that many of the American great literary men — such as Whitman, Melville and Hemingway — were very much against American culture as "puritan theocracy" (31) or as vulgar "opinion-industry" (31) tyranny of the lowest common denominator and that

the hell with it is the theme of nearly all the  
famous American literature of the twentieth  
century. (32)

MacLennan calls Eisenhower platitudes, Nixon smiles, and false American novels and movies "one big hunk of baloney" (31), repeating what an American, met on a trip to the Lower Mackenzie River, said about the United States. The American "had as much of 'it' as he could take" (31). The American Dream in the late fifties was propelled by conformist middle-class values and was, in a certain way, the antithesis of the Robert Kennedy vision of a just America. MacLennan admires one movie, *Edge of the City*, which he says is very different from most Hollywood productions

and

deals profoundly and elementally with three themes Hollywood almost never touches without lying about them — love, violence and the spirit of Jesus Christ. (33)

The main character of *Edge of the City* is demoralized by not doing something spectacular with his life and being a failure in general. He is befriended by an educated black man who works with him. This black man with a Christ-like quality about him sacrifices himself and dies for his friend. The violence of his death is dealt with in an honest way; violence is not glamorized and only the “wicked” (36) get any pleasure out of it.

“Boy Meets Girl in Winnipeg and Who Cares?” is about the difficulties of being a writer in and from Canada, as well as about American cultural imperialism. The main advantage of being a writer is attractive — freedom. MacLennan says that the only person you have to cooperate with is the “occasional editor” (113). The price to pay is unfortunately a “total lack of security” (113). Even if a writer is willing to gamble with his life, “in Canada the gamble doesn’t work at all” (114). Selling 10,000 copies of a novel is considered a bestseller by Canadian standards. The royalties are not enough for a family to live on for the years it took to write the novel in the first place. To write, MacLennan feels that the necessary frame of mind is “to hell with figures, I say, while genius pretends to burn” (115).

It takes a very self-assured writer to expose the financial constraints placed on him if he does write. It does not diminish him to be seen weighing these practical

considerations. MacLennan then compares the Canadian market with the American one. The latter is of course much bigger than the former. He even noticed that American reviewers, to no avail, have encouraged their countrymen to read Canadian fiction. As in many MacLennan essays, he ties his basic premise to an amusing anecdote and to a bit of wild imaginings. When an American producer was interested in turning one of his novels into a movie, he went to meet him in New York. On arrival, he is told that the deal is off, the producer saying:

“It’s like this... This book of yours, it’s about this town Halifax and who’s ever heard of Halifax down here except as a word nicely brought-up kids say when what really they mean is hell? ‘Go to Halifax’ is what nicely brought-up kids down here say.” (116)

It would be a viable project if they could work a “switcheroo” (116) so the story’s location would be somewhere else, such as Paris or London or “mix up the English and Americans in the same package...(and) try to work Lincoln into the story somehow” (119). MacLennan then devises a surreal scenario for a novel that would cater to American taste. He concludes by suggesting that the newly established Canada Council could pay him not to publish such a novel, just as John Cleland was given a life pension not to have any more copies of his Fanny Hill printed in the eighteenth century.

The essay “Literature in a New Country” attempts to answer the question of the exact nature of a Canadian literature. MacLennan enunciates a principal applicable to a national literature:



A colonial literature can at best be but a pale reflection of the mother-literature, without authority of any sort, until the colony has matured, and the history of American literature is the best possible example of how this law operates. (139)

His reference literature is American literature. He thinks of its history in terms of having been colonial. It is probably interesting to him that both American and Canadian literature have the same “mother-literature,” that of Great Britain. In his opinion, Canadian literature truly became a national literature around 1940. Canadian writers were mature enough to produce a literature of their own but were handicapped by being located in a milieu where

the great themes which engaged everyone’s attention could not be handled here with the same authority as elsewhere. (140)

The situation for him changed around 1940 because

there are many evidences that the Canadian scene at the moment can provide themes as significant to old countries in Europe, and to the United States, as can be found anywhere. (141)

Hugh MacLennan is really the champion of Canadian autonomy. This is probably hard for us to understand since we did not live in Canada when it was a quasi-colony as it was when MacLennan came to maturity. Not everybody would now necessarily agree with Hugh MacLennan that, for example, to produce Canadian literature one has to be a native son or daughter because

the work of writing *émigrés* always lacks the drive and compulsion of genuine native work (140).

This seems to exclude the work of immigrant writers to Canada; it also seems a bit self-serving. With MacLennan it is extremely important to always remember the context in which he wrote. What we have to keep in mind is that it was imperative for him to contribute to making a place for Canadian literature on the world scene. Sometimes, while doing this, he got a bit carried away.

A last thing that should be mentioned is that in Hugh MacLennan: A Writer's Life, his biographer, Elspeth Cameron, writes that MacLennan saw in 1960-61 "two of the Canadian magazines in which he has published extensively, the Montrealer and Mayfair, fold in the face of American competition" (311). In reality, The Montrealer did not fold at all and MacLennan continued to be on its editorial board throughout most of the 1960's, up till October 1968. He did not write many essays for The Montrealer in the last two years of David Hackett's editorship. It is clear, however, from the interview with Hackett, that Hugh MacLennan played a very important role for some years in influencing the Canadian literary orientation of The Montrealer. He was an advisor, an inspiration and a contributor to this periodical.

The network of Canadian talent covered a diverse range of types of talents — such as photography, cartooning, writing — as well as a diversity of individuals representing these talents. As for the writing, a good number of women fiction writers were represented in the magazine. Some were, at that time, young writers such as Mavis Gallant and Joyce Marshall. Marshall continued writing of course but also made a reputation as a translator of Gabrielle Roy's work. Ethel Wilson was a more

established writer in the fifties. Margerie Scott must have been a certain age as well when she was published in The Montrealer because she had been writing, in the thirties and forties, for a Montreal publication called The Family Herald. There was a strong connection to Montreal amongst the writers and, in some cases, to McGill. The writers definitely born in Montreal were Mavis Gallant, Joyce Marshall and Mordecai Richler. Some others with Montreal connections, such as Norman Ward, Norman Levine and John Waterhouse, studied at McGill and, of course, Hugh MacLennan was a professor of English Literature there. Some became expatriates from Canada, like Gallant, Richler and Levine, and others were immigrants to Canada — Wilson and Waterhouse. Most were Protestant but some were Jewish (Levine and Richler), and at least one was most likely Catholic, the Newfoundlander, Brian Cahill. Unfortunately, Vernon Hockley and Dexter Hubbard have not been identified but their short stories are available. These writers have many things in common but they also represent a diversity. As Michael Benazon writes in the introduction of Montréal Mon Amour: Short Stories from Montreal:

Canadian short stories are not written to a formula. The authors have very different formations, come from different backgrounds and experiences, and are influenced by a wide variety of other writers, many of whom are foreign. (xvii)

A perfect example of the nurturing of Canadian talent was Mordecai Richler. He was first published in The Montrealer in 1953 at the age of 22. Hugh MacLennan may have played some kind of role in helping the young Jewish Montrealer to be

published, being the person with the most literary background connected to the magazine when it still belonged to Alvah Beatty. Still in his twenties, Richler became a contributing editor to the magazine when David Hackett was the editor. Richler was based in London. This gave the magazine a certain panache and probably did not hurt Richler professionally either. Part of the encouragement Hackett gave the young writer was to feature more of his work than that of any other writer. Seven of his pieces were published between 1957 and 1959. When the magazine was changing hands, Richler was not as interested in continuing his professional relationship with The Montrealer. He finally relented and continued contributing to the magazine. Two more of his short stories were published, one in June 1961 and the other in June 1962. Of the short stories published when David Hackett was editor, four of them could not be found even after consulting Robert Weaver. They are: "Job Hunting" (April 1957), "The Secret of the Kugel" (October 1957), [ sic "The Ballon" ] (May 1958) and "You Wouldn't Talk Like That If You Were Dead" (December 1958). These short stories are all enumerated in Weiss' A Comprehensive Bibliography of English-Canadian Short Stories.

Mordecai Richler's contribution to Canadian literature was and is to

dramatize the dilemmas of various kinds of dispossessed or ghettoized individuals: the Jew, the artist/intellectual, the expatriate, the hero *manqué*, the political and cultural victim, and his half-dozen or so books of essays convincingly expose and analyze what he sees as the major forces of hypocrisy and dishonesty in the world. (Ramraj V)

This statement is demonstrated by three pieces in The Montrealer. The first one, “Home is Where You Hang Yourself,” is actually an essay. The second “The Cure for the Novel” resembles an essay in its content but comes under the heading “A Short Story” in the magazine. The last one, “Griffin, Shalinsky, and How They Settled the Jewish Question” is complete fiction.

In “Home Is Where You Hang Yourself,” Mordecai Richler writes about the touchy subject of the expatriation of Canadian writers. He parallels observations made by Norman Levine, in his short story “The Dilettantes,” about being a young Canadian writer in London when he writes that

most of us “colonials” move on the periphery of the city. We meet with other Canadians, West Indians, South Africans, Australians and Americans, but we don’t go native. We’ve brought our wives, electric razors, and manuscripts with us (26)

It is a difficult position to be in, leaving Canada behind because it lacks enough opportunities for the writer. On the other hand, he finds himself marginalized in a different way in England. There he associates with other people from Canada and finds himself representing and defending, despite himself, Canadian values. In this essay, Richler actually enumerates many Canadian artists doing quite well in England as writers, poets, directors, and actors; amongst them are Norman Levine, the writer and poet, Silvio Narizzano, the director, and Barbara Kelly, the actress. He is also honest enough to tell his readers that “Coming to England...implies stamina and more than mild ambition” (28) and that to stay in Canada means to have to

demand \$150 from the local Elks or “Y” to address them on “CANADA: Land of Cultural Contrasts.” (29)

This may seem a bit harsh but it should be considered a metaphor for the difficulty of earning a living as a writer in Canada.

“The Cure for the Novel” is a short piece about the fact that Richler considers that the novel may be “blissfully adrift in a pre-American Age backwater,” (18) a bit stagnant. Reviewers of Canadian literature all seem to him to be looking for points of comparison between the work of British and American well-known writers and Canadian fiction. They bring up elements of comparison like “Mr. Greene’s sense of sin” or “F. Scott Fitzgerald’s sense of time and place” (18). Since Canadian writers don’t seem to be able to be judged on their own merits, he suggests a somewhat far-fetched remedy:

Instead of throwing out everything that has been discarded for the final drafts of their novels, writers like Graham Greene, Saroyan, and Faulkner would be able to pick up extra beer money by shipping the redundancies to the Writer’s Blood-Bank at an agreed word-rate. (18)

He sees this bank as the only way Canadian writers can make any headway on the international market. They would have to cannibalize well-established British and American writers. Even as a satire, this says a lot about the lack of recognition Canadian writers had to work against to get their work acknowledged.

The setting for “Griffin, Shalinsky, and How They Settled the Jewish Question” is the quintessential Richler St-Urbain Street where the Shalinsky of the

title lives. It is about identity and more particularly Jewish identity. The main character, Griffin, is a young lecturer in English literature at the fictional Wellington College. His evening classes attract mostly adults. Shalinsky is a “ponderous presence” that Griffin only notices during his fourth lecture. Richler’s portrait of the Jewish intellectual is not very flattering but has an authentic ring to it. Describing Shalinsky, he writes:

His wisps of grey hair uncut and uncombed,  
Shalinsky was a small, round-shouldered man  
with horn-rimmed spectacles, baleful black  
eyes, and a hanging lower lip. His shiny, pin-striped  
grey suit was salted with dandruff round his  
shoulders. A hand-rolled cigarette drooped  
from his mouth, his eyes half-shut against the  
smoke and the ashes spilling unregarded to his vest. (17)

It is worth noting that Mordecai Richler has himself come to look like the description of his character, Shalinsky. The whole saga between Griffin and Shalinsky begins with the question: “Why did you change your name?” (17) From that point on, Griffin has to think about who he is and where he is from. Shalinsky has no doubt about his own identity, publishing practically single-handedly a magazine called Jewish Thought. The fictional names of the articles in Jewish Thought are amusing but also quite acute:

“On Being Jewish in Montreal West,” “The Anti-Semite as an Intellectual: A Study of the Novels of Graham Greene,” and “Stephan Zweig and J. Shalinsky: A Previously Unpublished Correspondence” (19). Griffin, on the other hand, vacillates. He is never sure if some ancestor of his changed the family name from a Jewish one to a more Gentile-sounding one. He is a bit caught in the dilemma of the second-generation

Canadian who does not understand what his background is. Since Shalinsky is sure that he is Jewish, this becomes enough for Griffin who then becomes Jewish, a bit in spite of himself. Shalinsky being sure is enough for him. Shalinsky may very well be right but he may also be wrong; *qu'importe* he knows who he is and who somebody else is. This story eerily foreshadows a powerful movie of the 1970's, Monsieur Klein, starring Alain Delon.

Now we will take a look at the other writers in The Montrealer and how they represent a uniquely Canadian perspective. Pacey's comment that

The development of a satirical attitude toward Canadian society is one of the chief signs that the country is gradually taking shape. (233)

could have been written with Brian Cahill in mind. Cahill has three short stories in The Montrealer: "The Romance of the Beekeeper," "My Cousin Ned and the Canadian Ethos," and "Righting a Great Wrong." Unfortunately, there is no trace of "The Romance of the Beekeeper." His first-person narrator may be amused by the story he tells in "My Cousin Ned and the Canadian Ethos" but he also participates in it since he is after all talking about a member of his family, his cousin Ned. He writes about a "duty to Canada and the social sciences, in that order" (24) to make known "the life and legend" (24) of his cousin, a member of "the Newfoundland Range Force" (24). He wonders why Canadians always have to take examples of the "incorruptible frontiersman" (24) from American folklore when we actually have our own heroes right here in Newfoundland, and by extension in Canada. Cahill gently



mocks a certain stolid Canadian character trait, writing that the way of doing things in Newfoundland before it joined the Confederation:

may also touch a responsive cord in the breast  
of other Canadians who are not, I like to think,  
quite as dour and hide-bound as they are usually  
portrayed. (24)

The circumstances leading to this particular expression of “Canadian ethos” are quite low-key. A cow, one of two in a small fishing village, has been given to a girl’s family in compensation for her becoming pregnant by an unmarriageable 14 year-old boy. Only after the cow’s slaughter and consumption does everybody in the short story realize that the girl, aptly named Prudence, has “either fibbed or made a serious error concerning her condition” (25). As is still the custom in remote areas of the country, a peace officer, in this case Cousin Ned, travels to the small fishing village to dispense justice. There his hero has to deal with the Newfoundland temperament:

as may be gathered from recent events in the news,  
Newfoundlanders, when roused, are prone to violent  
action. (25)

This refers to the riots that happened to protest Newfoundland joining Canada. From a Canadian point of view, nation-building does not always have to be taken as seriously as in other countries; there is even a light touch on the subject of political violence itself. In a very tense atmosphere, Ned is asked for a solution to the aforementioned dispute. Cousin Ned responds to the tense atmosphere like a Newfoundlander Solomon, asking those assembled to see justice done: “What do you say we let the boy have another chance?” (25). Everybody then dissolved into

laughter; the whole scene is truly “an elucidation of the Canadian ethos” (25). Cahill also involves another national institution in his story telling his readers that the whole episode may be “of interest to CBC-TV” (25).

Brian Cahill’s second story “Righting a Great Wrong” is written in the same spirit as the previous one. Again his narrator is in the position of laughing at those close to him, as well as being part of them. By doing this, he expresses a national attitude of not putting anybody too much above anybody else. This also speaks to the Canadian idea of fair play. This short story is about a cousin who operates a hotel in a remote Newfoundland village. Montreal’s Queen Elizabeth Hotel is the point of reference for

the imaginative kind of swank that would have appealed to my Cousin Roselind who ran the Magnificent Hotel in the little town of Plasencia in Newfoundland before and during the Second Great War. (19)

The swank imported from Montreal turns out to be ridiculous wording for signs — *Thrust* and *Draw To* — on the doors leading to the main bar of the newly-built Queen Elizabeth. This reference deflates Montreal pretensions as well as puts emphasis on Cousin Roselind’s foolishness. She actually goes a step further in pretension when she has the same signs put up at her hotel, thinking of them as a clever inside joke:

As in the case of “Thrust” and “Draw To” the signs were not so much to impress the multitude as subtly to flatter the more intelligent of the customers by giving the impression that they were in on a private joke with management sophisticated enough to spoof its own pretensions. (20)

Other sign ideas imported from Montreal for the remote hotel read *Salle a Manger* (no accent) and *Le Petit Salon*. These signs in general “caused a certain amount of sniggering among the local bumpkins” (20). In many ways, all Canadians are those “local bumpkins,” as Leacock humorously intimated. We often laugh at the pompous. We may now have a different reaction to certain signs but the wording of signs still preoccupies us.

At the end of the story there is another occurrence involving signs on doors and something quite Canadian. Cousin Roselind’s hotel was greatly expanded during the War to greet thousands of American sailors. Sometimes these expansions seem to have a life of their own and get a little ahead of themselves. When a young couple walked up to

two spanking-new doors...marked “Ladies” and “Gentlemen” in the conventional manner. Each pushed through the appropriate door and within five paces met again under a large pine tree swaying in the cool night air outside the building. (20)

This reminds us that Canada is still a wide-open country where nature is an important element; the young couple walk from a frenzy of construction to the serenity of the forest. It also satirizes Canadian pretensions, since swank-looking signs, ostensibly leading to modern restrooms, actually lead only to the outdoors.

The title of Vernon Hockley’s “The Iron Mikado” refers to a locomotive of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. A specific time in Canadian history frames Hockley’s short story, the Great Depression. His narrator is Harry,

never cut out in the first place to be a hobo...  
 carried a toothbrush and studied Technocracy,  
 but nothing seemed to help. (20)

He and his friend drift working day-to-day picking fruit and living where they can.

The story does not specify exactly where they are but they probably are in the Niagara

Penninsula. Just like in other places in Canada, the summer is short:

We came home one afternoon in a high rain. The  
 peaches were over, and the summer too, and the  
 gray sky gave a man a kind of feeling. (20)

That feeling is shared by most of us when we realize that our inevitable Canadian winter is on the way. This is the shared experience alluded to in Hockley's narrative: we never know in advance what weather event, insignificant in itself, will make us all understand that the forgotten winter will be coming again, as it does each year.

In the narrative, a companion met by chance tells them: "You know what I am?...I'm a frigging Red, that's what I am" (21). Harry cynically says about this Indian hobo that he is "rich in remembrance" (21) because he asks, as a favor, to stay overnight and tells them that he will "remember it all his life" (21) if they agree. This is a subtle reminder of a long history of Indian grievances not being taken too seriously by Canadian society as a whole. After the night's sleep, Harry has to track down the Indian suspected of having stolen their "dream money" (21). It is decided that the Indian must be guilty because he left before breakfast. He also is said to be "too stupid to go anywhere else" (21) but to try to jump the next train going West towards warmer British Columbia.

The process of finding the Indian is an occasion for Hockley to express a pride in and a knowledge of the Canadian railroad which was essentially built to unite the country coast to coast. He speaks about a “No. 12 pride of the Canadian Pacific...the Kettle Valley Express...quiet with grease and gravitation” (22). Harry understands the train and how it operates:

The wheels of the tender pounded, the baggage car behind shrieked and rocked and fought the coupling...(he) knew that the engine had whistled three times...meant that the train would stop at the siding. (23)

In this short story, even a transient can share in the knowledge of the product of impressive Canadian engineering and determination.

The subject of Dexter Hubbard’s short story “Discrimination” is one that became a central preoccupation of David Hackett’s life. The same thing could be said of some of the subjects of “The Iron Mikado”: racism, unemployment and poverty. The main character, a young black man, is the classic modern chip-on-the-shoulder anti-hero, suffering from anxiety and thinking self-defeating thoughts like: “except for the colour of my skin I’m exactly the same as you!” (19) This story could also be American. The action starts when the young man helps a girl having trouble with some rough young men on the street. When he realizes that she’s white, he lets “the protective cocoon of aloofness” (19) protect him until he sees that she was not going to reject him. The description of where she lives could be an area of every big city in the world as well as of Canada:

Her boarding house was a large, gray, two-story frame building in a part of the city in which it had once been fashionable to live, but which was now a sort of no man's land between a sugar refinery and the slums. (20)

This description is vaguely familiar, making us think of Montreal's Redpath factory and parts of Shaughnessy Village before yuppies discovered it in the 1970's. Once the girl is safely home in her rooming house, a drunk living there laughs at him calling the girl and him "a breed and a blackie" (21). He understands all of a sudden that the girl is an Indian or at least part-Indian. He sadly lets her phone number fall from his pocket, not really wanting to have anything to do with her now that he knows she's not a white girl. This story has an ironic twist: the young black man so concerned about discrimination against himself does not hesitate to discriminate against a member of another minority. Canada is a nation of minorities, and Hubbard's short story looks ironically at a Canadian attitude which is completely illogical.

"The Dilettantes" by Norman Levine features a young Canadian writer and his family looking for an apartment in London. In the meanwhile, they are staying at a writer friend's house in Kensington (is this friend Mordecai Richler?). This short story is about the fringe players of the literary scene as well as the relationship between the colonies and Britain. A man, named Obodiak, and his wife Molly are supposed to help them with their housing problem. Obodiak always makes a big show of calling an acquaintance for them, saying for example:

Now, Tony, I've got a well-known Canadian dramatist (he mumbled my name) and his very

charming wife, an Irish painter. (149)

The only problem is that his wife is not Irish, nor does she paint, and the young writer does not write plays. Obodiak flatters him somewhat but also strings him along getting him to buy things, to do free translations, to have time-wasting endless conversations and to invite his own writer friends to parties. The dilettante of the title always has a new address for them to try and a question such as “what did they think of Kierkegaard?” After quite some time, the young Canadian realizes that the parties where

all sorts of people are coming and going...Graham Greene, Stephen Spender, Auden, Isherwood, Edith Sitwell...(154) was always talk...(Obodiak's) business was to introduce visiting writers to literary London. The visitor was being cheated, but at the time he didn't know. In any case, he had little to complain of. They were... Canadians, Australians, South Africans, who had some money and who had come over with the manuscript of a novel or a book of poems. (155)

Obodiak acts as the intermediary, or the agent, facilitating an essentially unfair relationship between the naive person coming from the colony and the cultural establishment of the colonial power which nearly has no interest in him except to exploit him.

“The Cocks Are Crowing” also by Norman Levine has a very Canadian setting:

on the banks of the Richelieu River south of Montreal...and about six miles north of the American border...two miles away is the French Canadian village of Ile aux Noix. (27)

The short story's main theme is the decline of WASP ascendancy and the gracious lifestyle that went with it -- a tone reminiscent of Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited. The first person narrator is an adolescent who remembers that, in Canadian history class, everybody learned that the "Pierces came from Devon at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century" (27). Thinking about Pierce, he muses about families being a bit like humans in the sense that they too have a "zenith to their lives" (27) and then decline.

After a chance meeting when the adolescent was caught in a thunderstorm, Pierce takes him under his wing and enjoys teaching him what he considers a civilized young man should know: literature, manners, aesthetic sense and some sports. About an enormous fireplace in his family manse, Pierce says in a subdued tone as if it really had no importance anymore:

My great-grandfather built it from pebbles in the cove...thousands of small round bluish-green stones were set in the cement. (29)

Pierce's ancestors had the vigor needed to build financial empires; he does not care and sees it all as vain and futile. His inherited wealth is a given that does not interest him. Despite seeming romantic, this attitude is actually quite decadent. It could also be said to represent Anglo decline in Montreal.

The boy goes to McGill and later comes back to visit. At first he is reassured because Montreal itself looks the same "along the parts of Sherbrooke Street that I knew or walking along St-Catherine" (31). He will eventually realize that something about Montreal society has indeed changed when he visits Pierce. His old friend is ill



and bullied by two immigrant servants, a Hungarian chauffeur and a German maid. It is interesting that Levine decided to have the two people, tormenting the elderly gentleman, come from countries with a Nazi past. Pierce does not resist the bad treatment he is subjected to because again he is just not really interested. Pierce's attitude is resigned just as it was when he was younger -- the weight of fate. The narrator catches the Hungarian "holding his hand lifeless up in front of his chest in a cruel parody of Pierce" (32). He also notices that

The room hadn't changed. Except that his portrait was added to the others on the wall. It was painted the way I remember him. (32)

With his portrait on the wall with the other Pierces he has symbolically become part of an inevitable trend in history, taking his place among the English-Canadian elite that built Montreal then somewhat declined and largely disappeared.

As seen earlier, Hugh MacLennan's contributions to the magazine were mostly essays and editorials. "My Last Colonel" is the only short story that he wrote for the magazine. It has the heading "A Short Story" to distinguish it from MacLennan's essays, though it is reprinted in one of his books of essays. It has quite an autobiographical tone since it concerns an athletic young Canadian studying in England on what may be a scholarship. MacLennan's story also has literary references as well as a reference to his own "Celtic soul" (26). The setting is England but the story is truly a Canadian one. The colonel is everything you would imagine a villainous colonel to be: a drunk, a liar, a snob and a colonialist through and through.

The narrator begins his story by telling us one of those truths that usually occur to perceptive people such as MacLennan:

The chief difference between England and (our) continent is that in England you can still discover things. (26)

This is possible because for the writer the English have the grace not to bother explaining England to strangers. Canada, on the contrary, is explained because it is a country that is open to strangers who come to visit but also come permanently. The young Canadian is invited to a tennis tournament in Cheltenham where, his English companion tells him, “colonels go to die” (26). The colonel of the title of the story, Hemsley-Bullcock, applauds his tennis playing. He mocks the young man’s opponent on the court, the major, commenting that in the old days “not even the Australians acted like that around a tennis court” (26). The colonel goes on to say that the tennis-playing major is nothing but a “bounder” (26) who is “not received” (26). The word “received” is the same one used by Hackett about MacLennan’s writing and shows a kind of sympathetic and old-fashioned idea of what is acceptable and what is not. If something or somebody is “received,” it is because everybody agrees on his, her or its value. The use of this particular word speaks of shared values and of a rejection of relativism.

The colonel then invites the young Canadian for a drink and, making polite conversation, goes on to be very insulting in a way people don’t usually notice at first saying:

You're from Ireland, of course, charming voice,  
you Irishmen all have...Wretched business that  
Black-and-Tan affair. (27)

When the colonel is told that the narrator is Canadian and not Irish he is terribly surprised and

broke into fluent French, and seemed astonished  
when I told him I was hopelessly bad at the  
language. (27)

He went on saying loudly how great the French are and particularly French-Canadians because they “stayed loyal...the French all adore a king, of course” (27). In the colonel’s mind, if you are not English, you might as well be French-Canadian, Irish or Australian. It really didn’t matter what you were since you were not English. After drinking all night with the colonel, the narrator finds out, from the major, about the high-living colonel, “in Rangoon it was plain Bullock, he was not received.” (28). By making the colonel an imposter despite his having “a straight back, a red face, a waxed pepper-and-salt moustache ...(and) tweeds” (26) MacLennan reduces colonial arrogance to the staged, the deceitful and finally to the laughable. He also signals that Canadians do not have to take this attitude seriously anymore.

The short story “In the Midst of Life” by Joyce Marshall conveys the lifestyle of the heartland of Canada in the 1940’s and 1950’s, a small Ontario Presbyterian town. Marshall gives us a glimpse of the oppression but also the orderliness and moral rectitude of that social environment:

After supper, her mother washed the dishes  
and Cynthia dried them, as she always did. (20)

The story revolves around the funeral of a very young girl. She was the same age as the main character, Cynthia, who actually did not really like the dead girl while she was living. Her father considered that he did not have to attend since consoling “is woman’s work” (21). The piano teacher, Miss Sloan, who accompanied Cynthia and her mother, says piously:

it’s my duty to go...we must forget our own  
little selfish feelings. (21)

Cynthia’s mother outdoes her because she:

believed you should do these things silently,  
with a sharp sense of duty suitably done, and  
not chattily, in Miss Sloan’s way. (21)

Another interesting element of Marshall’s narrative is her use of the very modern device of conveying atmosphere by describing bits of colour and related objects:

the flowers were white and already soiled along  
the edges...the box...spilled over with flowers so  
that the shape within seemed to float along a  
heavy pink and crimson lake...the air seemed to  
be swimming pinkly around her...the shape ...  
was yellowish, Cynthia saw, and had a high pinched  
face. Two hands, each finger set in a grim careful  
curve, met across a pink silk dress. (21-3)

Colour here conveys the dead and, in a certain way, the forbidden and mysterious; it also only seems to be noticed to convey a certain grimness of life.

Joyce Marshall’s second story is a bit more cynical as the main action moves to the city, or more precisely to the road to the city. A spoiled girl from Rosedale leaves a summer job in a camp to hitchhike a ride back home from a traveling

salesman. She takes over the driving when the man becomes too tired. The railroad plays a role in this story, as it did in “The Iron Mikado,” since the girl is on the lookout for a train station in order to be able to send a telegram to the camp explaining her early departure. She actually pretends that her parents are ill, an excuse she thinks of as always being convenient. Social differences exist here as well as any other place; this is illustrated by the girl asking the traveling salesman a thoughtless question: “Do you — travel around selling things?” (6) After awhile, the situation degenerates when the man puts his hand on the girl’s knee saying:

You angled for this, am I right?...Wanting and  
not wanting. On my beat I run into lots of girls  
like you. Small town girls without your advantages. (8)

She finally gets rid of him by giving him a false name and leaving him to look

through all the Martins in the phone book, trying to  
find one who lived on this street (8).

Norman Ward had four short stories published in the Hackett years: “The Changing of the Fossils on Parliament Hill,” “The Three Day Week,” “The Seasoned Cemetery Man,” and “The Fewer the Higher.” Only the first one is no longer available. “The Three Day Week” is subtitled “A Lament.” The narrator is a professor at a Canadian university up against the unshakable logic of a blue-collar worker. In a certain way, it is also about what it means to be civilized in a young and growing country. It’s the clash between the urban and the rural, intellectual education and practical education, and the tax-paid and the tax payer. When the worker sees the professor in his backyard sitting under a tree, he thinks that the other man is probably

taking a day off. For the blue-collar worker, thinking about the content of an article is the same thing as “loafing” (24). The worker is also very proud of the fact that “the customer is paying for every minute” (25) of his time even if he’s not actually doing anything. After a very futile conversation the professor

settled back to woo the muse; but she had fled.  
Besides, the sun had gone behind a cloud, and  
the air had turned suddenly chilly. (25)

This is a very Canadian ending to a story, the temperature suddenly getting quite cold.

“The Seasoned Cemetery Salesman” is subtitled “A Bit of Canadiana” and is published in the same issue as Richler’s “Home Is Where You Hang Yourself.” It is only a magazine page long. To the sales pitch of the cemetery salesman who got his name from a “reputable citizen” (31), the narrator counters with “clause 48 of Chapter VIII of the Statutes of Canada for 1867” (31) and an equally silly federal governmental department which he calls “the office of Worm Tail Inspector and Safe Approver” (31). A bizarre conversation ensues, a bit like some dialogue that we imagine civil servants have with one another. Another short piece is “The Fewer the Higher,” subtitled “A Field Note on Fecundity Among Politicians.” In it Ward says that he has definitely noticed that

in this country we have gone in heavily for  
politicians whose comprehension of their  
fellow men has been unimpeded by the raising  
of large families of their own. (22)

The piece is a kind of history of Canada seen from the particular vantage point of the number of children respective Prime Ministers or Leaders of the Opposition had. He

wonders about the Canadian tendency to give

the laurel to men who, whatever their acumen  
in public matters, have been unconvincing  
performers on the home front. (23)

Ward's story tells us that Canada's first Prime Minister, Macdonald, only had one daughter but Laurier, Mackenzie King, Borden and Diefenbaker were childless. When St-Laurent, with five children, was elected Canadians broke their pattern but they then went right back to it when they later elected Diefenbaker. Ward's short satire shows us a Canadian with a sophisticated knowledge of the history of his country as well as one of our important political institutions with a tradition of its own, the federal Parliament. Without this kind of knowledge, it would be impossible to conceive of such a farcical twist to the interpretation of part of our history.

The next two stories are by Ethel Wilson. The first one, "My Father's Teacher" is an autobiographical piece about Paul Verlaine having been a schoolmaster in her father's village. This short story has an interesting little introduction most likely written by David Hackett: "A charming sidelight on the famous French poet, Paul Verlaine" (27). The narrator is a young immigrant to Canada where she becomes a well-known writer. She lost her mother when she was young and her father takes her with him to South Africa which was then still under the rule of the British Empire. The baby's Kaffir nurse is described as "careless and dirty" (27) but her father soon

found an Englishwoman (who)...took good care  
of the baby...(Miss Heath) fair, strict, clean, capable (27).

When they are back in Lincolnshire, her father never wants to tell her about his strange school master; his answer to her questions “retreats into a cloud” (27). The narrative changes location to another part of the Empire:

Then I was taken to Canada, and for years and years I did not hear such a name as Paul Verlaine, because ours was not that kind of a household. (27)

When the narrator and her husband go back to visit, she asks her uncle if Verlaine was real or a dream. He actually really was a schoolmaster in the little English village. He probably arrived after his disgrace, his involvement with fellow poet, Arthur Rimbaud. His mother, who acted as his housekeeper, was considered very charming but he did not have a great reputation. The only memory of the great poet that the uncle has is that Verlaine’s command of English was not the best. He was known to have yelled at a runny-nosed little boy, with no handkerchief, who was annoying him: “Sir! Sweep your nose” (28).

The second of Wilson’s stories is written clearly by a first-generation Canadian who still loves the old country, England. The story happens a short while after World War II. The narrator is “afraid to see bombed England and especially bombed London” (90). The writer’s sensibility is very much like that of Virginia Woolf:

a street musician ...a young Oscar Wilde, after all the disillusion...in the shadow a girl starts singing song after song...then a man starts dancing... ‘Had these things happened? Yes, and they had left no trace as dreams leave no trace. (91-3)



The story is about a moment on the street in front of a London restaurant when time does not have the same quality it usually has. It also gives the impression that this type of moment only happens in that place where the narrator lived most of her childhood. This is a common experience to many in a country where most people are relatively recent immigrants. The homeland always seems to have a magic quality.

The remaining short stories pose a bit of a problem since they are listed in Weiss but there is no trace of the actual copy: Mavis Gallant's "A Short Story of Love" and "Bebe's Place," Margerie Scott's "Mees and L'Amour" and "My Belgian Straw Hat," and John Waterhouse's "Corbett's Shaft." Robert Weaver, who is considered an expert on the Canadian short story, has never heard of John Waterhouse or Margerie Scott. Waterhouse did have a short story published in The Northern Review, "The Hollow Men." It is about an adolescent in England whose father is a very strict pastor. He plays solitary games in which sticks floating in a stream represent different members of his family and he bets to himself "that if they sailed any further he would pass Father" (19). It is quite old-fashioned since the boy wants to liberate himself to be able to "burn the Guy" (20) with the village boys, a practice his father finds a "very pagan custom" (22), sapping all the fun out of it. The boy's act of revolt is refusing to say Grace, which is expected of him every evening before supper. He feels the atmosphere of the rectory is "thick, steaming trees, rotting, echoing, like a deep pool of loneliness" (23). In a way, he saves his soul by being able to imagine his father's clerical friend "with straw for a head and burning"

and hating both men, his father and Dr. Mills, with “the collars they were wearing, white as snow but shining unhealthily” (27). Would only a Canadian compare clerical collars to snow? This story has a certain anti-clericalism. The religious presence was a strong one in both English and French Canada, and a reaction to this fact manifested itself in both literatures at a relatively late date. Waterhouse’s story reflects this reaction.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Gerald Taaffe and Canadian Short Stories**

Gerald Taaffe was born in Chicago in 1927. He served with the U.S. army in Korea during the Korean War. He then studied at Loyola University in Chicago and earned a B.A. in English Literature. In 1951, he immigrated to Canada with his young family and started writing professionally in 1955. He became program director for a private television station in Quebec City in 1957 and was by then publishing articles in Canadian and American magazines. Moving back to Montreal in 1960, he became the editor of The Montrealer. Writing scripts for CBC television and radio as well as for the National Film Board was also part of his professional activity; he also contributed articles to Canadian magazines such as Saturday Night and Maclean's. In 1967, he moved to Ottawa to become director of communications for the Canada Council and was in charge of the organization of the Governor General's literary awards. He later became a senior speech writer for the federal Minister of Health. All through his career, Gerald Taaffe wrote short stories that were published in Tamarack and other literary publications. He also wrote a novel, Girls of Two Summers, published by McClelland & Stewart.

The interview with Gerald Taaffe was conducted over several months, mainly by electronic mail. Gerald Taaffe remembers that The Montrealer was purchased by a group of young Montrealers in the mid 1950's and that they "revamped the magazine, put a lot of money into it, and began to publish fiction and bright journalism." In 1960 Shaun Black, "a hard-driving young executive at Alcan's Magnesium Company of Canada," was hired to find a buyer for the magazine. Eventually, Joseph J. Wallace, "a self-made man of the old school," purchased it along with a number of business

magazines as a sort of “low cost competitor to Maclean-Hunter etc.” On the strength of an article on Marie-Claire Blais, published in The Montrealer early in 1960, Gerald Taaffe was appointed editor of the magazine in May 1960.

From the beginning of his editorship, Gerald Taaffe did the layout of each issue of the magazine because he did not think much of the work of the Wallace Publishing house artist. Since he had no previous experience in layout, he spent an afternoon with the art director of a big ad agency who “went through the format page by page” criticizing and making suggestions. Taaffe wanted more fiction in the magazine despite the readers’ surveys done by Wallace indicating that most business readers, at any rate, did not like to read fiction. The publisher actually did not personally like fiction either but he did not interfere with Taaffe’s editorial policy for The Montrealer. Even with a very small budget, Taaffe tried to find “the best possible fiction.” He was looking for humorous pieces but also for pieces with an original and contemporary point of view.

An interesting anecdote is that Taaffe found what is called a slush pile (unread manuscripts) when he arrived at The Montrealer. One was what he called “a very good story” but it had no name attached to it. Only after advertising in the various writers’ magazines did he get a note from Alice Munro acknowledging the authorship of “Dance of the Happy Shades,” which has since been recognized as a Canadian classic. This contributed to his decision to pay particular attention to writing by women. He also tried to be objective in choosing what would be published. He was good friends with some of the writers he published but this did not interfere with his

job as editor. He can remember refusing a Hugh Hood story because he thought it needed more work. Their friendship cooled a bit after this. In his opinion, publishing in the magazine was a “helpful source of income and encouragement for writers but did little to advance their careers.” He can think of one writer, now well established in the Canadian literary canon, whose work he did not particularly care for but he published him anyway because he said: “The only thing I had in mind was how good a story might be and if it had a strong narrative line.” For the kind of literature he actually prefers, he jokingly describes it as “anything except Robertson Davies.” He was of course interested in the work of Canadian writers and Montrealers in particular, just as David Hackett had been, though he did publish some stories by English and American writers. He remembers publishing writers who had been previously published in The Montrealer. For him, Norman Levine was

an amiable figure, totally unpretentious, whose work and company I valued increasingly during my tenure at the magazine. Oddly, it was he who put me on to reading Flan O’Brien.

Some of Austin Clarke’s descriptions impressed Taaffe, such as spring being described as “brownish and reddish” because, after thinking about it for awhile, he realized that Clarke was right. He also remembers spending quite a bit of time editing the short stories of Steve Nadasy, a Hungarian who had just started writing in English. He published short stories of Hugh Hood when Hood had just started as a professor at the Université de Montréal. Eric Wright, Larry MacDonald and Edward McCourt were good at writing amusing short pieces that fit very well into the

magazine's format. A writer who, in Taaffe's opinion, was never given his due was Russell MacCallum. He thinks this may be because MacCallum lived in a kind of isolated place, Buckingham Québec, and was not able to establish contacts easily. He also remembers publishing stories by M. Charles Cohen, more of a television script writer who later went on to work in Hollywood. As editor, he wrote frequently to The Canadian Periodical Index asking that the magazine be included in the magazines being indexed. They finally accepted, two years into his editorship after he sent them letters of endorsement.

For Gerald Taaffe, Montreal was opening up during the time he was editor of The Montrealer. It seemed to be very different from the place he remembers from the early 1950's and the one "described by Mavis Gallant in her autobiographical fiction." The new coffeehouses, the Pam Pam, L'Échourie and the Bistro for example, were grounds for interchanges between "writers, artists and hangers-on." English and French met there. They were also places to meet like-minded recently arrived immigrants, such as the Hungarians who came to Montreal after 1956. Anglos did not seem to be very aware of radical intellectual change in French Canada but Taaffe remembers writing a script in 1963 for a television documentary called "Writers in Revolt" that gave an early taste of the new nationalism among French-language writers. The magazine tried with its limited resources to reflect these changes in the social and artistic milieu of Montreal.

Every day was different when Gerald Taaffe was the editor of The Montrealer. At the end of each month, there was the rush to get the issue to the

printers. No editorial help as such was available apart from the contributors. A

German lady, Charlotte Haver, looked after the mechanics of circulation and there

was a

series of nauseating space salesmen whose only editorial contribution was to try unsuccessfully to get me to match content to their current customers. One kept trying to get me to do a special section on bathroom furnishings in the hope of squeezing something from Crane.

Taaffe liked Sam Tata the photographer and his work very much. The NFB animator,

Gerald Potterton, was a personal friend who also often contributed covers and

cartoons to the magazine. Derek Lamb, also at the Film Board, had work published in

the magazine. The Montreal Press Club was also a meeting place for potential

contributors. Through the CBC, Taaffe came to know most of the better known

French Canadian writers and would often review their work in The Montrealer. While

he was editor he

usually tried to keep the slush pile of contributions from getting too big, dealt on the phone or via correspondence with contributors, and did some work on my television, radio and film commitments, along with pieces I was doing for some national magazines. In the afternoon, I would sometimes grab a handful of invitations and take in a few of the press receptions, which resulted in very few stories but kept me in touch with lots of journalists who were there for more or less the same reasons as me, to be catered to and meet one's friends.

The press receptions were often held at the Ritz. As editor of The Montrealer, he was

invited to many society balls, galas and cocktail parties given by different consulates.



He remembers going more than once to the annual Champagne and Strawberries Ball.

Some of the writers published when David Hackett was editor also appeared in the magazine when Gerald Taaffe was editor: Norman Levine, Joyce Marshall, Mordecai Richler, and Norman Ward. A little more than half of the writers had actually only one short story published but the others had between two and seven stories in the magazine throughout the years that Taaffe was editor. Many of the writers were unknown then and remained so later. Others were starting their writing careers or were young but already had a certain reputation. Short stories that expressed a wider range of points of view and perspectives as well as being innovative were an important element for publication in The Montrealer. Women writers were also fairly well represented in the magazine during Taaffe's tenure. Despite his self-deprecating opinion, publishing in The Montrealer was most likely considered a plus in a young writer's career in that Canadian publications where short stories appeared were few and far between.

Under Taaffe's editorship, the subject matter of the short stories was greatly expanded, taking into account the new thinking of the 1960's. In the case of a few short stories, it is the form itself which was changed. This wider diversity was expressed by the settings some of the writers chose for their stories and by the darker themes others articulated such as genocide, death, murder, despotism, mental aberration and juvenile delinquency. There was also more interest in themes related to the women's liberation movement. A lighter tone was also present in the innovative

subject matter of some of the The Montrealer's short stories. They had subjects such as space aliens and the sometimes idiosyncratic attitudes of immigrants. The form of the short stories also expanded. One story is a parody of a first novel, another is the fictitious correspondence between writer and editor, and another explores the use of clichés.

Countries part of the British Empire, in the past, were favorite settings for some of the short stories in The Montrealer (South Africa, for example). Five stories published between 1960 and 1965 show a wider range of settings and cultures than those previously appearing in the magazine. H. G. Classen's "The Pool" is set in Paraguay. The main character has a McGill connection since he took Spanish classes there, then went to Paraguay on a "reconnoitering mission" for his film maker brother. In the story, a wealthy neighbour, a Paraguayan congressman, indicates that he wishes to speak to him with

the curious baronial downward flick of the hand which under other circumstances would have unsettled Harry but which he had learned to take as the normal way for a Paraguayan to extend an invitation to approach. (26)

The mannerisms of a different culture have to be learned or there are bound to be misunderstandings. Later, when he exchanges friendly greetings with the congressman's cleaning lady, he "wondered what his friends at McGill would think" (27) of this familiarity with a different class. Invited to an English friend's cattle ranch, he can't help but notice that the lifestyle was very un-Paraguayan with its "businesslike, almost scientific round-up, vaccination, the breeding, the comradeship

between English *patron* and his cowpokes” (29).

The setting for “Convalescent Sunday” by Frances Hall, Zurich, is on another continent. It also uses the location in a more subtle way than “The Pool” uses Paraguay. Paraguay is all contrasts but Zurich is just like

any comfortable country he knew of – people  
by the hundreds strolling, digesting abundant  
dinners; dogs straining at leashes by every  
chestnut tree; children scuffing the fallen leaves  
around their feet and shouting. (37)

While relaxing in the park, the main character, Henry, tries to feed a dog on a leash a bit of roasted chestnut. The dog’s owner indignantly pulls her pet away from the “strange North American...guilty of feeding other people’s dogs” (37). Casually following a couple made up of a youth and a “nobly curved” (37) blonde, he is reminded by the young man’s gestures of painting his boat in summertime. Daydreaming, he follows the movement of the woman’s body as the couple walks through the crowd. Very suddenly the woman dismisses her companion and is on Henry’s arm.

She laid an expectant hand on his arm, ready to  
move off with him. Her shrug in the direction of  
the vanished youth said she had made a choice that  
was intended to be flattering to her new escort. (38)

His reaction was only embarrassment and an inadequate apology in bad German. The blonde “snorted” (38) and turned away from him having misunderstood his previous attentiveness. Something had happened a bit too fast for the unsophisticated North American. Crestfallen, Henry returns to his hotel and his “wife’s comfortable

presence”(38).

Shanghai, during World War II, is the setting of “The Imperial Seal” by Joan Klyhn. A very charming portrait of this great Chinese city under siege by the Japanese underpins this story. Shanghai is described as

depopulated and cut off from the world, became intimate and friendly, like a village. People banded together, starting clubs and organizing activities. (20)

The narrator’s father closed his factory but continued going to the club to play tennis. Her mother “cooked and cleaned in a fury of inexperience” (21). The “Imperial Seal” of the title of this short story refers to the seal Japanese soldiers put on the cellar door of their house. It contained copper pipes that an acquaintance had asked them to store for him right before he was interned in a prisoners’ camp. The cellar

had an earth floor, and was flooded during Shanghai’s usual spring rains. (20)

Having washed off the seal by mistake, the young narrator is called before a Japanese military tribunal.

The Court was located in Marble Hall, a huge mansion belonging to an Anglo-Chinese millionaire, who had been interned... Great French windows looked into a formal garden. (22)

In this beautiful building, the Japanese looked “small and unimportant” (22).

The last two stories are set respectively in Turkey and Greece. In “Crime Wave in Istanbul,” Christine Manning’s first person narrator is

staying for four days in the Old Quarter of Istanbul, quite unafraid on account of my aging person. (28)

Her attitude is a bit defiant when dealing with situations that come up in an Islamic culture in the late 1950's when a woman is on her own. The crime wave referred to turns out to be a Western woman asserting herself.

I had disobeyed army rules; I had stolen some Turkish dishes; now I was to argue the right of a waiter to charge me for what I had eaten. (31)

The “disobeying army rules” is actually not listening to an officious Turkish soldier who does not want her to photograph some fishing boats; the stealing dishes is putting a cup and saucer in her purse till she was given the correct change; and the arguing with the waiters who charge her too much turned in her favour since the bill was finally corrected after she “would not budge” (31). Still her triumph is only a weak one as she got soaked on her way to her hotel and caught a cold she carried with her into Yugoslavia (31).

The last story, “Rightly Call the Nymph” by Joyce Marshall, is also about foreign men's attitude towards women. It also is about stereotypes. Two women are spending time in a city in Northern Greece, Thessaloniki. The more sober-headed of the two says that the other

had to invent a stereotype brigand, a mountain man with tender eyes. (30)

She tries to bring her friend back to reality by saying that “the real Greeks are in the islands...Demetrios is from Crete” (30). The smitten one finds her Greek lover “so jealous”(31) because he wants no man's eyes to even look at her. He does not even like her to say *efcharisto* (thank you) to the waiter. She is thrilled when he does

traditional dances with other men. She feels that

they were entirely different, these southern men... primitive, saw one as a chattel even before one was in any sense of the word possessed. (31)

Greece seems to be mainly Greek men to the two women in this story. They even admire the “old tattered priests” selling sweet basil at the entrance of churches in celebration of some Greek saint’s feast day, and the younger “handsome black-bearded priests” (34).

The next five stories deal with much darker themes. Marion André-Czerniecki’s “The Gates” is about genocide during the Second World War. Its setting is a Jewish ghetto in a town in Poland. At first, they could “tramp over the fields, and even walk straight to the village” (20) but then barbed wire was put up and everybody had to stay within its confines. Despite being understated, it is nevertheless a very powerful story. When the narrator’s grandfather disappeared, “no one could understand anything” (20). One afternoon, a policeman ordered him to report to the *Judenrat*. He was never seen again but people learned to hide when they were asked to appear before the Council (20). The narrator’s father wore a “white armband with a blue star in a cellophane wrapping” (20). Regular police roundups were a way of life,

when the Ukrainian police would come, vodka was necessary. They’d always take money, and drink vodka. Unless they came together with Germans. Then they wouldn’t drink, only swear and strike. (20)

In the story the Jewish family does not even bother to hide

because we knew it was useless anyway. The woman next door, with her children, was taken straight from the closet. When they went to her house, and saw that the room was empty, they marched straight to the closet, and pulled four people out. (21)

The narrator's sister says that she prefers to be taken from a sunny room rather than from a dark cupboard (21). People are taken from their homes by shouting brutal soldiers. Then the silence of shock fell,

I don't know why it became so quiet; though perhaps it wasn't quiet at all, because the huge German was yelling and aiming his rifle... the shot rang, and the little boy... fell on his stomach right between our big gates. (22)

The story conveys the unreal tension between a seemingly calm daily routine and the horror of a deadly trap that no one can get out of.

Zena Collier's short story is entitled very appropriately "Forever After" because it is about murder. It is a kind of black humour piece. In it a young couple buys a house that needs a lot of work. Her plan is to make it "the loveliest house in the world" (17). All through the story, the question is asked "When had it changed?" The narrator wonders when the turning point was when the husband could not stand it anymore. Their main subject is the renovation to be done, and the couple's conversation usually went like this:

"They're not really *that* important," she said, "Not right away, anyway. We can go ahead and paint the room just as it is."

"Well fine." ...

"Of course, there won't be *quite* the same effect I

was after,” she said. “But it doesn’t matter really. I’m sure it’ll be perfectly adequate. I mean, if you’re tired.--”

“Well,” he said slowly, “not exactly tired, but --” (17)

Finally exasperated beyond endurance, the young husband kills his wife to silence her.

The next story, “A Matter of Business” by Gabriel Gersh, is about the repression of Papa Doc Duvalier’s regime in Haiti. It is not so much about Haiti as about political corruption, brutality and extreme poverty. The Craigs are going on a “combined honeymoon and business trip” (21) to Haiti because Ezra, Mr. Craig, had “read somewhere that the standard of living in Haiti was the lowest in the Western Hemisphere” (21). The company that he worked for manufactured dolls and was looking for cheap labour to assemble the parts of their product. Puerto Rico was a possibility but Haiti may prove to be even better from the money-making point of view. He is a young executive on the way up because

he figured out that there might be point o five of a cent in it. It was worth investigating. (21)

He is pleased when he sees young women in the market wearing dresses made of old flour sacks, confirming that Haiti is indeed poor. A Mr. McBean recommends the help of Ti Joseph, “a kind of priest, a voodoo one” (21), to make sure everything runs smoothly:

“The guy’s not only a priest,” McBean said, as if in defense. “he runs sugar mills and a tourist shop. Supposed to have fifteen wives. Good thing to handle him with kid gloves. These houngans are pretty independent. Call you by your first name. You want labour, you got to go to them.” (21)



When Craigs actually meets Ti Joseph, the Haitian

looked Ezra up and down with a kind of amused tolerance; exuding a self-confidence that was flawless and perfect. (21)

After negotiations about how much Craig is willing to pay the workers, Ti Joseph leaves arrogantly “without further salutation” (22). The bartender hurries to open the door for him, since he most likely knows that he “runs everything but the presidency” (22). McBean and the Craigs later go to a voodoo ceremony where Ti Joseph is described as having a “sweating smugness” (22) and total sway over a group of Haitians, some who fall on their knees and kiss his bare feet (22). What the author calls a “houngan” is most likely better known to us as a Tonton Macoute, a member of a secret elite police who terrorized the population of Haiti for many decades.

The fourth of these five stories is by Robert Green, “The Peeping Game.” Again it is something of a black comedy piece. It is about nervous tics indulged in to a neurotic extreme and their effect on an otherwise perfectly sane man. The story is funny yet at the same time not funny at all. The first person narrator, called Green like the writer of this short story,

probably would never have got involved in the peeking game if I had known about anxiety in the air. I can only describe it as a pollen of distrust, wafted on glances and gestures and snuffed by inference in to the fertile minds of the high-strung and neurotic... (23)

The narrator gets into an unreal and complicated relationship with his immediate boss, Mr. Walter Pembleton, whom he refers to as

a Mr. Peepers, a chipmunk of a man better suited to hopping the telegraph wires than ordering reporters around. (23)

The neurotic game begins when Green, amused by Mr. Peepers' numerous tics, peeps at him over his newspaper to find Mr. Peeper already peeping at him. This goes on for a number of days and develops "into what my psychiatrist has since told me is an obsessive-compulsive act" (23). His nerves got so bad that he would stare at people passing on the street to make sure that they were not staring at him. Finally he was not able to get any work done so absorbed had he become about co-workers, and other people in general, who might be staring at him.

"Firebug" by Alan Sillitoe concerns juvenile delinquency. The firebug himself is the narrator. When he was younger, some family members said that they "wouldn't trust him an inch" (19) but others, like his mother, felt that he "was delicate and might not have long for this world" (19). The story has the tone of A Clockwork Orange.

The narrator tells of his misdeeds:

My first fires were nothing to speak of: baby ones built in the backyard and with a single sheet of paper. (20)

After awhile, his mother would actually give him a few matches and paper to keep him quiet. He lit fires at school and didn't care much if he was punished. A bit older, he

didn't want to get caught again and have my head batted, for as well as it hurting a long time afterwards it might send me daft or dead which would be terrible because then I wouldn't be able to make fires or hear the engines. (21)

The narrator loses interest altogether in setting fires after he put a match to a number of homes that burned down completely. Some other event came along that superceded in intensity the fires that he could set on his own,

In any case there was something bigger than me to start fires, for a couple of years afterwards came an air raid by the Germans and I remember getting out of the shelter at six in the morning when the all-clear had gone and standing in the middle of our street, seeing the whole sky red and orange... (24)

Stories, like the one above, of an innovative type were published in The Montrealer and had a distinctly light tone. Some stories also expand the limits of the short story form. "There Was This Smell of Peanut in the Air" by Francis Murray mocks the sighting of extraterrestrial beings. "Archeologists from Mars" (37), Dr. Jekyll and Dr. Levine assisted by Miss Rice-Davies and Wong-Wite, look for traces of an extinct civilization. They use a "Strontium 90 ball-point pen" (37), a "Geiger counter signet ring" (37) and a "portable fluorotelescope" (37). Earth as we know it was destroyed by "the Blast" (38). They marvel over their findings of indestructible plastic which has survived for centuries. The Martian archeologists find "hundreds of interesting treasures... all sizes, colors and shapes... and all plastic" (39-40). They end up back home wondering if the long-gone inhabitants were made of peanut butter (40).

Steve Nadasy wrote of his experience as a Hungarian immigrant to Canada in the early 1950's. "Our Patron in Canada" is a story about "old 'newcomers' who have have already arrived" (32). The author, Mr. Nadasy, is also the narrator. He notices

how very interesting it is that my brain still works in the European manner. In the new world charity does not work in dollars and cents but in advice and second-hand clothing. (33)

Friends in Budapest to whom he had sent second-hand kitchen pots and pans received from his Canadian patron thought that he had struck it rich. When he and his wife purchased new furniture against the patron's advice, she was quite mad and

took it as a personal insult that we had not purchased our furniture from the Salvation Army. (34)

All the patron's advice turns out to be denigrating or self-serving. Canadians are rarely portrayed as being so cynical.

The next three stories, "There's Plenty of Room On the Inside" by Eric Wright, "Just a Few Minor Changes" by Leo Simpson, and "The Man Who Kept a Hungry Alligator" by M. Charles Cohen mock the form of the short story, each in a particular way. Wright's story is a parody of an angry young man's first novel. It has four chapters condensed in a few pages. The fourth one ends with "... " followed by a Chapter Thirty-Five in which the young writer confides that he is finally an insider but he can also see why he doesn't have any real friends (26). It's the nature of being a real insider to have no real friends.

Leo Simpson's story is a correspondence between James Jones, articles editor for Spectacle Magazine, and Miss Osgoodney, writer of an article on a tribe in Tanganyika (19). Mr. Jones at first tries to let her down gently since he has no interest at all in publishing her article. Each of the editor's outlandish suggestions are carried out by the writer. The suggested revisions become progressively sillier, such as adding

a section describing a Royal Visit or explaining the complicated electoral system of an African culture or even eliminating the original subject of the original article. As the letter writing progresses, Miss Osgoodney is in a more and more uncomfortable financial situation, having to choose between a stamp or a cup of coffee. She later has to sell her typewriter and finally is obliged to move permanently to Africa because it was the only continent she could afford to live in.

The last story of this type, Cohen's, uses a long series of clichés, all capitalized. Examples of this would be a sentence like:

He was a Sound Executive With Both Feet On The  
Ground, and a Good Head, and Well Liked By His  
Business Associates. ( 20)

The whole text is kind of a celebration of expressions we use daily without realizing how much we repeat ourselves; we don't always make much of an effort to express ourselves with a clear and original voice.

A fair number of women writers were published when Gerald Taaffe was the editor of The Montrealer, nine out of thirty-five writers. Given the time and the place (Canada), this was a very innovative initiative. Most of the females had only one story published. The exceptions are Joyce Marshall, already published under David Hackett, and Alice Munro. Joyce Marshall had two stories, "Snow on Flat Top" and "Rightly Call the Nymph." Alice Munro had six stories: "Dance of the Happy Shades," "An Ounce of Cure," "The Office," "Boys and Girls," "Red Dress - 1946," and "Remember Roger Mortimer."

The relationship between women and men is usually an important element in the short stories by these women, although this is often the subject of men's writing too. Some exceptions to this are "Dance of the Happy Shades" by Alice Munro, "The Imperial Seal" by Joan Klyhn, "The Atwater Fiancée" by Elizabeth Spencer and "Remember Michael" by Elizabeth Stacey.

Men are totally excluded from the world of "Dance of the Happy Shades." The story evolves around an invitation to a children's piano recital. Two feminine world views converge but will never be able to actually merge into the apprehension of the same reality. One is that of Miss Marsalles, a piano teacher, and her sister of whom it is said that

it must have finally come to seem like a piece of luck to them, to be so ugly, a protection against life to be marked, in so many ways, *impossible*, for they were gay as invulnerable and childish people are; they appeared sexless, wild and gentle creatures bizarre yet domestic. (43)

The second world view is that of

women who have moved to the suburbs and are plagued sometimes by a feeling that they have fallen behind, that their instincts for doing the right thing have become confused, that without knowing they may even become a little ridiculous. (42-3)

The narrator's mother, one of these "youngish women" (43), is irritated at Miss Marsalles's invitation to her annual piano recital, held at Miss Marsalles' home and given by her young students. Knowing that "piano lessons are not so important now as they once were"(43) for the proper education of a young girl, she nevertheless feels

an obligation to be at the recital since she herself was once a student of Miss Marsalles, just as her daughter is now. Something that she finds very tiresome about Miss Marsalles are

the deceits which her spinster's sentimentality has practiced on her original good judgment are legendary and colossal; she had this way of speaking of children's hearts as if they were something holy. (43)

Feeling that Miss Marsalles was more and more out of contact with reality, she and her friend, Marg French, promised "to go together and buck each other up" (42). She and the other mothers

complained for a week previously about the time lost, the fuss over the children's dresses, and above all the boredom, but who were drawn together by a rather implausible allegiance not so much to Miss Marsalles as to the ceremonies of their childhood, to a more exacting pattern of life which had been breaking apart even then but which survived. (43)

In her small house with the "picture of Mary Queen of Scots" (43), Miss Marsalles is oblivious to all as she greets her guests. A neighbor, Mrs. Clegg, has been invited. When Mrs. Clegg acts as if Miss Marsalles is dotty because the sandwiches, set out many hours earlier, were getting dry, the narrator's mother is uncomfortable because she

had suddenly become aware of the impropriety, the hideousness, of discussing a hostess' arrangements in this way in her own living room. (45)

The narrator's mother is waiting for the arrival of Marg French, the friend who was supposed to buck her up; Miss Marsalles also seems to have her eye on the front

door. The party continues and no one expects to hear something that really could be called music. Finally a group of children arrive. Little by little, the reader realizes that the children in this new group are actually mentally deficient. The narrator's mother

looks around the room and meets the trapped,  
alerted eyes of the other women, but no decision  
is reached. (46)

Should they leave or not, should they act as if nothing was? A big clumsy girl from the group is called to the piano and "Miss Marsalles sits beside the piano and smiles at everyone in her usual way" (46). The music is played by the girl with consummate skill and beauty. In a strange way, the women act as if a trick has been played on them and that

the girl's ability which is so extraordinary and  
so useless, so out-of-place, is not after all  
something that anybody wants to talk about.  
To Miss Marsalles such a thing is acceptable,  
but to other people, the people who live in the  
world, it is not. (46)

This is when the narrator realizes that they will never be coming back to Miss Marsalles' annual piano recitals. The divide between idealism and pragmatism can never really be reconciled. This story has become a Canadian "classic" and is included in most anthologies that have appeared in recent times. The fact that it was published by Taaffe in The Montrealer, at about the same time that it appeared in Tamarack, shows how the magazine served as a literary midwife for new and dynamic writers. It also shows how Taaffe was willing to rely on his own literary taste.

"The Imperial Seal" features the very conventional household of the narrator



where the man runs a business and the woman runs a house. There is one amusing moment between a man, the Japanese military judge, and the narrator, the young girl accused of breaking the Japanese Seal. The man addresses her as “little girl” which sounds to her like “rituru guru” (23). At that point in the story, we know it will end well.

“The Atwater Fiancée” by Elizabeth Spencer is about Montreal and the relationship between the French and the English. A young couple arrive from England to Montreal and are staying in a “tourist home (where) the landlady plays a French-language radio at night in her apartment” (24). They usually have their meals in a small café where, in the evening, a television set takes up everybody’s attention. The owner is a

small French-Canadian with a white apron so big it goes around him twice and the waitress is a big sexy girl with platinum-dyed hair, long platinum-tinted nails, and platinum-painted eyelids... from Cannes; before that she had lived in Algiers. (24)

The waitress gives them a lead, a friend called Eddie, for renting an apartment. There is an elusive Indian quality to Eddie in the way that “his gesture indicates a sort of domain” (24) as he shows his apartment to the young couple. The place is everything that a Michel Tremblay setting would be:

corrugated walls are painted pink and green, the kitchen is red, the corridors bright blue... There are hockey pennants, a totem pole, Indian moccasins, dusty moose antlers and calendars with girls on them... every space is filled either with an ashtray

that tells a joke, or something for serving drinks,  
or for lighting cigarettes. (24)

Sleeping in one bedroom is Eddie's brother and, in another, a taxi driver friend. The cool English couple are a bit appalled by all they see and hasten to deny ever having said to Eddie's other friend, the Pied-Noir waitress, that they would take the apartment when they saw it. Eddie sees it as an "opportunity" (24) for them because of the amount of space available and the low rent. He's actually sad that he has to leave his "palace, temple, tent, sea cave, penthouse, or whatever it is" (24). His fiancée lives on Atwater, an Anglo street for the socially mobile, and works in an office. Even though "in a way he does not understand her" (24), he still admires her and has great respect for her. He can't understand why the couple would object to having his brother and his friend stay with them once he moved. Elizabeth Spencer was an American from the deep South who came to live in Montreal because her husband had been transferred to the city by his company. Ms. Spencer had no Canadian literary connections whatever; she was a complete outsider. Taaffe recognized the fact that her perspective on the Montreal reality was a unique one and that she had a refined literary sensibility. Taaffe's judgment was later confirmed by the recognition Spencer soon received as a major and important writer.

Elizabeth Stacey's short story, "Remember Michael," is about the relationship between an old woman and a pre-adolescent boy. It also has a fairy tale ending since the boy, Michael

is going to touch the golden stars and travel to  
the planets. He will create beauty and have

power. He will be rich and good and handsome  
and someday he will find the beautiful princess  
and she will love him and they will be happy  
forever. (28)

This is what the narrator, the old woman hopes for him. At the beginning of the story, the narrator is saying goodbye to the boy that she has known by chance. She says that she was “his first love, and he was my last and only love” (23). These words are only understood at the end of the story when we realize that, for her, the boy represents “the masculine” (27) in her life. Her fiancé who died forty years ago after he went off to “fight the Kaiser” (27) also represents the masculine. The young boy who she has come to love is also the fiancé whom she loved. Her life is renewed as it comes full circle.

The other short stories by women deal with the eternal tensions between women and men. Many of them have already been looked at in other parts of this chapter. Two, “Elena” by Katherine Campbell and “Snow on Flat Top” by Joyce Marshall, have not been analyzed yet, as well as most of the Alice Munro short stories. “Elena” by Katherine Campbell is the classic infidelity tale with an underpinning of feminist consciousness. What is a woman’s role in a marriage? Is she secondary and interchangeable with another woman? Is she valued for the number of people that she takes care of? These questions were somewhat avant-garde when this story was published.

Elena’s husband is involved with two women, Elena and the nanny-housekeeper, Nicole. At the beginning of the story, Nicole is already usurping Elena’s

rightful role. She allows herself a very inappropriate tone, asking Elena when she brought her own baby in from a car ride: “Why in the name of God did you keep him out so long?” (45) Not having the strength to assert herself and maybe not being well enough to, Elena “went to her room” (45) just like a child being punished. Her older children chat and laugh with Nicole while Elena “lay listening” (45). Her husband only patronizes her when she wants to tell him about Nicole’s behavior. He usually

might pat her absently on the shoulder and tell  
her to go and have a little rest. (45)

He essentially has no interest in what used to be known as the *woman’s sphere*, the areas of activity in which women are the prime movers.

There is also an unwritten tension about language in this short story. Nicole is French and is expected to teach the children how to speak French. There is evident competition here because it is obvious that Elena can’t speak French at all. There are cultural tensions as well between the two women, two different ways of seeing and doing things. When Elena’s husband insists that she take a brief vacation for the weekend, he tells her not to “feel pressed to be back by Monday” (46). In other words, they can do perfectly well without her. This is not something that men are usually willing to admit so easily to their wives, especially with another woman around. Elena spends the weekend at the Ritz on Sherbrooke Street. The alienation that she felt at home continues when she goes to a restaurant on Ste-Catherine Street and is not understood by the French-Canadian waitress when she orders coffee. People were looking at her and “her alienation from them all satisfied her strangely”

(46). She meets two French-speaking men and pretends that her name is Nicole, lying that she had a French grandmother. Later she realizes about her home that

Nicole belonged there so much more than she did, with his children, in his house, in his arms perhaps. (She) was the one with all the nice, invulnerable names: "wife". "mother".(sic) But they all knew, all, that she was really the unwanted guest. (49)

Elena's life does not mean anything if it is not validated by a man. This is a basic existential problem that the feminists have tried to resolve with more or less success. If she does not *belong* to her husband, she is nothing. The story, in dealing with Canadian cross-cultural and linguistic tensions, broaches a theme which was later to loom large in Canadian literature and life.

"Snow on Flat Top" tells of an encounter between two women of different backgrounds. In a secondary way, it is about their respective relationships with men. Nina, the main character, is married but has left her husband, having decided to go travelling because it "was being nowhere, that the mind could absorb only two concepts – Here and There" (24). She is the Bohemian middle-class liberated woman. She is surprised when the working class woman sitting next to her in the bus does not seem interested in finding out the details of her personal life. The other woman is going to visit her husband in the hospital with "t.b." (24). She tells Nina that she had three children when she married the man in the hospital. She also confides, in a voice "hypnotic in its evenness" (25), that her first husband died in a mine accident. She doesn't even pay much attention when Nina says that she's sorry about her son being

killed in Europe during the War. The woman only tells her that she wears her dead son's old pants and carries around a letter that he sent her just before dying. Nina, "clinging as hard as she could to her own grief" (26), has trouble understanding the fatalistic attitude of the blue-collar woman. Then, as the dead boy's letter was being read,

the break in the voice was shocking and terrible.  
The woman began to sob and to rock herself  
back and forth. (26)

Nina is only "embarrassed and appalled" (26) by the woman's show of emotion. She is not able to sympathize with her at all. She may also be a woman but, in this case, background and social class are more important than *solidarity* with the fate of a person of one's own sex.

In Margaret Atwood's opinion

it is possible for writers like Alice Munro ... to write  
nothing but short stories and be considered major. (XIII)

Publishing short stories in The Montrealer was most likely good for Alice Munro's writing career. She was pleased when her stories appeared in the magazine (Weaver). The first notable characteristic about the Munro stories is their length. Each one is quite a bit longer than most of the short stories in The Montrealer. They are also more detailed in their descriptions and make of a very mundane occurrence or emotion something monumental and intense. As Gadpaille observed when writing about Alice Munro:

As she has said, she sees the story not as a "road taking me somewhere", but more as a "house for

the reader to move around in and “stay in for a while.” (57)

The only contribution to the magazine not following these general observations about Alice Munro’s short stories is her “Remember Roger Mortimer,” subtitled “Dickens’ ‘Child’s History of England’ Remembered.” The other three Munro short stories, “The Office,” “Boys and Girls,” and “Red Dress - 1946” are all really about the limitations of womanhood. There is always a female character struggling to confirm her relevance as an individual. The story “An Ounce of Cure” was unfortunately not available.

In “The Office,” a young married writer with a family to raise thinks that it may be a “finicky requirement, a rare piece of self-indulgence” (18) to want an office to be able to write in peace. She wishes that she could have “workmanlike pride” (18) about being a writer instead of thinking of it as “some coy female hobby” (18). She actually did not want her own office at first but was more interested in the actual “sound of the word ‘office’” (18). In her mind, this word meant “dignity and peace ... purposefulness, importance” (18). In the text of the short story, Munro uses parentheses to encapsulate her explanation of her overly “emphatic and emotional” (18) way of expressing herself.

The story is also about a complicated, not to say neurotic, relationship that develops between the writer character and the person she rents the office from. The landlady is described as having a

swaying passivity, the air of exhausted and muted apprehension, which spoke of a life spent in close

attendance on a man (18)

Our attention is focused on Mrs. Malley, the landlady, and we don't really think about Mr. Malley. He is only "a man" who Mrs. Malley caters to. For the moment, he seems quite inoffensive and remote. The young writer says that she has a

tendency to placate people whom I dislike for no good reason, or simply do not want to know. I make elaborate offerings of friendliness and courtesy, in the foolish hope that they will go away and leave me alone. (19)

In this "tendency to placate" lies the drama of this story. Our assumption is that Mrs. Malley is going to be the disliked person. Actually, Mr. Malley turns out to be the trial for the major character's patience. At first, Mr. Malley pretends that he just wants to make her comfortable. At the same time, he is making sure that she never feels completely at home in her office. When his suggestions become too numerous and invasive, she tries out

that cold, self-sufficient voice which is heard frequently in my thoughts but has great trouble getting out of my cowardly mouth. (20)

Even after her roughness with him, Mr. Malley is far from being beaten. His new weapon to continue to interfere with her work is a child-like humility. He also uses generosity, giving her a plant, to make her feel guilty. She accepts the plant despite the fact that she actually hates plants. He also undermines her by suggesting that she could write a book about the chiropractor who used to occupy the office in which she is now trying to write. He mentions the soundproofing of the office which made it easier for the chiropractor to carry on an affair with one of his patients. The



insinuation is made that this could also be the writer's real motivation in wanting to be by herself. Nobody really wants an office to write in.

Getting rid of Mr. Malley turns into a distracting battle of the wills. It contributes to building up the young writer's confidence in what she is trying to accomplish. In a moment of discouragement due to Mr. Malley's incessant interruptions, she reflects that

perhaps I am being paid back for having wanted a place to be alone and for having wanted to do something. A woman does not do things, she is told them; listening, reflecting, she gives men and children the reality of their lives. Would he impose on a man like this? Not likely. (21)

Maybe Mr. Malley would impose on a man as he has on a woman because he turns out to be quite deranged. He accuses the young woman of entertaining people in the office when nobody but herself goes there. Finally, pretending that she drew graffiti on the walls of the bathroom, he tells her that she has to leave the premises. In fact he is the one who defaced the bathroom to get rid of her. At the end of the story, the idea of an office of her own is abandoned, for the time being, by the young writer. This story explores some of the challenges women face when they want to break out of their traditional roles.

In the short story "Boys and Girls," the main character has the same earthiness as its setting, a fox farm in Ontario. It is also a story about the pride of working with one's hands and doing a man's job. For the narrator, a young farm girl, the farm had

the smell of blood and animal fat, with the strong primitive odour of the fox itself, (which) penetrated

all parts of the house. (25)

She finds this odour “reassuringly seasonal, like the smell of oranges and pine needles” (25) at Christmas. She loves to work with her father and is extremely proud when he introduces her as “my new hired man” (26). Her father does not talk much as he works:

whatever thoughts and stories my father had were private, and I was shy of him and could never ask him questions. Nevertheless I worked willingly and well under his eyes, and with a feeling of pride. (27)

Making sure that the foxes had enough to drink was her main responsibility. She also had to clean their watering dishes. When she brought the water to the animals, she used a normal-sized watering can. Her younger brother, Laird, only had a “little cream and green gardening can” (26), not made for real work but only for play. She considered him to be a baby because he never stayed with her till a job was finished. He would always run off to play. When she ran off, it was to get away from her mother and to go work with her father. She did not understand why her mother told her father that he would soon have a real helper when Laird was a bit bigger. She hated the “dark kitchen” (27) and the work involved in preparing food and running the house but she could not always evade helping her mother. It

seemed that work in the house was endless, dreary, and particularly depressing; work done out of doors, and in (her) father’s service, was ritualistically important. (26)

Little by little, she realizes that the word “girl” is not an innocent one but something that she is expected to become. The definition of being a girl was “always touched

with emphasis, with reproach and disappointment” (28). An everyday event on the farm pushed her into the unenviable girl category. Horses had to be killed for meat for the foxes. The farm’s two horses were Mack and Flora. With her brother, she secretly watches as her father shoots the horse, Mack. She is surprised to see that she is more upset than her brother about what they just saw together. When it is Flora’s turn to be slaughtered she lets the mare go free. This is a bit of a metaphor for her own desire to be free. She knows that when she lets the mare get out of the gate she is in fact betraying her father.

When my father found out about it he was not going to trust me any more; he would know that I was not entirely on his side. I was on Flora’s side. (33)

This is when she becomes sadly a “girl,” somebody who can’t be trusted because she puts her feelings before practical and necessary acts of cruelty.

In “Boys and Girls,” the young girl is sure that her mother loves her because she makes dresses for her. In “Red Dress - 1946,” a young girl’s mother also makes dresses for her.

She had made me, at various times... a flowered organdy dress with a high Victorian neckline... a Scottish plaid outfit with a velvet jacket and tam; an embroidered peasant blouse worn with a full red skirt... (she) had worn these clothes with docility, even pleasure, in the days when (she) was unaware of the world’s opinion. (28)

The girl in the story is a typical teenager who answers with her girlfriend questionnaires in magazines and reads articles about makeup, first dates and boys’ behavior (28). At high school, she is “never comfortable for a minute” (28). She hates

all her classes and the “carnival atmosphere of brutality” latent in the classroom (28).

She even hates English

because the boys played Bingo at the back of the room while the teacher, a stout, gentle girl, slightly cross-eyed, read Wordsworth at the front. She threatened them, she begged them... They offered burlesqued apologies and when she started to read again they took up rapt postures, made swooning faces, crossed their eyes, flung their hands over their hearts. (28)

The only interesting thing about going to school was that it was “full of the tension and excitement of sexual competition” (29). When there is a dance at school, she wears a red velvet dress that her mother made her. It makes her look more buxom than she has ever looked before. Her girlfriend, with whom she is going to the dance, helps her with her hair. All the older girls at the dance look “bored, aloof and beautiful” (30). They all have boys to dance with. The young girl wonders if “there was something the matter with (her)” (31). Nobody seemed to want to dance with her.

Fat girls, girls with pimples, a poor girl who didn’t own a dress and had to wear a skirt and sweater to the dance; they were claimed, they danced away. Why take them and not (her). (31)

An older girl, Mary Fortune, emerges as a possible savior. She is an

officer of the Girls’ Athletic Society and ...on the Honour Roll and she was always organizing things. (31)

She takes the younger girl under her wing, telling her that she thinks dances are stupid and that most girls at school are “boy crazy” and “idiots” (31). She personally has plans for her future. She’s going to college and paying her way by working in the

summer picking tobacco (31). The young girl feels a sudden surge of power and independence. As she gets ready to leave the dance with Mary Fortune, a boy “was in (her) way” (33). He asks her to dance and she accepts without thinking. This moment is described like this:

He puts his hand on my waist and almost without meaning to, I began to dance. (33)

Mary Fortune is dismissed with a “weak waving motion” (34), meaning that a girl is with a boy now and that it was no use waiting for her. Raymond, the boy, does not know that

he had been (her) rescuer, that he had brought (her) from Mary Fortune’s territory into the ordinary world. (34)

“Mary Fortune’s territory” is not a safe place to be. It can lead to unhappiness. At the end of the story, the young girl knows that she has a “mysterious and apprehensive obligation...to be happy” (34) for her mother’s and all her family’s sake. Since she did not follow Fortune, she is saddled with an ambiguous obligation.

“Remember Roger Mortimer” is a charming piece about the first book that Alice Munro read. It was written by Charles Dickens around 1850. She learned much later that it had also been her father’s first book. She remembers the summer of 1939 when she read about Roger Mortimer, Queen Isabella’s lover, and all the other figures of English history as seen by the Victorian novelist. In her family, reading was not really encouraged but treated like a bad habit that has to be indulged. This story demonstrates the constriction of Canadian small-town Puritanism, where reading anything but the Bible was regarded as tomfoolery and sinful self-indulgence.

## **Conclusion**

The role of The Montrealer in encouraging the development of English-Canadian literature has never been appreciated. It was hardly ever mentioned, as is evident from the cursory treatment it received in Sutherland's The Montly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines. Nevertheless, The Montrealer, in the 1950's and 1960's, provided an outlet for original Canadian talent and served many authors as a springboard for their literary careers.

It is significant that this role played by The Montrealer was fostered by two American-born editors, David Hackett and Gerald Taaffe. The interviews with these two former editors revealed how they consciously set out to produce a "Canadian" magazine with its own distinctive voice. The earlier "carriage-trade" magazine was transformed by them into a serious outlet for young Canadian literary talent. This was significant because Canadian writers had few outlets at that time for their talent. Taaffe in particular published many stories by female writers and this must have been a daring initiative in the early 1960's.

The interview with David Hackett also revealed a hitherto unknown fact: the key role played by Hugh MacLennan in The Montrealer's literary orientation. MacLennan was at once judge, arbiter and inspiration and he was called upon continuously for literary input. MacLennan's role was not properly appreciated in Elspeth Cameron's biography.

Hackett and Taaffe broadened the scope of the Canadian short story. Amongst the themes in the stories they published one can find the relations between men and women, women's special concerns, English-French tensions in Canada, class

conflicts and the immigrant perspective. The Montrealer, under the tutelage of these two editors, became somewhat avant-garde, and this was remarkable when one considers the carriage-trade origin of the magazine.



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## **Appendix**

A complete run of The Montrealer does not seem to exist in any public or university library, though two institutions in Montreal have a good collection of the magazine. McGill University has many issues of the magazine that are often bound together in complete years. The Bibliothèque nationale du Québec (BNQ) also has a collection that includes the first number of Gossip and many numbers of The Canadian Passing Show (or The Passing Show). There are some duplicate numbers in both of these collections but they often actually complete each other.

The physical condition of some of the numbers of the magazine is not what it should be because the paper it was printed on is highly vulnerable to deterioration. The BNQ has recently removed its collection from relatively easy access. If a person wants to consult their collection of The Montrealer a special request must be addressed to the librarian. It is also necessary to wait a few days to actually see the collection since it is stored in a different building. As for McGill, the library may be planning to better protect their collection of the magazine by entrusting it to their Rare Books and Manuscripts department. It is presently available in the library's general stacks. Also, some individuals own collections of the magazine in which there are issues not included in either the McGill collection or the BNQ one.

A project, making the collection of The Montrealer accessible to whoever wants to consult it without contributing to its physical deterioration, is to reproduce every page of the magazine page from paper form to digital form. This digital form of the issues of the magazine could then be indexed and put on the internet. The index could for example track the short stories published in the magazine by title, by date or

by writer. It could also be a useful research instrument for the study of diverse subjects such as the work of Canadian cartoonists and illustrators, the evolution of different types of advertisement throughout the decades or even Canadian humour as expressed in a monthly publication. This is not so much a difficult project as it is a laborious one requiring the work of more than one person. It should also be closely supervised since to use the scanning machine it is necessary to manipulate the documents quite a lot. On the other hand, once it is done there is practically no more work involved in keeping accessible and maintaining the particular site. An internet site on The Montrealer can of course also be linked to other sites on the internet with themes such as Canadian culture, Canadian literature, short stories, and magazines.