Shadow Continent: the Image of Africa in Three Canadian Writers

PATRICIA MONK

AFRICA as it exists physically in space and time is the concern of geographers and historians; Africa as it exists in the minds of humankind is the concern of poets and novelists. It is with this latter, the image of Africa, as it appears in the work of certain Canadian writers that I am here concerned, for I believe that the emergence of this image more or less simultaneously in several Canadian writers can be explained in terms of the Jungian archetype known as the Shadow.

If a country can be assigned a collective personality, which may be seen to be manifest in its literature and which can be described within the Jungian frame of reference, then particular elements, such as the Shadow, may also be isolated from the literature and discussed. My contention, therefore, is threefold: that in certain Canadian writers the image of Africa fulfills the role of the Shadow, the dark "other self" constantly with us; that the image of Africa as the Shadow of Canada has developed as a part of the quest for a Canadian identity; and that the appearance of the Shadow Continent suggests that an integration of the scattered elements of this identity is imminent. I shall consider this contention in relation to Dave Godfrey's *The New Ancestors*,[1] Audrey Thomas' *Mrs. Blood* and *Blown Figures*,[2] and the work of Margaret Laurence, particularly *The Tomorrow-Tamer* and *The Diviners*.[3] This is necessarily a selection from a more extensive group, but it contains the essentials for my argument, and does not claim to be exhaustive.

The quest for identity can be defined as a quest for historical and geographical continuity, and in terms of history such a continuity is manifest in the concept of ancestry. The Shadow acts as a link with the ancestors. It lies on the border of the conscious and the unconscious mind and prefigures those archetypes of the deep unconscious, the Old Wise Man and the Old Wise Woman, who manifest the most fundamental and least personal aspects of the total psychic inheritance of humankind and personify all ancestors for each individual. It is with this question of ancestors, therefore, that I shall begin, for to understand why Dave Godfrey, a Canadian writer writing about Africa, calls his novel *The New Ancestors,* it is necessary first to find out why we need ancestors at all, especially new ancestors, and what was wrong with the old ones.

C. G. Jung says that certain tribes believe that

> it is not possible to usurp foreign territory because the children born there would inherit the wrong ancestor spirits, who dwell in the trees, the rocks, and the waters of that country.[4]

The ancestor spirits enter the unborn child as its mother moves among their habitats during the months of her pregnancy, and bond it into the group, making it part of the group identity. If the mother remains within territory possessed by her group's ancestors, the child will be linked with the correct ancestors; if she were to move outside it, the child would inherit the wrong ancestor spirits.

But what happens in a land which has not been possessed by anybody, when an immigration takes place and children begin to be born to the immigrants in their newly possessed territory? In Canada, large parts of the country were never occupied even by the Indians or the Inuit, and so would be empty of ancestral spirits, even those alien to the child. The child will receive all the natural marks of community — religion, literature, history, custom and so on — but that is all. The immigrants have left their ancestry behind in the rocks, trees, and water of "the old

country," and the child born into the immigrant group will never achieve a psychic bond with the group and the group-past because the rocks and trees and waters of the "new country" have no ancestors in them.

In the old country the life of a people and the physical environment in which they live that life are joined in a gestalt — a psychic ecology, as it might be described — by the presence of the indwelling ancestor spirits, and when these are missing the gestalt fails to develop. When this happens the empty environment will demand the spirits of the living — it will drain them in an effort to fill the gap. Earle Birney's poem "Bushed" is a good example of what happens to the life of the individual in this situation. But since the spirits of those who die have no community with each other, having no common bond with the past, their deaths are in vain, and the gestalt remains undeveloped.

Those who survive the pull of the vacuum will experience feelings of isolation, loss, and incompleteness. There will be a gap in the universe. More specifically, there will be a gap in history which puts humankind on one side and the rest of the universe on the other. In the old country the individual would be constantly linked with the natural world, and subconsciously aware of this link through the presence of evidence of historical ancestry (in the broadest sense of the word — the dead in the local church-yard, Roman walls, pre-historic gravemounds, fossils in the rocks) stretching back through known history to pre-history, through human to proto- and pre-human life. In the new country he has no evidence of a history, no history, and no bond with the past: he is dislocated from his place in the universe.

However, from this disastrous position a group can be redeemed by its artists. For literature in particular is where the psychic inheritance and the natural inheritance of the group co-exist, simply because, with or without their conscious knowledge or intention, artists have greater

access than most people to psychic reality. Poets and novelists therefore act as integrators of the human gestalt, by identifying and restoring to the community the lost fragments of its psychic inheritance. This, however, is not always done without difficulty or without much misplaced effort. The place of landscape poetry in Canadian literature is instructive in this respect, demonstrating efforts to reach back to a source of wisdom beyond the individual. These efforts are misplaced — we cannot really compensate for our lost kinship with the natural world by developing a close friendship with a tree. Canadian writers, must, as I believe they are now doing in certain cases, try a new direction.

This new direction, towards a true reassertion of natural kinship and of ancestry, operates, I believe, through the Shadow archetype.[5] In Jungian terms of individual psychology, the Shadow is that part of us we put behind us as we grow from infancy to maturity; it is made up of the personality elements (such as curiosity, aggression, and laziness) which are rejected in the formation of the Ego as a result of cultural pressures between the conscious and the unconscious mind, and form a sort of enemy (or opposition party) within. The qualities of the Shadow are not necessarily undesirable; often they are merely incompatible with the entelechy of the conscious personality. So the contents of the Shadow may be good, bad or a mixture of both, depending on what the Ego, as it develops, discards or retains.

When the formation of the Ego is complete, however, a further phase of psychological growth should take place — maturation. In the maturation of the individual, one of the early and important steps is the "resolution of the Shadow", in which those qualities which have previously been relegated to the unconscious as undesirable or incompatible with the Ego are raised to consciousness, accepted, and integrated as part of the total conscious personality. In the dreams of the individual, both before and during

this maturation process, the Shadow characteristically appears as a person of the same sex as the individual and one who is in some ways strange or exotic in the waking experience of that personality.

In the myths and literature of the group, which are analogous to the dreams of the individual, the Shadow also makes its appearance. It is always disguised to some extent, but never completely unrecognizable. And my first contention in this paper is that in the Canadian experience this role can be seen to be fulfilled by the image of "prodigious" Africa.

Since the archetypes are not controlled by the conscious mind, the images in which an archetype expresses itself are selected unconsciously. And although these images may be drawn from the conscious mind's knowledge of external reality, the principles on which they are selected are rarely clear. The three writers I am discussing all have first-hand experience of Africa (Laurence in Somaliland and Ghana, Thomas and Godfrey in Ghana), and so are provided by their observation with material on which to draw. But the symbolic value with which the archetype invests the image is not explicable in terms of experience, however vivid. Some explanation for the link between the Shadow archetype and the image of Africa perhaps may be offered in terms of geography, history, and the lure of the wonderful.

Of these three I am least certain about geography. In an essay entitled "Equatorial Zones and Polar Opposites,"[6] W. H. New makes a claim for the importance of Africa as a " 'furthest extreme' . . . an equatorial opposite to . . . northern life." Certainly the polarities of climate involved are obvious and attractive. The heat of an equatorial zone must have a powerful attraction for writers in a country where winter is a major enemy. There may be, in the idea of a country where it seems always warm, some faint hint of a return to the womb — to the protection of the constant warmth of the mother's body. This hint is

ironically exploited in Thomas's *Mrs. Blood*, which is the chronicle of a miscarriage; more directly, Michael Burdener in *The New Ancestors* speaks of the "womb-like humidity" of Lost Coast. But, although it may be significant that Laurence, Godfrey, and Thomas all had their experience of Africa in the equatorial belt, in Ghana, I am inclined to think that the element of climate is less important than the element of history, specifically pre-history.

It is toward history and pre-history that the Shadow directs the conscious mind, for history is the physical account of the ancestors with whom the individual must be linked psychically. The Shadow, as I have pointed out, is a part of the personal unconscious in the mind of the individual, but it also forms a link with what Jung calls the "collective unconscious", which lies at a very much deeper level where the individual is less differentiated from the generality of humankind and where the most fundamental human characteristics remain stored, as it were, for the reference of the differentiated individual personality.

For "ancestorless" Canadians, then, the ancestry of humankind is more important than mere genealogies; in the pre-history of humankind can be found its links with its non-human predecessors and its relationship with the rest of the natural world. Charles Darwin's prediction of 1871 (in *The Descent of Man*) was that

> It is somewhat more probable that our early progenitors lived on the African continent than elsewhere.[7]

More recently Louis Leakey has claimed that his work in the Olduvai Gorge (and elsewhere in East Africa) has proved the truth of Darwin's prediction, saying that

> men of science today are, with few exceptions, satisfied that Africa was the birth-place of man himself.[8]

If this claim of Leakey's is valid and Darwin was right, then it is no more than natural that the individual in search of ancestors should start that search at the "birth-place" of the species — where humankind became human.

Certainly Godfrey suggests this through Burdener's remarks to his class about genealogy:

> If the queen had an inch of honesty she would shove herself right back to the Olduvai Gorge . . . . we all go back to those Gorges, through those Gorges even. (p. 133)

The immense span of time involved in looking back to the first ancestors in itself creates a sense of awe and wonder. For European minds Africa was already a place of fable in Classical times: when Pliny in his *Natural History* said that "Africa is always producing something new" he was quoting an established Greek proverb.[9] For the Middle Ages Africa was the home of the fabled priest-king, Prester John;[10] and for the Renaissance it was still a place for wonders:

> We carry with us the wonders we seek without: there is all Africa and her prodigies in us.[11]

It is not simply a coincidence that both Audrey Thomas and Dave Godfrey choose these words from the *Religio Medici* of Thomas Browne to stand as epigraphs (to *Blown Figures* and *The New Ancestors,* respectively), or that Clara Thomas chooses them as a *point de répère* in discussing Margaret Laurence.[12] Africa is still today a place of wonder.

Such a vision of Africa is, if considered in terms of realism, no more than W. H. New has described it — a "natural cliché" or "stereotype".[13] Considered symbolically, however, such clichés and stereotypes are important for they encapsulate in brief and memorable form, not the nature of the object itself (in this case the continent of Africa) which they purport to describe, but the image of that continent as it exists in the minds of the observers. Browne himself indicates this: Africa exists objectively, but we "carry . . . Africa and her prodigies *in us*" (my emphasis), subjectively. Metaphorically speaking, the stereotype vision of Africa acts as a mirror showing part of ourselves that we cannot see until it is bounced off the reflecting surface — and that part of us is the Shadow.

All three writers I have chosen to discuss manifest a similar image of the Shadow of the Canadian identity,

but each of them emphasizes different features. Dave Godfrey's title *The New Ancestors* reveals a considerable amount about his particular image of the Shadow. Africa is the home of the ancestors, who are *literally* new ancestors, because the Canadian experience has never previously looked to Africa for ancestors; they are also literally new in the context of Leakey's discoveries, in which *Homo Zinjanthropus* (and presumably *femina Zinjanthropa*) replace Adam and Eve as our first parents. But the ancestors of Africa are *ironically* new ancestors, since they are really the old ancestors rediscovered, the ones we once had and lost.

It is significant, too, that Godfrey's characters inhabit an African country called Lost Coast. The word "lost" operates in more than one sense. From the imperialist point of view of some of the characters it is lost in the sense that it has slipped from their grasp; and from the nationalist point of view of others, it is lost because it has gone the wrong way politically. But in terms of the search for the ancestors of humankind, it is lost in the sense of having been misplaced. And in these terms it is also significantly the Lost *Coast*; for a coast is part of a greater mass — from the coast we can journey through the hinterland into the interior or heart of the continent. This journey is the image of the journey of the individual into his own unknown Shadow region.

Specific elements of the Shadow which appear in the image of Africa are the elements of heat, fertility, sexuality, violence, unreason, and death — not because these do not exist in the Canadian experience but because within that experience they are resolutely suppressed and refused recognition, whereas in the image of Africa that these writers manifest the same elements are, more wisely, recognized and accepted. They are all elements basic and necessary to humankind and are approached through what Laurence calls

> cavern entrances, leading both to and from the labyrinth which is the whole life of any individual and the lives, too, of those who formed him.[14]

They were elements of the ancestors which must be accepted by their descendants, who in the journey back to recover the ancestors must face and recover each of these elements in turn.

In Dave Godfrey's *The New Ancestors* we see the recognition of the Shadow both refused (in the person of Firebank) and given (in the person of Michael Burdener). Firebank is a minor character in the book: in the "Prologue" section of the novel he sets up the attitude of refusal which has been the conscious attitude of the Canadian experience so far. His refusal symbolizes the refusal by cerebral and sterile intellect of all that in humankind is not of the intellect. He operates in terms of hygiene and morality — as, for example, on the drive back to Silla from the airport where he has watched Michael Burdener leave, when he passes a lorry containing an English VSO girl, a nursing mother, and almost hidden behind the latter,

> One of those American PCV's. Down in the dirt getting the job done. And pulling others down in the dirt with them. (p. 13)

For Firebank the ground is "dirt" — undesirable because unhygienic. Earlier in the same section, almost his first response to what is happening to Burdener is formulated in terms of morality: "Our Mr. Burdener has been playing the ignoble Englishman again" (p. 2). As his name suggests (banked fire), he denies the essential vitality which lies in the Shadow region.

But what Firebank sees in Burdener and characterizes perjoratively is in fact the manifestation of Burdener's recognition of the Shadow elements in himself and his acceptance of them. In the section called "The London Notebook", Burdener is shown as acknowledging the nature of Africa, Lost Coast in particular. He recognizes in Lost Coast those elements which I have called the Shadow elements: "the swamp heat" (p. 48), "relatives who barely

knew me" (p. 20), "naturetime . . . destroying [me] from within" (p. 29), and the floods ("Three or four square miles of swirling treachery . . . full of crocodiles") in which his son has drowned (p. 51). He has recognized through his wife, Ama, the elements of fertile sexuality; in a very simple way he does this by taking her as his wife and making her the mother of his children; the two concepts are present together in their lovemaking:

> The family-warmth and utter liquidity of her unseen mouth. Tongue in. Second tongue responds. Now feel the shape of her familiar belly. The child inside ready to quicken. (p. 49)

It is a lovemaking from which conscious thought is totally excluded and where communication is only on the instinctual level: "Pleasantly, his mind elsewhere, the Lover enters his wife's pleasure" (p. 50). But in a more complex way Ama is also Burdener's link with a fertility and sexuality which transcends the merely physical. This is expressed symbolically in her dream in the section "A Child of Delicacy", where at the end of a long series of nightmare episodes she finally enters a visionary sequence:

> the sides of the mountain plunged down in a great steepness, but she was not afraid for the valleys of the mountain were filled with peace and regularity . . . . The sun even and calm on the cloudtops. Then below white shadows and blossom of the clouds, more valleys unseen, more peace, richer houses, even happier children . . . (pp. 125-126)

By his acknowledgement of the Shadow elements which Lost Coast presents to him, Burdener in London comes to an acceptance of Africa as his true element, a necessary part of himself:

> I am a seafarer without a sea. And so I will return to Africa because there is something there I can say yes to, something beyond the sandbeaches, something beyond the womblike humidity, something beyond the rhythms that suffuse all life so patently there. And I need to say yes . . . . We will go through Mopti. I am ready at last for the desert. (p. 85)

It is an acceptance, finally, of danger and violence. These culminate symbolically in the curiously ritual violence of

Gamaliel's murder, beaten to death by the market women at First Samuel's instigation and with his help. Gamaliel in his death takes on the role of *pharmakos*, the sacrificial scapegoat, which Burdener has earlier attributed to himself (a motif further echoed in the death of Rusk).

Finally, the journey to the interior accomplished, and all its findings accepted, the Shadow region must be left behind. The Lost Coast expels Michael Burdener — he leaves as a "deportee". But significantly, Firebank's observation (made from behind a wire fence) is that "all they watched was a departure . . . Michael walked on his own" (p. 9). He goes willingly when told, because he is ready to leave.

Audrey Thomas' presentation of her image of Africa differs significantly from Godfrey's in that in *Mrs. Blood* and *Blown Figures* we view the image from within the consciousness of the protagonist, Isobel, and what we see of Africa is no more than what she makes of it. There is a difference in movement, too, which is important: in *The New Ancestors* the centre of action moves with the protagonist, Burdener, following his journey from outside the Shadow region of Lost Coast into its interior and back again, even when the viewpoint is shifted to another character. In the Thomas novels the action is stationary. Just as the centre of consciousness is firmly interiorized in the "I" of the first-person narrator, and does not shift, so the action on the archetypal level remains firmly centred in the inner realm of the Shadow.

In *Mrs. Blood* there is, ominously, a schizoid division of the narrator into two parts: "Mrs. Blood" and "Mrs. Thing". The narrative is divided into sections each spoken by one or the other; the voices do not alternate strictly, and as the narrative reaches its climax it is one voice only, that of Mrs. Blood, which takes over more and more. Both of them are Isobel, but each is a different aspect of her — so different that they almost seem like different personalities sharing the same body and experiences.

In terms of the archetypal pattern, Mrs. Thing represents, as Firebank does in *The New Ancestors*, the refusal to recognize the Shadow: her experience is in terms of conscious thought and intellectual procedure. She analyses and articulates her experience constantly:

> There are smells here which will always be a part of Africa for me; and yet if someone asked later what Africa was like and I said "Mansion Polish", or "Dettol", or the smell of drying blood, they wouldn't understand. And they would be right not to, for the real Africa (whatever that may mean) is none of these and my Africa is only real for me. (p. 43)

Hospitalized and helpless, Mrs. Thing is afraid of physical process and the encroachment of the body upon the mind:

> Lying here my brain grows musty from disuse and I am obsessed by the least twinge or rumble of my traitor body. (p. 93)

Consequently, in her determination not to give in, she seems to be without feeling: she can take only "a certain objective interest" (p. 65) in a particular fellow-patient. Clearly she knows, however, that feelings exist, even though she does not recognize them in herself ("I feel no sympathy for her"). In the same way it is clear that she knows of the existence of the other personality; it is Mrs. Thing who says at the beginning of the novel, that

> Some days my name is Mrs. Blood; some days it's Mrs. Thing. Today it's Mrs. Thing. (p. 11)

By contrast Mrs. Blood seems unaware of Mrs. Thing, although sometimes she echoes ironically statements made non-ironically by the other, such as the statement "There are no victims," which Mrs. Thing intends as a straightforward acceptance of responsibility for herself and what happens to her (p. 69); this becomes in Mrs. Blood's voice purely ironic:

> There are no victims. Life cannot rape. There are no bad experiences. Say your beads and be silent. (p. 91)

Whereas Mrs. Thing manifests the objective intellectual side of the personality, Mrs. Blood represents the physical,

instinctual, and emotional side; she exists in terms of physical sensation and feeling: "I am here [in hospital] because I bleed" (p. 14)" and "I stink therefore I am" (p. 21). She responds to Africa without naming it and in personal terms:

> The rains here are enormous, devastating. How far down must they dig [graves] in order to feel secure? I do not wish to be washed up and floated down to the town. (p. 142)

This also reflects a certain childlike quality in Mrs. Blood, perhaps typical of the instinctual side of the personality; rather than analyse her experience as Mrs. Thing does, Mrs. Blood simply reruns it without comment.

Mrs. Blood is the one who gives the elements of the Shadow their due recognition, for she understands them. In her experience sexuality, fertility, and death are blended, as in her recollection of a night which she and her husband Jason passed with their children in their cabin on the crossing from New York:

> All that night the four of us were so close together it was as though we were growing from a common stem . . . And yet while [Jason and I] were gently making love a man who was on his way to Ireland was dying.

But this schizoid split in Isobel, apparent in Mrs. Blood, between the rejection of the Shadow elements by her intellect and their acceptance by her instincts, is merely a prelude to a further disintegration in *Blown Figures*.

I shall not go into the details of the presentation of the separate elements of the Shadow here, because the main point of interest in *Blown Figures* is that it shows what happens when the Shadow archetype is too strong for the Ego, and the process of acceptance becomes a life-and-death struggle between the two parts of the personality. This struggle has been foreshadowed in the previous novel, where the part of the personality which recognizes and accepts the Shadow gradually pulls away from the other. Integration of the Shadow, however, requires its acceptance by the *whole* conscious personality — and technically what happens to Isobel here is that a part of her conscious personality (Mrs. Blood) identifies with the Shadow, and the

resultant increase in energy available to the Shadow enables it to take over her whole personality. Her Ego is submerged in the Shadow region of her mind and she becomes quite divorced from reality. To begin with, she talks about herself in both the third person ("Consider Isobel", p. 11), and in the first person:

> Oh Miss Miller I have such strange twinkling random thoughts, like distant stars, in the darkness of my mind. (p. 48)

These random thoughts are evident as her narrative repeatedly breaks down into incoherence; snatches of verse and prose, lists of surgical instruments, advertisements, dictionary definitions, horoscopes, and all the other debris of memory swirl uncontrollably in her head. Further, I am convinced that the journey she describes (a return alone to Africa) is a hallucination based on her desperate guilt over her miscarriage (described in *Mrs. Blood*) and over the earlier abortion which ended her affair with Richard before she married Jason. In addition, it is a hallucination she is condemned to repeat: in both *Mrs. Blood* and *Blown Figures* she mentally rehearses her experience over and over again. *Blown Figures,* in fact, opens with the identification of the human condition with a symbol of eternity, rebirth, resurrection — and perhaps, by extension, repetition — the egg:

> Cripples, one-eyed people, pregnant women: we are all the children of eggs, Miss Miller, we are all the children of eggs. (p . 11)

So in her mind she must return over and over again to Africa to look for the foetus expelled in such "an elaborate parody of birth" (p. 177), convinced that it is alive somewhere, and condemned to go deeper and deeper into the shadows of the Shadow Continent, the darkness of her mind, in search of it. So the process of the integration of the Shadow, instead of being a time of rebirth from the darkness of the interior (as we have seen it worked out by Michael Burdener in *The New Ancestors*) is for Isabel

metaphorically equivalent to her experience of physical birth in Africa — an abortion.

The retrospective vision of Africa in the mind of Matthew, the narrator of "The Drummer of All the World" (in *The Tomorrow-Tamer*), is perhaps the most distinctly realized manifestation of Africa as archetypal Shadow in the work of Margaret Laurence. As a child Matthew lives in "a world of wonder and half-pleasurable terror", its impact upon his senses and nerves unmitigated by adult knowledge:

> Our garden was a jungle of ragged banana palms and those giant leaves called "elephant's ears". In front of the bungalow the canna lilies stood, piercingly scarlet in the strong sunlight. Sometimes the nights were suffocating . . . Every lizard nervously hunting for insects, every cockroach that scuttled across the floor, seemed to me the footsteps of *asamanfo*, the spirits of the dead. Then the rain would come, and at night the wooden shutters would slam against the house like untuned drums, and the wind would frighten me with its insane laughter. (pp. 1-2)

Somewhat in the same way as Godfrey shows Burdener accepting Lost Coast, Laurence shows Matthew accepting Africa through his relationship with women: with Yaa, who (he discovers) "had sucked me at her breast when I was a baby" (p. 3) — a symbolic act of adoption — and with Afua, for when he makes love to her he not only confirms his psychological link with Africa but also finds that "possessing her, I possessed all earth" (p. 12). The image of Africa as a woman — mother and lover — reiterates Thomas' and Godfrey's image of the femininity of the Shadow Continent as the womb, the image of fertile sexuality, but personifies it more sharply. This is not irrelevant, for when Matthew returns to Africa later as an adult, his vision of the new Africa is also a vision of a female figure:

> that bedraggled queen we had unthroned . . . [with] her still-raging magnificence, her old wisdom. (p. 18)

For all her reduction to "old withered bones" and "mouldy splendour" (p. 19), Africa is still a figure of power for Matthew — dethroned, she still remains a queen.[15]

Just as the transition from childhood to maturity changes Matthew's natural relationship (his physical relationship as child and as lover) to a more abstract relationship of subject to sovereign (his personification of Africa as a queen), so his knowledge of Africa is changed from the simple sensory understanding of the child (as quoted above) to the complex conceptual understanding of the adult:

> I shall be leaving soon. Leaving the surf that stretches up long white fingers to clutch the brown land. The fetid village enclosed and darkened by a green sky of overhanging palm trees. The giant heartbeat of the night drums. The flame tree whose beauty is suddenly splendid — and short-lived like the beauty of African women. The little girl dancing with her shadow in the stifling streets. The child sleeping, unmindful, while flies caress his eyes and mouth with small bright wings of decay. The squalor, the exultation, the pain. (p. 19)

In this passage Matthew deliberately transmutes all his experience of Africa into an image which he cannot forget.

This crystallization of experience into personified figure and image signals a distinctive feature of Laurence's presentation of the Shadow. In Godfrey and Thomas the physical outer journey through the continent imaged the inner journey into the dark regions of the individual unconscious, and the archetypal Shadow was essentially a region, bigger than an individual, traversed successfully by Burdener and unsuccessfully by Isobel. The Shadow region is the region of Matthew's unreflecting experience as a very young child: in his adult reflective state it can no longer be an environment within which he lives, but instead becomes a knowledge within him which can be reflected upon. It becomes personal and interiorized, a person, rather than a place, a neatly ordered memory rather than an unordered recollection (such as Burdener's or Isobel's).

The shift from one to the other reflects on one level of metaphor the shift from the raw material to the ordered artefact which takes place during the creative process. It is a metaphor which is extremely important to Laurence, for it is through the symbol of the creative process that, not only here but elsewhere, she reaches for the presence

and meaning of the archetype within individual experience. In terms of her own personal experience the assimilation of Africa takes place not only in the writing and ordering of the material in *The Prophet's Camel Bell,*[16] but also in her translations of Somali literature[17] made during her stay in the country described in that book. In her novels and stories of Manawaka the same understanding of the archetype is achieved through the creative process as seen particularly in the reconciling figure of Morag in *The Diviners.* So that in the shift of the vision of archetypal Shadow evident in "The Drummer of All the World" is implicit the entire shift from Africa to Manawaka.

If we return for a moment to the metaphor of Africa as the mirror reflecting the shadow, it is possible to say that once we have seen the reflected Shadow it then becomes necessary for us to identify the Shadow internally by looking directly at it. So in the Manawaka novels the attempt is made to translate the Shadow into Canadian terms — to make Manawaka cast its own Shadow, and to see it directly. The translation is effected in a number of ways.

Most simply, in each novel, Shadow elements are constantly presented as event or image. *The Stone Angel* presents these elements not only in Hagar's dying (her physical disintegration and mental confusion) and in her raw sexuality, but also in the image of birds which recurs throughout the novel (the squashing of the dying chicks in the Nuisance Grounds, the dead fighting cock, the injured and dying gull in the fish cannery episode). In *The Fire-Dwellers* the portrait of Buckle Fennick's old fat blind mother is deliberately presented so that it resembles some primitive carving of a fertility goddess, ugly but powerful; yet in the context of the novel, this ugliness is intended to convey a perversion which only her son's perversion makes visible.

The same Shadow elements, however, are presented less straightforwardly in *A Jest of God.* Significantly, Rachel's

erotic fantasy is set in a Shadow region, a dark forest — and is both involuntary and the cause of guilt and shame; but her first love-making — the beginning of her liberation from fear of herself — is not merely outside the town, but out of doors in broad daylight, for the Shadow is met, not by suppressing it until it boils over, but by approaching it voluntarily in the full light of consciousness. Significantly, too, she almost grasps the nature of the Shadow during her visit to the Tabernacle where she speaks in tongues: she perfectly understands that what is involved here is an atavistic process, a movement into the inner dark in search of the dark itself,[18] but her understanding is limited by fear inculcated by her mother, so that she cannot yet enter. Forbidden by her mother to enter her father's mortuary premises below their apartment, Rachel's natural fear of the dark regions has been reinforced; her mother's prohibition subsequently seems to be extended into the psychic realm: Rachel therefore sees the speaking of tongues as similarly "forbidden" (p. 36). Only when Nick has liberated her natural sexuality can she also feel free to break the other taboos — to go down to the mortuary and drink rye at midnight with Hector Jonas, and then to go into the darkness of her own mind and emerge with the understanding of her total self which she formulates as "I am the mother now" (p. 184). In many ways, Rachel, the apparently uncreative, is the forerunner of the creative Morag in *The Diviners,* and the complexity of her encounter with the Shadow reflects this.

The full complexity of Laurence's transmutation of the shadow archetype from the vision of Africa into Canadian terms is achieved in the steady bringing into focus of the Tonnerre family as an integral part of the community of Manawaka rather than as its outcasts. This process is evident throughout the whole of the Manawaka sequence, but reaches definitive statement only in *The Diviners* where, significantly, it is the artist Morag who is able to share both the experience of the outcast and the experience of

the community member, and to unite both in her daughter Pique.

The trajectory of the changing relationship between the Manawaka "establishment" (the conscious personality) and the Tonnerre family (the Shadow) moves in a simple curve which may be described in terms of proximity and of communication.[19] Physical and psychological distancing characterize the attitude of Hagar, representing the most conservative generation:

> I saw [John] with the Tonnerre boys. They were French half-breeds, the sons of Jules, who'd once been Matt's friend, and I would have trusted any of them as far as I could spit. They lived all in a swarm in a shack somewhere . . . (p. 127)

"A shack somewhere" conveys the remoteness with which Hagar views them; "all in a swarm" reduces the members of the family to insect — and so insignificant — proportions. To the young Vanessa, however, Jules' daughter Piquette (in the story "The Loons" from *A Bird in the House*) is a person with whom she ought to be able to ccmmunicate:

> I could not reach Piquette at all, and I soon lost interest in trying. But all that summer she remained as both a reproach and a mystery. (p. 122)

In *The Fire-Dwellers,* Stacey, in her encounter with Valentine (her former schoolmate and Piquette's sister) manages only a little better than Vanessa, but even this slight improvement is significant. For Vanessa, Piquette remains "a mystery", but for Stacey, Valentine is paradoxically "the known and total stranger" (p. 268); both Vanessa and Stacey understand the necessity for communication, and Stacey at least achieves surface communication — and so is given the important revelation of Thor Thorlakson's true identity. But only Stacey understands that it is Valentine herself whom she must know (and accept as part of her). The very importance of this prevents it from being communicated: "Too little can be said, because there is too much to say" (p. 268); and symbolically their en-

counter ends when "Valentine does not appear to have heard" Stacey's awkward half-meant invitation to visit her.

By contrast with these images of failed communication and distance, Morag's achieved communication with Jules Tonnerre (nick-named Skinner) is spontaneous and wordless:

> She catches the eye of Skinner Tonnerre . . . He grins at her. Well think of that. The grin means *Screw all of them, eh?* Astounded, Morag grins back.

This response gets ahead of Morag's learned response — her conscious knowledge of the Tonnerre family ("Morag knows. She has heard.") because at the time of this meeting of minds she is sharing with Jules the experience of being outcast in a redoubled form (she has just been sharply and sarcastically rebuked for daydreaming in class). In this way Laurence suggests that communication requires a context of shared feeling (something which Vanessa and Stacey never managed): to know is not enough, it is necessary to feel in order to reach the Shadow.

Finally, the Shadow principle is enunciated by Christie:

> By their garbage shall ye know them . . . . They think muck's dirty. It's no more dirty than what's in their heads. (p. 39)

Just as the garbage which individuals leave for Christie as Town Scavenger to cart to the Nuisance Grounds reveals the unacknowledged, rejected elements of their lives, so the Tonnerre family who are treated as garbage by the Manawaka establishment reveal the unaccepted side of the community's life. The elements which are suppressed by the community and which the Tonnerres manifest are such things as family love and pride (Lazarus claiming his dead daughter and her sons, Jules' concern for his sister Valentine and deep love and grief for Piquette), an uncomplicated and fertile sexuality (Jules and Morag), and the creativity of the artist (Jules and Pique). These elements are accepted by Morag, who also accepts for herself McRaith's name of Morag Dhu, (knowing the Shadow within her as the "Black Celt" part of her personality), through her deep

and enduring love-relationship with Jules. However, Morag's intuitive acceptance remains personal and she cannot extend it to the community. Manawaka will not accept its Shadow: Pique with her guitar, when she visits the town, is bombarded with beer bottles by a car-load of drunks, refused help for a cut inflicted by a broken bottle, and finally, for seeking that help, is jailed as a troublemaker by the community, which has already rejected in differing ways (but basically for the same reason) both her father and her mother.

I suggested at the beginning of this paper that the novels of Laurence, Thomas, and Godfrey which employ the image of Africa could be interpreted in terms of the Jungian archetype called the Shadow, and my argument has been directed to show how this interpretation emerges. It would be easy for this type of discussion to be reduced to a case history, or series of case histories, of the presence of the Shadow. However, Jung himself was sternly opposed to any such "reductive" method in psychotherapy — to any tendency to say "this is nothing but . . ." — and it is essential that the error of the reductive approach be also avoided in applying Jungian principles to the study of literature. The archetypal pattern I have traced here is not the only theme of the novels concerned, or even the dominant theme to which all others must be considered subservient. The literary value of such archetypal criticism lies precisely in its amplification of the dimensions of literary interpretation. For the works considered here, to which other approaches have also proved fruitful, the particular contribution of the archetypal approach is, I believe, that it draws together the individual works into a larger pattern in which the recovery of the scattered elements of a long-fragmented Canadian identity is suggested. If this recovery has not yet been achieved, at least it seems to be at hand.

NOTES

[1]Dave Godfrey, *The New Ancestors* (Toronto: New Press, 1970).

[2]Audrey Thomas, *Mrs. Blood* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1970); Blown Figures (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974).

[3]Margaret Laurence, *The Tomorrow-Tamer* (1963: Toronto: McClelland & Stewart NCL, 1970; *The Stone Angel* (1964; NCL, 1968); *A Jest of God* (1966; NCL, 1974); *The Fire-Dwellers* (1969; NCL, 1973); *A Bird in the House* (1970; NCL, 1974); *The Diviners* (1974; Toronto: Bantam Books of Canada, 1974). All page references are to these editions and are given in the text or at the end of quoted passages.

[4]C. G. Jung, "The Complications of American Psychology", in *Civilization in Transition,* in the Bollingen Edition of the Collected Works Vol. 10 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2nd edn. 1970), p. 510.

[5]For material on the Shadow see Jung: "Archetypes of the Colevtive Unconscious" and "Concerning the Archetypes" in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious,* Collected Works Vol. 9(i); and *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self,* Collected Works Vol. 9 (ii), Ch. 11.

[6]W. H. New, "Equatorial Zones and Polar Opposites", in *Articulating West* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), p. 229.

[7]Cited Sonia Cole, *The Prehistory of East Africa* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, rev. edn. 1963), p. 1.

[8]Louis S. B. Leakey, *The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 1.

[9]"Unde etiam vulgare Graeciae dictum semper aliquid novi Africam adferre". Pliny, *Natural History* (London: Heinemann Loeb Classical Library, 1915), Vol. III, Bk. viii, 42, p. 33.

[10]". . . in the East side of Afrike beneath the red sea dwelleth the great and mighty Emperour and Christian King Prester John . . . in this province are many exceeding high mountains upon which is said to be the earthly paradise", Richard Eden, *Briefe Description of Afrike* in Hakluyt [cited C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pb. edn. 1970), p. 144].

[11]Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici & Other Writings* (London: Dent, rev. edn. 1965), p. 17.

[12]Clara Thomas, *The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975).

[13]New, p. 216.

[14]Margaret Laurence, "Caverns to the Mind's Dark Continent", [Review of *The New Ancestors*], The Globe and Mail Magazine, 5 December 1970, p. 18.

[15]The power of the concept of sovereignty expressed by the term *queen* in such a context appears uncontaminated by the exercise of temporal authority; the image called into play is a figure akin to that of Ayesha in Rider Haggard's *She* and *The Return of She* — beautiful, supernatural, and immortal.

[16]Margaret Laurence, *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963). As *New Wind in a Dry Land* (New York: Knopf, 1964).

[17]*A Tree for Poverty: Somali Poetry and Prose,* collected [and translated] by Margaret Laurence (Nairobi, 1954; r/p Shannon: Irish University Press, 1970; Hamilton: McMaster University Library Press, 1970).

[18]"Speaking with tongues (glossolalia) is observed in cases of ekstasis (= *abaissement du niveau mental,* predominance of the unconscious). It is probable that the strangeness of the unconscious contents not yet integrated in consciousness demands an equally strange language", C. G. Jung, in a letter to Dr. E. V. Tenney of 13 February 1955, in C. G. Jung: *Letters* II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 227.

[19]I am concerned here only with a single aspect of the larger theme of "the problem of communication", which G. D. Killam, in his Introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of *A Jest of God,* describes as "central in Margaret Laurence's novels". It is not only between the Tonnerre family and the Manawaka establishment that there is a communications gap.