

prairies. Some authors, notably Hugh MacLennan, have chosen as themes such national or local problems as relations between Canadians and Americans or between French and English Canadians. From Ringuet's classic study of rural French Canada, *Trente Arpents*, to Mordecai Richler's strangely powerful novel of Jewish life in Montreal, *Son of a Smaller Hero*, the interest and appeal of these novels lie in the skill with which their authors have depicted Canadian life and character. But regionalism, though a characteristic feature of Canadian novels, is not the only one. The works of many contemporary French Canadian novelists, Gabrielle Roy, Yves Thériault, Robert Elie and André Langevin, for example, and writers such as Morley Callaghan, Mazo de la Roche, and Ethel Wilson, have a Canadian background too, but their primary concern is with the study of human nature. Yet another group of novelists, among whom are Lionel Shapiro, Thomas B. Costain, Brian Hearne and David Walker, write of broad human problems in a cosmopolitan setting. The humour of Stephen Leacock was universal, and if Paul Hiebert's esoteric satire, *Sarah Binks*, can best be appreciated by those with some knowledge of Canadian cultural pretensions, the wit of Robertson Davies and Robert Thomas Allen has a wide appeal.

In works of non-fiction similar interest in self-discovery is evident. Examples are Bruce Hutchison's *The Unknown Country*, a sensitive sketch that remains among the best general books on Canada, and Pierre Berton's *The Mysterious North*. Many historians have successfully combined detailed research with a genuine

talent for literary expression. This can be seen in Donald Creighton's two-volume study of Sir John A. Macdonald, in A. R. M. Lower's *From Colony to Nation*, in Bruce Hutchison's *Struggle for the Border*, and in Thomas B. Costain's *The White and the Gold*.

Poetry, also once regional in inspiration, has become more varied in impression and content. Nineteenth century poets, such as Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts and Duncan Campbell Scott, sang the praises of Canadian nature; much of the contemporary work of E. J. Pratt—for example *Brébeuf and his Brethren*—is epic in scope and Canadian in theme, but a large group of younger poets, including A. M. Klein, D. V. LePan, Earle Birney, P. K. Page, Robert Choquette, Alain Grandbois, Rina Lasnier and many others, have gone farther afield and show marked originality and individuality in subject matter and in style.

### Theatre

Only since the war has a professional theatre, nurtured to a great extent by radio and television experience, grown up in Canada. In Toronto the New Play Society has presented a series of plays written by Canadian dramatists (such as Lister Sinclair and Robertson Davies) as has another repertory group, the Crest Theatre. In Montreal the great French-speaking actor and producer, Gratien Gélinas, has maintained a professional theatre. A newer French-speaking group, the Théâtre du Nouveau

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