

cynical friend and later boss Bratian, who unscrupulously exploits people and drops them afterwards, represents the more advanced and more 'aggressive', money-oriented society of the U.S.A., the obsession with success related to the American dream which is here exposed as a sham and empty quest. The failure of Lucy's love romance and of her marriage in New York, the appropriate contrast to the humble Canadian town, brings out virtues and strengths which the ostensible losers from the northern country can draw upon. Lucy, who has temporarily returned home, eventually remains true to her ideals and responsibility even for her unfaithful spouse.¹²⁷

While exploring the lives of these and other individuals – one of them is a mere observer figure, the Canadian Bruce Fraser, himself a natural loser but also a sensitive poet and writer – MacLennan in this book also explicitly investigates in many dialogues between various figures and in many reflections of individuals the connections between the societies in the U.S.A. and in Canada, their parallels and contrasts.¹²⁸ Through his exploration of the burdens of the past (especially of dominant father figures the characters have to bear) and a constant sense of guilt and through his 'rhetoric of fiction' the author suggests that both Americans and Canadians share a puritan ancestry and a secularized puritan mentality, but that they cope differently with this heritage, with Canadians being better able to manage. At any rate the author seems to advocate joint action and to argue the complementarity of the two neighboring countries and societies. Inevitably, MacLennan also allows a character, in this case a subsidiary figure, i.e. Bruce Fraser, a neighbor of the Camerons, an innocent and naive Canadian, to express patriotic feelings and to extol

1994, pp. 23-36. On MacLennan in the context of cultural politics cf. the first monograph on him by Paul Goetsch, *Das Romanwerk Hugh MacLennans: Eine Studie zum literarischen Nationalismus in Kanda*, Hamburg, 1969.

¹²⁷ Eventually Lucy goes to Chicago, where Stephen has taken shelter after his dismissal by his boss, Carl Bratian.

¹²⁸ Cf. for instance *The Precipice*, pp. 26, 106ff, 341, 345ff, 359ff.