

**PAULINE JOHNSON: A BIOGRAPHICAL,
THEMATIC AND STYLISTIC STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis deals with E. Pauline Johnson's poetry and prose in relationship to her heritage and her surroundings, as well as contemporary literary modes.

Although generally relegated to a position among the Group of 1861 nature poets, Pauline Johnson stands out from the other members of the Group in several ways: she was a woman, she was half Mohawk Indian so that the natural settings of Canada were her home in a way they were not to the others of the Group, and she was a recorder of a dead or dying way of life--the Indian way--in both her poetry and prose.

Initially influenced by Transcendentalism and Romanticism, as well as her Indian heritage, she compromised her literary art in order to reach a public which she felt otherwise might ignore her. But near the end of her life she returned to the subject matter and themes of her early work, but with increased literary skill, as her last few poems indicate. Because of her blending of white (both British and American) literary and philosophical beliefs with Indian myth, folkways and narrative art, she may be regarded as the first authentic and purely Canadian writer.

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Chapter I

LIFE

A biography of the Canadian Mohawk poetess Emily Pauline Johnson must begin far before the simple statement of her birth because it is, in part, also the biography of the Iroquois Nation in Canada. And this story is inexorably bound up with the fabric of the entire concept of Canadian myth the poetess so beautifully sets forth in her work.

The expression of this myth and its spiritual and literary ramifications I propose to later explore in this thesis, but in the meantime, I will set about recounting her life by relating the story of Hiawatha, the great Onandaga chief who united the disparate tribes into the Council of the Five Nations (as of 1715, the Six Nations) and in so doing, determined, albeit unwittingly, that E. Pauline Johnson should have been born a Canadian.

Contrary to popular opinion, Hiawatha was indeed an actual person who lived c. 1190 in some part of Eastern North America. His story has been glamorized and myth-enveloped partly through the popularity of Longfellow's epic "Song of Hiawatha" and through the continuing fabric of many Indian legends. Of course this is natural in a time when reportage was not so accurate as it was colorful and ballad-inducing.

But from the carcass of romantic and undoubtedly fabricated sagas, it is possible to glean certain facts with a

credible amount of historical perspective to piece together a fascinating account of the formation of the Five Nation Confederacy.

The Iroquois themselves were first called the Aganyschioni or Housebuilders¹ and made their home on the North-East shore of the St. Lawrence River with the Hurons and the Adirondacks, the powerful Algonquin tribes to whom they were subject.

Through a matter of insult surrounding a marriage proposal (a Huron wanted to marry a Seneca woman but was insulted by her father, who considered the proposal an affront; in a rage, the young man killed the Seneca chief and this crime caused the tribes to take sides in a battle which left the Aganyschioni defeated by the Hurons), the Aganyschioni became a wandering tribe that experienced many battles with hostile tribes until it reached the Niagara Peninsula. It then made its way to what is now New York State and settled at some point along the Oswego River.²

There they lived as one band, with the Onondaga being the ruling clan, until quarrels caused a division into separate bands which drifted into nomadic patterns. One band crossed the Oswego River and called itself the Mohawks. It is from this band Pauline Johnson drew her ancestry. This band settled near the spot where Utica now stands and divided into two settlements; one east of Lake Oneida became an independent tribe calling itself the Oneida Nation. The oldest branch, the Onondagas, settled among the hills and valleys

around Lake Onondaga (the area of present-day Syracuse) and the two other branches (Mohawks and Oneidas) lived together many years on the Seneca River but finally separated when the younger branch located on Lake Cayuga and became a separate nation, as did the Senecas upon Lake Canandaigua.³ These five tribes made up the Five Nations. These five lived separately, had their own bounded territory and kept intact as distinct nations with their own ruling sachem (councillor) and their own language.

Many of these separate tribes fell into disputes over neighbouring lands. The Onondaga tribe would attack the weaker tribes, who would call for help from the elder tribes of Mohawks and Senecas and, taking advantage of this internal conflict, foreign neighbouring tribes constantly raided their country. This situation preceded the coming of Hiawatha.

The coming is a legend in itself, involved almost entirely with mysticism and intrigue. It tells of Hiawatha's approach as an unknown warrior in a white canoe. Some sources say that his canoe was of birch bark--a tree unknown to the peoples he came upon--and so was thought to be sacred. It is more likely, though, that because of his demeanour and wisdom, he was respected so highly.

In c. 1190, an old Mohawk chief named Dakonahweda (Inexhaustible) brought forth a plan for the unification of the tribes which would solve all possible conflicts. Unfortunately, he was a poor speaker and so, after a long time of medi-

tation, he decided to weave the whole of his plan into one great wampum belt (a shell bead belt, often in the form of pictograms used to tell a story). It is told that one day in the forest, nearly finished the belt, he looked up and saw a strange young hunter watching him. The hunter asked to be allowed to help the old man, who, after careful consideration, taught him his elaborate scheme, convinced that because of the young man's physical attractiveness and powers of oratory, he would carry the plan to members of tribes who would readily accept it. The young man was Hiawatha.⁴

The myths surrounding the meeting of these two men are varied. In the Constitution of the Five Nations or "The Iroquois Book of the Great Law" (Arthur C. Parker, New York State Museum Bulletin, Albany, New York, No. 184, 1916) there are recorded certain stories of Dakonahweda and Hiawatha which, although fraught with myth, cannot be disregarded.

Dakonahweda (sometimes spelled Dekanahwideh) himself is a figure of great legendary stature. Because of his wisdom, probably, the myth surrounding him was entirely a religious one. It is written that he was born of a virgin in a manner not unlike Christ's birth⁵ and these stories go on to describe his exile from his own tribe because of his unusual profound wisdom. They tell of his hermitage in the forest, of his self-education through ordeals, of his private purification, and finally of his return to the tribe as a

wise and holy man.

The stories concerning Hiawatha are similar. Apparently as a young man he left his tribe to go in search of a great teacher. There are many speculations put forth trying to resolve the question of his departure from his tribe. They centre around the deaths, it is said, of his seven daughters at the hands of a vicious sorcerer⁶ or the death of his only daughter⁷ or his sister.⁸ In all sources, however, it is said that his departure depended mainly on a dream of the tribal medicine man that depicted a great meeting in the woods.

In keeping with the transcendental pattern of Indian sensibility, which in fact echoes in these stories, the Eastern Indian tradition of disciple seeking guru, it could be said that Hiawatha was like an Eastern wanderer who forsook his tribe to go in search of a great teacher who could give him enlightenment. And when he found this teacher he lived with him for several years, soaking up wisdom, achieving enlightenment, and then himself going out into the world to teach others about peace. This emphasis on Hiawatha as peacemaker draws him even closer to the framework of Christian tradition in the same way that the disciples learned from Jesus, "the Prince of Peace," how to make peace.

This is not to say that I draw any parallels between Hiawatha and the disciples or St. Paul, or between Dakonahweda and Christ. It is simply interesting to note the similarity between the cultural-religious lore of the North

American Indians and those of the East Indians, the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and, for that matter, all cultures. This religious relationship (with its Eastern, transcendental flavour) will later be important in the discussion of spirituality in Pauline Johnson's work. And the point will then be taken that it was a spirituality and transcendentalism not necessarily created by her alone but stemming from the awareness of her Indian heritage and culture.

Dakonahweda's plan, meanwhile, as recorded in The Book of Rites, specified the rites to be maintained in a particularly religious way. Laws and rules were laid down for the protection of the amalgamated tribes. Elaborate schemes for different clans of the tribes were outlined. Three clans (Bear, Wolf and Turtle) were formed and it was stipulated that they could not intermarry. A bear could not marry a bear, but could marry a wolf.⁹ Any clan bearing the same totem must give food, protection, shelter, clothes or any needed hospitality to any member of that clan, irrespective of his nation. This plan of clanship further strengthened the organization.¹⁰

Dakonahweda instituted great reforms in religion, advancing many new observances and a host of thanksgiving ceremonies, and these were remarkable in their devotion to nature and the Great Spirit. These rites will figure strongly later in this thesis in a discussion of Indian transcendentalism as expressed by Pauline Johnson in her work.

Together, Hiawatha and Dakonahweda went to their brother tribes and explained their plans. The other chiefs decided to meet because of their confidence in Hiawatha, whom they assumed was sent to them by Rawen Niyoh, the Master of Life.¹¹ One chief, the most despotic and unfriendly (Addodahgonh or "Tangled," because he had tangled hair and a mean and ugly face), would not listen to the project, which he thought would rob him of his sovereignty. But Hiawatha urged him to listen. It is rumoured that while Hiawatha (then still unnamed) explained this project, he busied himself separating the tangled tresses of Addodahgonh, who, finally believing Hiawatha to be of superhuman origin, named him Ayontwatha or Hiawatha, meaning He Who Combs.¹² Longfellow made the name famous after hearing about Hiawatha from the Ojibways (Chippewas), a branch of the Algonquin tribe with whom he had much contact.

Ultimately the Iroquois Confederacy was a model upon which the British colonists based their provincial government. In fact, it supplied the basic idea upon which rest the foundations of the present systems of the United States and Canada, according to some historians, who go on to say that the first council of the Five Nations proved the strongest, most binding and longest-lived democratic confederation known to have existed among any people.¹³

When Champlain founded Quebec in 1698 the Iroquois Confederacy was already ancient. By 1650-1670, the historian

Parkman estimates that the Iroquois population included 12,000 people, 2500 of whom were warriors. By that time they had become masters of the territory from Florida west to the Mississippi and northward to include most of Canada, through various alliances and protectorates.¹⁴ The government itself was developed along the principles of representation by population. There were fifty sachems (councillors) whose titles were hereditary and depended upon bloodrights in the female line. War chiefs and lesser chiefs were elected by the women. The Mohawks, who always held first place in the council, had nine chiefs, the Oneidas nine, Onondagas fourteen, Cayugas ten, and the Senecas eight.¹⁵ In 1715 the Tuscaroras (from North Carolina) joined the confederation and it became the Council of Six Nations.

Pauline Johnson was a Mohawk of the Wolf Clan. Her great grandfather's name was Tekahionwake. (Double Wampum) but he was christened in the Anglican faith and given the name of Johnson by Sir William Johnson, the British proconsul who was married to a Mohawk girl named Molly Brant.¹⁵ Molly Brant was the sister of Chief Joseph Brant, who was Pauline's cousin. It was Joseph Brant who led the Six Nations to Canada, on the promise of 50,000 acres in Ontario in 1784, after the Six Nations had been allies of Britain during the American Revolution.

Tekahionwake, or Jacob Johnson as he was later called, had a son named John Smoke Johnson (Sakayanwaraton or Dis-

appearing Mist), who served with Captain John Brant (Chief Joseph Brant's son) during the War of 1812. John Smoke Johnson (Pauline's grandfather) also served with Sir Isaac Brock at the battles of Queenston Heights, Lundy's Lane and Stony Creek. In fact some even said that John Smoke Johnson with his own hands set fire to the city of Buffalo in the War of 1812.¹⁶ But arson wasn't John Smoke Johnson's only talent. He also was extremely eloquent and for forty years served as the speaker of the Iroquois Council, with the nickname Mohawk Warbler. He also was the transcriber and co-holder of the rare and sacred Iroquois Book of Rites (there were at the time only two copies in existence¹⁷ and he was the official keeper of the wampum records of the Confederacy.¹⁸

John Smoke's son, George Henry Martin Johnson (Owanonshyshon or Great House or Mansion), Pauline's father, was born at the Grand River Reserve on December 7, 1816. He went to school in Brantford, Ontario, until he went to the home of Rev. Adam Elliott, a Church of England clergyman, to act as interpreter. In 1842 he became official interpreter for the Anglican Church.

Pauline Johnson's mother was the sister-in-law of Rev. Elliott, Emily Howells, and she came to America from Bristol and settled in Ohio with her father and sister. Her father, a widower, remarried to a woman with small children who was less than sympathetic to Emily and her sister, so, when the

elder sister was given a chance to escape the tyranny of their step-mother by marrying Rev. Elliott and moving to Canada, she jumped at the chance and took Emily with her. Once in the Elliott home, Emily became acquainted with the minister's Indian interpreter, George Johnson. Overcoming his parents' disapproval of a mixed marriage (since chiefhood depended on the bloodlines of the mother, the Johnson family would lose its line of inheritance if its chief married a white woman), Johnson bought 200 acres of land near Brantford and built Chiefswood, an incredible majestic house built without a single nail. He imported a sterling silver tea set from England and brought in a carved piano for the parlour as a wedding present to his wife. They were married in Kingston on August 27, 1853, after certain family squabbles. They honeymooned in Toronto.

Soon after the wedding, George Johnson was appointed special forest warden and licensed to carry a gun for self-protection because he was assigned to clean up liquor-running. It was, in fact, in this position that he met his death in 1884 at the hands of liquor runners who resented his interference.²¹

Chief Johnson was a very important man in the Six Nation community and his home was the focal point for all sorts of distinguished visitors. Poets, painters, statesmen often went there to spend some enchanted times, but the greatest stir seems to have been made over the visit in 1869 of the

Duke of Connaught (later Governor General of Canada).²² The Duke was made a chief of the Six Nations, with Pauline's father and grandfather and Chief George Buck of the Onondagas (the only other man to have a copy of The Book of Rites) presiding over the ceremony. The Duke was given the name Kavakouge (Flying Sun) and during the ceremony knelt on a red broadcloth blanket which was once used in Chiefswood as the piano cover. For some reason, the Duke's kneelmarks were considered something sacred and Pauline used the blanket as part of her performing costume. When they discovered the former use of the blanket, white Canadians just couldn't make enough fuss about how quaint it all was. All of Miss Johnson's biographers rhapsodized about this little red blanket. The object of their affection now finds a cozy home in the Vancouver Museum.

Pauline had two brothers and a sister who left no heirs when they died. The elder brother and Pauline's sister were sent to Hellmuth College in London, Ontario, but Pauline herself received very little formal education. The bulk of it, in fact, consisted of two years with a governess, three years at an Indian day school and two years at Central School in Brantford.²³

As a child Pauline was fond of the works of Tennyson, Longfellow, Byron and Shakespeare, and also read Addison's The Spectator.²⁴ Her cousin on her mother's side was the American novelist, critic and editor William Dean Howells,

and critics dwelt on this fact when they were discussing her work, insisting that it was through this branch of the family that her creative talents came.

The fact of this distant relationship to a man of letters was a kind of curse in light of the boring arguments set forth by white critics of the day, who insisted the Indian part of her could never come out with any poetry.

Pauline was an Indian by law because she was born on Indian lands and thus was a ward of the government. Her upbringing, as she records it in her short story "My Mother," was one which placed strong emphasis on her Indian heritage.

Her first poems were published in Gems of Poetry, a small New York magazine, and The Week, established by Goldwin Smith in Toronto. On the strength of these publications, Frank Yeigh, president of the Young Liberal Association of Toronto, invited her to read at a recital at the Art Gallery rooms of the Ontario Society of Authors on January 16, 1892.²⁵ She recited "Cry from an Indian Wife," "My Forest Brave" and "My Redskin Love," and gave the only encore of the evening. Even though she wore only a simple white dress, the content of her work and her rendering of it made her more colourful than the other poets who also read, among them Duncan Capbell Scott.

On the strength of her successful recital, she gave her first solo reading at Toronto's Association Hall, where her selections were "The Avenger," "Pilot of the Plains," "Cry

from an Indian Wife" and, composed especially for the occasion, perhaps her most well-known poem, "The Song My Paddle Sings." Her encore was "Beyond the Blue."²⁶ During the recital she forgot part of "The Song My Paddle Sings," paused, tore a rose to pieces, and after the second stanza said, "Sorry I've forgotten the rest of the piece and if you don't mind I'll give you another in its place."²⁷ For some reason this candour endeared her to the critics as well as to the audience. After this she signed all her letters to Mr. Yeigh (whom she called Yeigh Man), "Star."

Pauline became a big hit on the recital circuit and between 1892 and 1894 she gave 125 recitals in fifty different places. It was probably because she was so unusual, compared to the stiff Canadian poets of the day, who were somber and often pompous.

The works she read at the beginning were fiery condemnations of the white man's treatment of the Indian and undoubtedly white audiences thought themselves very liberal because they applauded such material. And perhaps to ease some tiny pang of guilt, they agreed to make the quaint Miss Johnson and her Indian costume, a star. In a personal conversation with Phyllis Armour Hertzberg of Port Hope, a demure lady artist who was in her early years at the time Pauline was reading, it was confided to me that "everyone made quite a fuss over that girl."

And little wonder. It was, after all, still a time when

the West was pretty wild and still being tamed by fearless men, and here was a real "redskin" who could write and talk the white man's language and present to him the Indian point of view. Audiences were delighted.

At the end of her recital tour, Pauline had enough money to make a trip to England, where she hoped to publish her first book of poems.²⁸ In those days, England and the United States were the only places to begin a literary career. There were no large Canadian publishing houses that would assure literary success. After a public reception at Brantford, Ontario, in 1894, where the city fathers gave her a purse filled with gold, Pauline left for London, carrying letters from the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and Rev. Professor Clark of the University of Toronto, assuring her introductions to state and literary circles.

In London Pauline made the fashionable drawingroom scene, meeting such people as Aubrey Beardsley, who had just finished writing "Venus and Tannhauser," and giving many readings with the salon attraction of the day, the American poet Joaquin Miller, who enjoyed hanging out in a flannel shirt, blue jeans, high boots, and sombrero. Miller enjoyed shocking fashionable salon guests by making an entrance, throwing a bearskin rug on the floor, falling down on it, and reciting his poetry.²⁹

Pauline fit right in with her Indian costume. The time

seemed one when freaks were fashionable. A resident poet in the drawingroom was the big attraction. After all, the writers of the day were Beardsley, Oscar Wilde, Ruskin and Swinburn. Bernard Shaw, still deeply involved in journalism and Fabianism, had just finished Candida. Things were very colourful and art nouveau. People just seemed to do outrageous things then, especially if they were artists. It was so fashionable to be eccentric. Joaquin Miller, for example, went around bragging that he was the only man ever to wear a hat in the presence of Queen Victoria; she undoubtedly prided herself on being the only reigning monarch to allow it.

Pauline was a rage in this very swishy scene, wearing a costume modeled after Minnehaha's. She wore a buckskin dress trimmed with ermine skins and silver brooches--the brooches were very old and had been hammered from silver coins by Indian silversmiths. Of course she carried the famous red blanket. In later years colourful additions were made to the initial costume. Two scalps ended up hanging from her waist--one a Huron scalp and the other a Sioux, given to her in 1895 by a Blackfoot chief. Around her neck she wore a graded cinamon-bear-claw necklace she received in 1897 in Manitoba, and on her wrist she wore bracelets of wampum beads.³⁰

While she was in England she decided to be very generous (she was always generous; in fact there is a popular story

telling how Pauline gave her entire savings to get a bank clerk out of trouble; the terrible man never paid her back and she didn't like talking about the incident³¹⁾ and hire a "worthy girl" to type her manuscript. She hunted all over London until she found one who did a job that was so terrible Pauline was afraid to send the manuscript anywhere.³²⁻

Through her connections in London, Pauline gained an introduction to the famous critic of the day, Clement Scott, and she convinced him, through flattery, of her great talent, thereby securing his recommendation to John Lane, a London publisher, who agreed to publish her book.

In 1894 she returned to Canada, where she went on a tour of the West, and in 1895 her first book, White Wampum, appeared. But the great sellout had begun. Her poetry began to take on a "whiter" attitude and certainly took on tones that were more British and less Indian.

The most striking example of this concession happened in 1895 when she went to Duncan Campbell Scott's home for dinner. She asked him if she could come in her buckskins but after suitable discussion "it was decided that she should only change into them later in the evening for a private recital."³³ Scott probably thought it was all right to listen to an Indian read poetry but it was not all right to dine with one. The effect these concessions made on her work I shall deal with later in the thesis.

Pauline became engaged in 1898 but the marriage never

came about. On January 26 an announcement appeared in the Brantford Courier reading: "The engagement is announced of Miss E. Pauline Johnson, daughter of the late Chief G.H.M. Johnson of the Six Nations Indians and Mr. Charles Drayton, assistant inspector for the Western Loan and Savings Company, Winnipeg and whose home is in Toronto. The young couple are the recipients of the warmest congratulations on all sides in Winnipeg in which no doubt many friends in this city will most heartily join."³⁴

Later in the same year on July 30 there was an announcement that Miss Johnson was leaving for Winnipeg, where she was going to marry and have her permanent home.³⁵ But mysteriously, the marriage did not take place. Rumour had it that the family of the young man did not agree. Miss Johnson was thirty-seven years old at the time.

At that time, too, things weren't going too well financially. In a letter from Horatio Hale dated July 13, 1896, replying to her request for a copy of The Book of Rites, he says, "It's too bad that after doing so much and so well in your profession that you should be left by your manager's fault in pecuniary troubles."³⁶ These troubles followed her the rest of her life. Probably because of this, Pauline switched managers in 1897, appointing Walter McRays after she met him in Winnipeg.³⁷ Two years later she undertook a series of recitals with him. In 1898 Pauline's mother died, so the year had been a tragic one for her.

In 1901 Pauline visited Newfoundland and then in 1902 began her first tour across Canada in the company of McRaye, who took second billing as an impersonator and reader of Dr. Henry Drummond's habitant folklore poems. The two were a team and put on shows in one-horse towns all across Canada. Mr. McRaye later wrote about this tour in highly uninspiring prose (Town Hall Tonight, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1949, and Pauline Johnson and Her Friends, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), describing their exploits in a corny American fashion. Apparently the two would ride into town, either on a train or in a buggy, set up in a pool hall or barn, and would read their poetry. Afterwards there would be a dance. The recital usually was the highlight of the year for these tiny places on the frontier.

But the whole thing seemed to be very tedious for Pauline, who was reduced to making up a group of imaginary friends she liked to call "the boys." They included a bug named Felix and his wife Jerusha, a cat named Dave Dougherty, and an imaginary mongoose named Baraboo Montelius.³⁸ This piece of silly information seems to be the only really personal bit of light McRaye sheds on Miss Johnson's life. As he tells it, Miss Johnson was a kind of shadowy figure who only came out of her box to recite. His descriptions of his travels with her are about as lively as an intimate dinner with the Sphinx. Not only does he fail to put on paper any of Miss Johnson's private life, but he also fails to convince

anyone she was at all, warm or human. He paints a very dull picture, in fact, of the entire time.

He does manage unwittingly to reveal certain of Miss Johnson's passions ((a terrible attachment to Mounties) and does manage to reveal the circumstances under which some of her poems were written ("Trail to Lilloet" on the back of a theatre programme during a Bernard Shaw play), but the information isn't particularly inspiring.

Unfortunately, Miss Johnson's papers are not available and only a few scattered letters rest in various university archives. These will be discussed later in the thesis. On the whole, her personal life was not widely known. Even the papers of notable Canadian families (particularly an influential Toronto publishing family, Katherine Hale and John Garvin) reveal absolutely nothing about her aside from a mild acquaintanceship.

McRae's books do intimate that the circuit in those days was a tough one. Pauline frequently was a guest of the local district commander of the North-West Mounted Police and his wife.³⁹ Other times there were the usual primitive hotels. Sometimes Pauline gave benefit performances; in one Ontario town she gave a show to buy a wooden leg for the town constable.⁴⁰

In 1903 her second book, Canadian Born, was published and received high critical acclaim. But she still wasn't making much money. Some of her poems would bring such piti-

ful sums that she was astounded. McRaye tells the story of how "Train Dogs" (a poem she wrote one late spring morning after she saw an Indian trapper pull into Jasper Avenue in Edmonton with his dog sled and haggard team) was sent off to a magazine called Outing. The assistant editor turned down the poem with the intimation that she could do better work. (After reading the poem, I decided he was right.) But when she heard this criticism she smiled and told McRaye she'd held the editor on her knee when he was a child. Finally she submitted the poem to Rod and Gun, who printed it and sent her a cheque for seventy-five cents, which she returned to them, deploring their apparent poverty. Finally a year later she was surprised to see the poem on the front page of Outing with its authorship credited to a young Canadian journalist.⁴¹

In 1906 Pauline returned to England, this time with letters of introduction from Sir Wilfred Laurier and Lord and Lady Minto. Laurier, in fact, paid a great deal of attention to Pauline and visited her often.⁴² Archibald Lampman's wife and mother came to see her too. By this time she was becoming one of Canada's best-known poets.

It was on this second journey that she met the Squamish chief Joe Capilano, who was to be her best friend and the man to give her the material for her Legends of Vancouver. He was one of three Pacific-coast chiefs who had gone to London to protest to the King about a British Columbia games

act which the Indians regarded as restricting their ancient fishing rights.⁴³

A businessman in London had met Joe Capilano while working in Vancouver and introduced him to Lord Strathcona, who wasn't sure how he would get the Indians to meet the King. In the meantime they were living in the War Office and at the time Pauline was writing for Sir Arthur Pearson's paper. The salon business had fallen off considerably since her last visit and she was no longer in great demand. Sir Arthur set up an interview between Pauline and the chiefs. The next morning the interview appeared under the headline "Klahoya Tillicum Scookum," which were Pauline's first words to the chiefs.⁴⁴ This meeting was, to my mind, another example of the creeping sellout.

Chief Joe finally met the King and was so impressed that he liked to tell stories about it for years after. Pauline encouraged these stories and the two became great friends after her third trip to London in 1907 until the chief's death in 1910.

Pauline's last concert was given in Kamloops in the fall of 1909⁴⁵ because the boys' stories she had written had sold well and she thought she'd try freelance writing in Vancouver. But her health was poor and she had trouble meeting appointments and schedules. She was nearly destitute and many times was touched deeply by benefits given in her honour.

Chief Capilano's Squamish stories lent themselves to renditions in the Iroquois manner, and when things began to get desperate financially, Pauline went to the Vancouver Province with the story "The Two Sisters." The paper asked for a series but it was hard on Pauline because she was in such ill health. This situation, however, produced Legends of Vancouver, a series which stretched from April 16, 1910 to January 7, 1911.

Finally, because of Pauline's dire financial difficulties and her reluctance to accept any charity, the press club and the Women's Canadian Club decided to take charge of a trust fund to finance the publication of the legends.⁴⁶ The fund was meant to carry the initial expense of printing the books and finally one hundred dollars paid to the Saturday Sun assured the printing of a thousand copies of the legends. These books were then distributed to various Vancouver bookstores to be sold on a commission basis, and out of these sales further publication was financed.

The first thousand copies sold out and a new edition was being pushed by Pauline's autographing the copies. But this caused her great suffering. She was dying of cancer of the right breast at the time and was in constant severe pain. Finally she was admitted to a private room in the Bute Street Hospital in May, 1912. She was constantly under the influence of opiates and so could walk about freely, but when they wore off she would faint from the pain wherever

she happened to be.⁴⁷

Her family was of little help. Although it is not recorded anywhere, all information points to the fact that Pauline was estranged from her sisters and brothers. At the time of her illness she wrote to them but received no reply. Shortly after getting to the hospital she received a clipping from her brother from an eastern paper which said that Pauline was in actual want and had lost the use of her right arm. To prove that she still could write she insisted on autographing every copy of Flint and Feather, which her trustees were then bringing out.

During her last days, she was visited by the Duke of Connaught, who sat on the red blanket he once knelt upon. Pauline made sure that it was spread over a chair for him.

During this time, Pauline requested a burial in Stanley Park because she had a dread of being "dragged back to Brantford." No one could blame her. Park officials agreed, as her body would be cremated. To this Pauline said, "some people tell me I've got to be burnt anyway. Whether they bury me in a cemetery lot or not. Well, they can burn my body in this world so as to make certain of it. As for my spirit, that will be between the Great Tyee and myself. If they would scatter my ashes within sight and sound of the sea near some great tree in Stanley Park, I would ask for nothing more from them."⁴⁸

"The Ballad of Yaada" was Pauline's last poem. It was

to be printed in the Christmas edition of Saturday Night, but unfortunately didn't appear until after her death. Another poem, "The Ballad of Laloo," was started but Pauline never got beyond the first few lines. She died on March 7, 1913.

Her only monument (besides her tombstone in Stanley Park) is Chiefswood, her birthplace. That has been restored by the Brantford Historical Society and contains many period pieces, photographs, furniture and books. The house was officially presented to the Six Nations Indians by Pauline's sister Evelyn in 1926 and was opened to the public in 1963. A five-cent stamp was issued in 1961 to make the 100th anniversary of her birth.

Besides this, and several slim volumes of work, nothing remains of Pauline Johnson. But her contribution to Canadian literature and in fact to the myth of this country cannot be questioned and it is these things that I hope my thesis will prove.

Chapter II

POETRY

In the 1798 "Preface" to his Lyrical Ballads, William Wordsworth indicated that his principal object was to "choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as possible in a selection of language really used by men, and the same time to throw over them a certain colouring or imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature."¹

This statement is perhaps the clearest and tersest manifesto of the Romantic Movement in English poetry. Ralph Waldo Emerson took the idea a step further when, in his essay "Nature" (1833-1836), he stated that "every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact,"² and that

the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind...there seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, preexist in necessary ideas in the mind of God and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit.³

Certainly Emerson maintained, and many of his contemporaries

aries agreed, that there was a spirit that flowed through all things and was at the same time part and parcel of all things. Nature was the very manifestation, the body, of God.

This attitude, hinted at by the earlier Romantics (Wordsworth whispered in his poem "Nutting" that there was a spirit in the woods⁴), became the dominant motif of certain American literary works, those that came to be known as Transcendental. The Transcendentalists, given Emerson as their spokesman, held several definite credos, just as did the Romantics who were defined by Wordsworth.

While Romanticism, as described by Wordsworth, clearly dissected the questions, What is a poet? What is good poetry? and What is in fact the vehicle of both? the Transcendentalists, far beyond structural concerns, delved still deeper into philosophy and religion, incorporating a sort of literary Pantheism which, if not entirely bohemian in the face of then current American literature, was at least provocative.

Wordsworth answers the question, What is a poet? by saying:

He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more

than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:--whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.⁵

He adds that all good poetry

is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply.

...we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.⁶

Finally Wordsworth states that the aim was "to imitate, as far as is possible, the very language of men."⁷

The Transcendentalists were more subjectively involved than were the Romantics. Theirs was the realm of nature, the love of beauty, and the language inherent in this fabric.* Language was in fact subservient to subject. For the Roman-

*Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and threefold degree. 1. Words are signs of natural facts. 2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.⁸

tics, it was a vehicle of subject, to a greater degree.

The Transcendentalists took nature for their champion, took the earmarks of a natural lifestyle as their expounded cause, and blended their observations with religious substantiation with a definite connection of "spiritual doctrine," as Emerson says:

He [the Transcendentalist] believes in miracle, in the perpetual openness of the human mind to new influx of light and power; he believes in inspiration, and in ecstasy. He wishes that the spiritual principle should be suffered to demonstrate itself to the end, in all possible applications to the state of man, without the admission of anything unspiritual; that is, anything positive, dogmatic, personal.⁹

Given the sway these two philosophies held over the literature of Britain and the United States, and given the influences of both on Canadian literature in the past one hundred years and more, it seems important to raise the question, was Pauline Johnson a Romantic or a Transcendentalist?

In this thesis, I maintain that Pauline Johnson and that area of Canadian Literature which she exemplified were neither Romantic nor Transcendentalist but a curious combination of the two, adding the still more mysterious and primitive vitality of Indian legend and lore. The result of this combination is quite startling because it provides a unique context for a literature that is entirely separate from any other in the world. It is no imitation of an English or an American culture. It is, in fact, a different

and separate cultural phenomenon so that no one who studies it could, with any accuracy, say that early Canadian literature was simply a regurgitation of foreign philosophies. And it is precisely this type of unique utilization of foreign elements translated into a personal native schemata that makes the work of Pauline Johnson so important to the study of Canadian literature.

Johnson emerged in the greatest group of Canadian nature poets--the Group of 1861--and her contributions to world literature in a separate mode pinpointed Canada at the corner of a triangle formed by the great British and American writers. Through the study of her attitudes we can glean for ourselves a deeper understanding of the history of early Canadian literature and it is her particular poetic sensibility that this thesis will also explore.

Pauline Johnson herself was a mixture of disparate elements. Her mother was of British descent; her father, Indian. The times in which she lived were a hotbed of American and French interaction, European values, Cosmopolitan ideals and rural sensibility.

Since she was the first Indian poet to write in English and express personal effects of such combinations, she was probably the first authentic and purely Canadian writer. And in the body of this thesis, while pointing out her connection with Transcendentalism and Romanticism, and her debt to both, I hope also to demonstrate that in her work

there emerged a third, unique element (and a revolutionary one because it was a successful synthesis of Indian, American and British culture) indigenous to Canada.

Because of her background, Johnson had the ability to sift through all three elements (Transcendental, Romantic and Indian) and come up with a literate poetic system taking the best from each approach. Whether she succeeded is not the issue. The important thing is that an attempt was made.

I will deal with Pauline Johnson's poetical treatment in Transcendental, Romantic and Indian modes of: Nature and Spirit; Religion and Relationship with God; Voyages and Journeys; Myths and Legends; Indian Culture and Tradition; Patriotism; Love; and the way in which her viewpoint as a woman coloured her work. Her prose will be dealt with in a separate section.

In all cases, I hope it will become evident that she creates an entirely original and remarkable piece of art stemming from a definite and entirely Canadian philosophy.

The Indians were Transcendentalists of a sort long before the Americans were, but because of confusion over their pictographs and an absence of literary transcription, these traditions and philosophies were largely ignored. Only in the present day has there been a great urgency to understand the Indians' interpretations of nature and so there has been an increased awareness of their wisdom, even via poor translations. The Indians, in fact, developed a

myth surrounding the earth that was really a primitive transcendentalism that is not far divorced from Thoreau's sophisticated reverence for nature.

The Lakota was a true Naturist--a lover of nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, the attachment growing with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him....

Kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water was a real and active principle. For the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them and so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue.

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence.¹⁰

Echoes of this sensibility remain in Johnson's work when she speaks of farming and of gathering. These traditions of the Indian she holds uppermost in her mind when she writes about his attempts at agriculture. In fact,

the agrarian nature of life as it was in rural Canada (and in rural America too) had a strong bearing on her attitudes towards the Indian and the white man. She saw them both in a light which led her to conclusions that the urban life was taking something away from man in general just as the forced patterns of agricultural life were removing something from the Indian.

Closely coupled in a symbiotic relationship with nature, the men of the plains and forests lived a radically different life from the men of the cities, and although Johnson could be considered a city-dweller by virtue of her sophistication and experience, she did live for the first part of her life in rural Ontario on the reservation near Brantford, Ontario, where she had ample time to absorb the Indian attitude towards survival. But her attitudes stem from a much deeper root. It was, in fact, of the subtle difference between the white man and the Indian in these matters of survival in nature, that Johnson wrote obliquely.

While there is a marked contrast between the Transcendentalists and the Romantics when it comes to taking from the land (even though the poet considers man and nature adaptable to each other,¹¹ consider Wordsworth's rape of the grove in his poem "Nutting," as opposed to Thoreau's sitting quietly on his stoop taking only what the land offers up), Johnson celebrates the Indian habits of gathering.

In her poem "At Husking Time" she describes the merry lads and maidens wandering between stalk and stubble at husking time, as well as the natural plunderers--raccoon, chipmunk, crow.¹² In this way she makes man's harvest seem as natural as the harvest by the animals amid the natural landscape.

In her poem "Joe," a young boy, satisfied after his work, leaves for home, little realizing it was a precursor of civilization to come--the pioneer's axe and settler's plough to mark, as natural epilogue to simple farming, a completely new attitude of survival in the forest.¹³ The poem seems to ring ominously as Johnson was aware of the effect of farming on the land. In this sense she agreed with Thoreau, who wrote of farmers:

I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. Better if they had been born in the open pasture and suckled by a wolf, that they might have seen with clearer eyes what field they were called to labor in. Who made them serfs of the soil? Why should they eat their sixty acres, when man is condemned to eat only his peck of dirt? Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born? They have got to live a man's life pushing all these things before them, and get on as well as they can. How many a poor immortal soul have I met well nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing, pasture, and wood-lot! The portionless, who struggle with no such unnecessary inherited encumbrances, find it labor enough to subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh.

But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is ploughed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before.¹⁴

According to Emerson, this desperate, rapacious farming technique of the civilized man is symptomatic of a more far-reaching religious significance. It is, in fact, he says, a symptom of lack of faith in God to provide for him as he does for the beasts in the fields.

I mean we have yet no man who has leaned entirely on his character, and eaten angels' food; who, trusting to his sentiments, found life made of miracles; who, working for universal aims, found himself fed, he knew not how; clothed, sheltered, and weaponed, he knew not how, and yet it was done by his own hands. Only in the instinct of the lower animals we find the suggestion of the methods of it, and something higher than our understanding. The squirrel hoards nuts and the bee gathers honey, without knowing what they do, and they are thus provided for without selfishness or disgrace.¹⁵

Overriding this simple standard that for every need there is a supply, civilized man in a desperate attempt to vindicate his fear tries to accumulate as much as he can as fast as he can. Man has mistakenly interpreted the innocent actions of animals as ratification of his disorganized and desperate attempts to feed himself. Certainly feeding and clothing himself is not a task civilized man takes lightly.

But Johnson, in her description of children in "Low Tide at St. Andrews," lovingly maintains that such a task can be pleasant, and the thing itself a noble and even delightful and innocent activity, and describes

...naked-footed children, tripping down,
 Light with young laughter, daily come at eve
 To gather dulse and sea clams and then heave
 Their loads, returning laden to the town,
 Leaving a strange grey silence when they go,--
 The silence of the sands when tides are low.¹⁶

In the case of the white man, selfishness and greed destroy his basic harmony with the elements. But the Indian system of Potlach--the ritual whereby one brought his possessions to a common place and shared them with others--and in his system of hunt- and village-circle, selfishness and greed were impossible. During shortages, everything usually was rationed; in times of plenty, things were shared. The Indian operated in the best tradition of nature: never take more than one needs. It was only when the white man came that the buffalo disappeared and other shortages became apparent. And Johnson, aware of this, acknowledges her kinship with even the smallest bumble bee in "The Homing Bee" and then derides herself because even her humanness puts on her the indelible stamp of selfishness:

You are better than I, little brother of mine,
 Than I, human-souled,
 For you bring from the blossoms and red summer shine,
 For others, your gold.¹⁷

But nature always takes her revenge on the white settler,

the civilized man. "The Wolf" (also the name of an Iroquois clan; thus possibly the poem is a subtle vindication of Indian revenge upon the white man) sets forth "to steal, to search and snarl and forage...falling upon luckless settlers' heifer"¹⁸ and in this way the natural hunter gains some satisfaction for the iniquities he has suffered.

Yet nature suffers to see man suffer because it, too, is involved in life. Any vengeance is bittersweet. Of course Johnson is often subjective in her interpretation of life and she shifts between her concept of nature as a balm soothing man's pain, and as a cold, indifferent backdrop to that pain:

...That underneath them snowdrifts we would find
 a thing or two;
 For he'll writ on that there paper, "Been lost fer
 hours,--all hope is past.
 You'll find me, boys, where my handkerchief is
 flyin' at half-mast."¹⁹

But it is a conflict that she does not intend to resolve because she is still operating within the framework of mood.

Sometimes the natural characters she creates are cute (in the best sense of that word) because they are enchanting in their natural beauty. "Lady Icicle," for instance, paints a beautiful silver delicacy in the best fairy-tale tradition. Johnson here revels in her expression of the feminine intricacy of nature; it is a concept of nature in its feminine aspect just as nature's violence could be said to be an expression of a masculine aspect.²⁰

Pauline Johnson believes, as the Indians did, that there is a soul or spirit present in all natural things--the stones, the trees, the grass--and that soul and spirit, although capable of individual expression (the soul within the river, the spirit in the flower), are all part of the one spirit that resides equally in man.

Emerson maintained that

The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.²¹

and that

Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact.²²

In her understanding of the relationship between man and nature, Johnson draws conclusions which lead her to a kind of religious overview of the relationship. As Emerson suggests, nature--by virtue of its creativity--is profoundly religious in that it can bring about regeneration and rebirth, and, of course, by virtue of its traditional aspect as offshoot from the "hand of God." Emerson explains natural phenomena in a totally religious context.

The natural experience is for the Transcendentalist, the Indian, and more subtly the Romantic, just as it is for Johnson, a religious one. For it is only in the framework of beauty and its interrelated aspects that feelings are evoked which are of sacred proportions. The only possibility is to lump these feelings together with feelings that are

religious. Both these awaken in the participant some sort of awe and reverence for a greater thing than the personality-self.

Johnson sees this and often reflects upon it. Her poem "Shadow River" beautifully describes the tender and sacred relationship between the river, the sky and man:

Midway 'twixt earth and heaven,
A bubble in the pearly air, I seem
To float upon the sapphire floor, a dream
Of clouds of snow,
Above, below,
Drift with my drifting, dim and slow,
As twilight drifts to even.

In the poem she goes on to describe a fern leaf and establish its link with the river, too:

The little fern-leaf, bending
Upon the brink, its green reflection greets,
And kisses soft the shadow that it meets
With touch so fine,
The border line
The keenest vision can't define;
So perfect is the blending.²³

It is, after all, all one--the river, the sky, the air between, the canoeist and the fern-leaf--all captured in the in the imperceptibly delicate net of nature. And the reflection of the sky and the landscape in the river are mirror images of the poet's mood which translates them into an emotion that is both devout and religious.

In spite of this harmony, it is the poet's (and the Indians') awareness of the unbendable mystery of the situation that is unique. The Indian and the poet too know that the "beauty, strength and power of the land / Will never

stir or bend at my command,"²⁴ but in moving harmoniously along the breast of the river, man can change it delicately and constructively, and tranquilly alter his image of the world. Just as his paddle dipping in the water changes the reflection that the canoeist sees, so does the harmonious relationship between man and nature constantly change in nuance and innuendo while remaining basically the same:

But all the shade is marred or made
If I but dip my paddle blade:
And it is mine alone.²⁵

Johnson's conception of spirit includes the belief that it should flow through all things. Yet she also draws close to a more personal aspect of spirit. Her treatment of Christ leads me to believe that she regarded Him as a cherished mate and friend. "Brier" is a loving account of her gratitude to Him for interceding in her difficulties.²⁶

Yet in spite of her tender familiarity and love for Him, she feels herself apart and undeserving of His gentle attention. "Christmastide" implies that she waits without the circle of intimate Christian fellows for the correct and proper guidance to spiritual fulfillment.²⁷ "A Prodigal" (although it was written to the memory of of a lost young lady whose newborn child was buried with her in a convent churchyard*) implies an alienation from the Church; only later was she reconciled with it. It is with the

*This is indicated in an undated letter of Pauline Johnson's, Queen's University Library Archives.

tiniest shred of guilt that Johnson speaks of organized religion.²⁸ Yet she always speaks of God and Heaven with reverence.

In "Cattle Country" she acknowledges the never-changing perfection of God²⁹ and in "Golden of the Selkirks" she acknowledges His omniscience.³⁰ Certainly these few poems do not bear strong testimony to her concrete beliefs. Rather, these are spread in more subtle fashion through her work celebrating nature.

It is true that she describes Lent (in "Easter") in picturesque natural terms--a large bird, a lovely lady³¹-- and it is these outlandish and unorthodox metaphors she enjoys. Yet there is something notably Eastern (or pantheistic) in her attitude towards the spirit. It seems quite obvious in the poem "The King's Consort,"³² where she in fact discusses reincarnation (the belief that the soul is born again and again into new bodies until it reaches spiritual awareness of its own perfection), that she was aware of philosophies that were other than traditionally Christian. There also is evidence of a reasonable interest (if not a belief) in the immortality of the soul, and the indominatability of the purer emotions such as love.

But interestingly enough, in "And He Said Fight On,"³³ the poem she wrote shortly after the doctors told her that her illness would be fatal, there is not one single mention of God. So it is safe to assume that her religion was a

personal mixture of orthodox Christian philosophy and an Indian-influenced Transcendentalism. Her Indian superstitions, more prevalent in her prose, find expression best in her legends. She seems unconcerned about many of the sacred Indian myths apart from their natural value, insofar as her poetry is concerned, at least.

Although at the outset of her career it seemed that she could quite easily have become an exceptionally fine and eloquent Indian poet, she seems to have wavered between championing Indian causes and dealing with white traditional modes of expression. And this indecision, this basic split, and her final resolution of it in her opting for the white approach, led her discussions of God (not at all her favourite topic) to be fairly conventional and less spectacular than they might have been had they dealt with pure religious expression.

Yet Pauline Johnson does use poems as prayers. Although not necessarily charged with joyous realization of ultimate cosmic consciousness, they take on a humble reverence and grandeur of their own by virtue of their simplicity of faith. "Workworn"³⁴ aptly describes the profound realization that God gives his gifts through many forms, in many ways. To the workworn old woman who had little, a smile from a child was divine encouragement. To Johnson, a glimpse of this very interchange was the gift. Yet the poet realized that her pattern of gratification is much

more complicated and, in fact, admonishes herself to observe the crosses others have to bear, to learn through others' interaction and suffering, to accept and be satisfied with much less.

Though Johnson undoubtedly was a Christian (she was influenced strongly by her parents, who were fervent Christians from their youth which was spent in the home of a minister*), she was not entirely inculcated with vibrant, God-fearing religious zeal. To the rigidity of dogmatic Christianity she brought a kind of personal pantheism parallel to that of the Transcendentalists and substantiated by the Indian view of life. She often uses religious images to describe nature:

Russet needles as censers swing to an altar, where
The angels' songs are less divine
Than duo sung twixt breeze and pine.³⁵

And in fact religious language and imagery recur in many of Johnson's nature poems to carry home the close association between nature and spirit present in her own consciousness.

For instance, in her poem "The Shadows" she speaks of the foliage being "baptized" by the river spray³⁶ and in "Nocturn" she describes the night "blessing" the world.³⁷ Both are symbolic baptisms. Both connect human conceptions of divine blessings in a natural rhythm. Both express a

*By the time Henry Mudson started up the Hudson River, the Iroquois long since had discarded their tribal deities and worshiped a god called Taconhiawagon, the Upholder of Heaven or Master of Life.

belief in the beneficence and even spiritual refreshment of natural life, as in the following lines from "Nocturn":

Night of Mid-June, in heavy vapours dying,
Like priestly hands thy holy touch is lying
Upon the world's wide brow;
God-like and grand all nature is commanding
The "peace that passes human understanding";
I, also, feel it now.³⁷

This poem alone, perhaps the most religious of all Johnson's work, is the perfect example of her conception of nature as shrine. In it she asks why men constantly beg for gifts when a myriad of treasures lie at their feet. Once more, these gifts are natural and are the unseen resting places of omnipresence.

This is, in fact, almost a glowing testimonial to the Transcendental spirit of her work which is Christian in its symbolism, yet maintains an all-encompassing mysticism which can be called Eastern. Ultimately, mysticism and Christianity with a certain sensitivity to Indian spiritual relationships have been so blended as to provide a perfect and yet unique literary tapestry.

It is this investiture of natural places with holiness that gives the poet's description a definite personality. In "Fire Flowers," for example, nature (the fire flower here) can trigger an emotional response, can take part in human interplay.³⁸ Once again Johnson indicates her belief that man living in nature is right and natural, and that such a condition is laudable. In this aspect, the Indian

agrees, the Romantic scoffs slightly (he is more sceptical and less practical), and the Transcendentalist, while he agrees, is more civilized and philosophical about it. He indeed takes his natural life symbolically.

But Johnson goes beyond symbolism, beyond romance, into the realms of practicality and participation. The Romantics proclaimed that a man working in nature was merely symbolic of a basic schism between the soul and the outside world. The Indian and ultimately Pauline Johnson, dealing with a more scientific and natural approach to these ideals, proclaim that nature is man's home and that he is part and parcel of it, and they think it no more unusual that man should live in it harmoniously (just as he lives in cities and towns) than that the moon should live with sky or that water should live in riverbed.

But because Johnson was part white, she links this practical acceptance of man's place in nature with the strangeness felt by the Protestant with his reluctance and his reticence in the natural setting, and comes to terms with it.

She is sportswoman and adventurer. She revels in the beauty about her and does not write about hunting or cooking game but writes about that which even the most alienated civilized man will understand: beauty. In so doing, she draws the reader, regardless of his background or views, into an inescapable web of natural wonder, until hopefully

he sees a kind of blend of Romanticism, symbolism and practicality working together much as the mental, spiritual and physical aspects of our nature work together.

Johnson is often guilty of coercion, of saccharine persuasion, of dramatic and forceful rejection of incongruity and civilized rapaciousness of natural physical responses. But for this she is to be forgiven because she managed to take out of disparate elements some form of concrete and special elements that accurately described a white woman of unusual background living happily and harmoniously in a rough environment. This is the way she lived her life. The voyages she made were in fact these very attempts to reconcile her disparate philosophies with her knowledge from birth (by virtue of her Indian heritage) of the basic harmony of all things. And this was Canadian in its essence.

VOYAGES AND MYTHS

The concept of voyage is paramount in Pauline Johnson's work. And it is precisely this concept that gives rise to the speculation that travel is endemic to the Canadian myth.

Our mythic heroes are the Voyageurs, the Coureurs du Bois, the explorers such as Cartier, Mackenzie, Radisson or Simon Fraser, the prairie-ranging Mounties and the builders of the Canadian Pacific Railway, as is natural in a vast and sparsely-settled country. Johnson melds this myth with her Indian love of space and travel, and substantiates it, gives it credence and body and favour in the expression of it.

As a poet and performer, she toured the country and wrote many verses about its expanse. Besides this melodic expression of the trips themselves, there is a description of charming scenes along the way, adding mystery and depth to the voyage.

An important place is also given to waiting, departure and arrival. The voyages encompass lost expeditions hampered by natural obstacles (the story of Henry Hudson, abandoned by most of his crew and left to die of hunger and cold in the bay that was to be named after him is perhaps the archetype of this myth). The very loss of these expeditions is mystic and implies a kind of opposing friction between man and nature, ending in nature's triumph. And of

course Johnson describes the ultimate natural voyages of the seasons. This entirely elemental aspect of her work makes her distinctly Canadian; this preoccupation with changing climate becomes indiginous to this country.

One of the most interesting aspects of her journies is the silence in which they are taken. The silence and beauty of an Indian voyage by canoe is obliterated by the chug-chug cacaphony of the white man's steam ship. It is this silence and gentle beauty of the Indian voyage that Johnson perpetuates in her poetry. Her most famous poem, "The Song My Paddle Sings," remains as a classic tribute to the perfect harmonious natural silence of the Indian canoe voyage:

West wind, blow from your pairie nest
 Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.
 The sail is idle, the sailor too;
 O! wind of the west, we wait for you.
 Blow, blow!
 I have wooed you so.
 But never a favour you bestow.
 You rock your cradle the hills between,
 But scorn to notice my white lateen.

I stow the sail, unship the mast:
 I wooed you long but my wooing's past;
 My paddle will lull you into rest.
 O! drowsy wind of the drowsy west,
 Sleep, sleep,
 By your mountain steep,
 Or down where the prairie grasses sweep!
 Now fold in slumber your laggard wings,
 For soft is the song my paddle sings.

August is laughing across the sky,
 Laughing while paddle, canoe and I
 Drift, drift,
 Where the hills uplift
 On either side of the current swift.

The river rolls in its rocky bed;
 My paddle is plying its way ahead;

Dip, dip,
 While the waters flip,
 In foam as over their breast we slip.

And oh, the river runs swifter now;
 The eddies circle about my bow.
 Swirl, swirl!
 How the ripples curl
 In many a dangerous pool awirl!

And forward far the rapids roar,
 Fretting their margin for evermore.
 Dash, dash,
 With a mighty crash,
 They seethe, and boil, and bound, and splash.

Be strong, O paddle! be brave, canoe!
 The reckless waves you must plunge into.
 Reel, reel.
 On your trembling keel,
 But never a fear my craft will feel.

We've raced the rapid, we're far ahead!
 The river slips through its silent bed.
 Sway, sway,
 As the bubbles spray
 And fall in tinkling tunes away.

And up on the hills against the sky,
 A fir tree rocking its lullaby,
 Swings, swings,
 Its emerald wings,
 Swelling the song that my paddle sings.³⁹

It is also a tribute to independence, courage, and the ability to work harmoniously and triumphantly within a natural landscape, a landscape she appreciates.

This appreciation is a strong testimonial to her understanding of the gentle natural cadences and important musical tenderness she confers upon the country. In this sense she is a romantic (see discussion of sound and her use of silence, to follow) as she draws this feeling from the nature of her environment. Her paddle gently alters

both her vision (the sight of the water beneath her) and her audible associations (its sound in the water). Notice how natural these sounds and these feelings are. The Canadian trail is always quiet. The voyage, for the most part, is a silent passage into a deeper, more silent, unexplored realm.

Many Canadian myths concern the establishment of routes across the country. The great railway stories ("Prairie Greyhound" adds to this⁴⁰) romanticize the making of the roadbed and laying of the track. Water legends romanticize the shipping routes along the Great Lakes and seacoasts. The myths of this country have grown up around a strong and vibrant tradition of survival and travel. The very myth that Johnson herself creates or renders, particularly in her poems, has to do with lovers losing themselves in the vast prairies ("Pilot of the Plains"⁴¹) or natural obstructions blocking men's progress ("At Half Mast"⁴²). It is the strong contour of the land as well as the movement of the seasons that makes for the romance. And it is a romance that is often expressed bitterly and with sorrow.

Because of the nature of the land, its potent powers often overwhelm control of any passage, fortification or struggle. The land always wins. Because of this, many have tended to suggest the inhuman and barren absence of myth, meaning those daring activities of men which are glorious accounts of their triumph over the natural.

But as Johnson shows, myth can be much more than that. It also can be a feeling that the spirit of the land is a personality separate unto itself and that that very personality seeks to define itself through upheaval, natural phenomena, and the encouragement of a search for its kernel of substance.

The most disturbing thing about Canada's myth seems to be that it is de-peopled, isolated and, in that sense, uniquely devoid of a strong personality or flavour. Yet in the same light, it is this very nudity and isolation that is mythic. The seasons, the wind, the shape of the land, the very loneliness of the men who try to cross it and tame it, blend subtly into a fabric of astounding mythic value. It is his profound respect for the impenetrable, allusive grandeur of its frontiers that makes the Canadian also reticent to render the spirit of his country in a definable framework. Because this allusive grandeur is truly mysterious in the best occult traditions of that word.

For these very reasons, the Indians seldom spoke about the country in which they lived in definite, plausible terms that defined it as an entity subservient to them. Rather, they endowed it with personality, activity, and reacted spontaneously and naturally with it. They saw no need to deal with it in geographic or traditionally scientific terms. That is why their legends are so childlike and yet, at the same time, demonstrate such a profound respect and

understanding.

Pauline Johnson, in her adoption of these same attitudes, seems to present a picture that is cohesive and clear, even if it is not specific. She does not rhapsodize about the land or the country. Rather she describes aspects of the country as one would describe the features of a beloved friend. This does not grasp the essence of the friend itself, but rather suggests, by shading and inuendo, the personality so that the reader can draw his own conclusions. There is no attempt to flagrantly pigeon-hole, to be vociferously Canadian.

The white literature of Canada, although natural and sympathetic enough to this kind of attitude, is not geared to translate into fairytale terms the natural immensity of the landscape. For centuries the Indians were able to personify their more magnificent natural vistas, making them real and less ominous. The white man is only capable, because of his strident formal literary traditions and sophistication, of exalting these vistas in prose and poetry. This is never enough.

Following this, the Canadian who looks for legends of man's triumph over the natural landscape will fail. It is rather essential to Canada's myth that man seek to comprehend its incredible physical grandeur in a more ephemeral way. It is not so much a sensibility of the conqueror that is required as an understanding of the symbolic struggle

that sets Canada's myth apart from America's.

Canada traditionally has been the country without myth. Her writers encountered such problems from the start. The Americans have had to rely on popular stories of revolutions, civil war, outlandish western settlements, intriguing political reform, desperadoes, etc. Canada, it seems, has evolved for itself a rather stodgy image based on quiet and tedious parliamentary procedure and demure organizational tactics (compare the external Mackenzie King and Franklin D. Roosevelt).

The American myth is almost technological in its emphasis on expansion and history. Canada's is rather more slow-moving and obscure. Traditionally for Canadian authors (W.O. Mitchell, Sinclair Ross, Margaret Laurence and Mordecai Richler, for example) the themes have been those of alienation and loneliness, attempts to come to terms with the ferocious landscape of personality or terrain. So in part, the white man seeks desperately for a way to deal with his role in the present wilderness. He is not so much a revolutionary; he is not sophisticated; yet he remains stable and resolute. He is romantic, yet not entirely pagan. He assumes a hodgepodge of identities, fluctuating between a Louis Riel and a Mackenzie King. But basically, he searches for an identity which must come to him through his relationship with the wilderness which is indomitable, stern and unyielding.

The Canadian does not conquer the prairies; he survives them. Just as the mountains of British Columbia do not turn into carved Rushmorian statues at his beck and call, so his lament becomes pure and winsome. He becomes lost in his search, identified by his image as a seeker.

The early poems of the Group of '61--Lampman, Carmen, Scott--were for the most part natural and highly simplistic, transcendental-like appreciations of the natural setting. Yet their transcendentalism (if that was what it was) was highly veiled, relying for the most part on their recollection of their Romantic counterparts in Britain. These poets glorified the sensitive beauty of their immediate national environment.

But Johnson was perhaps the first Canadian poet who breathed life into a landscape portrait. His poems themselves became capsule legends. This presents quite a juxtaposition to the traditional bases for myths which find reality as their touchstone. These legends, too, are loosely based on reality, but it is a reality that comes from interpretation of customs and the explanation of natural phenomena in a romantic way.

At the same time, the myth is a search for unification and the understanding of the country in its entirety. But this search is treacherous because to enter upon it the traveller must leave one part of paradise for another, realizing he can never return, knowing the insurmountable diffi-

culties that block him. It requires a childlike⁴ faith and conviction. Yet the search is always, in some respects, a disillusioning one, as many of Johnson's poems show, because man finds that his understanding of his country is always altered with his further explorations of it.

Johnson's best myths were those she created unconsciously. They dealt with Indian customs and culture and were, in fact, one of the first glimpses, in the literature of the day, into the Indian way of life. This was brought home dramatically and with as much effect and realism as in the paintings of Paul Kane.

Johnson familiarized the people of her day with Indians and their customs in a revolutionary manner, using poetry as a kind of journalism. And although many of her poems were dramatic, even outrageously theatrical, they did establish a new kind of awareness in the Canadian consciousness, particularly among the urban populations both at home and abroad.

These poems evolved a kind of fairytale mythology that explained natural phenomena and exploration. For example, "The Pilot of the Plains" explained, in this tradition, the guidance of travellers by moonlight over the prairies.⁴¹ This lends to the wilderness a less bleak, less lonesome aura. It is the guiding presence of invisible divine beings that keeps the Canadian explorer company. This is echoed in "Dawendine," where even the first line of the poem makes

the declaration:

There's a spirit on the river, there's a ghost
upon the shore,
They are chanting, they are singing through the
starlight evermore,
As they steal amid the silence,
And the shadows of the shore.⁴²

How like Wordsworth's "there is a spirit in the woods"⁴³
this is!

The Indian chants echo the silent chant of the wind.
Here is established a legendary pattern of ghosts of warriors
long dead, and it lends to the purely natural setting
another dimension. Like the ancient Greeks, the Indians
made up a natural mythological universe, only the character
of their gods was less sophisticated and splendid.

The Indians were monotheistic after all, but ultimate-
ly they took from the brave and noble examples of their own
village, idealized personalities they transformed into
divine manifestations such as the brave warrior or the stoic
and beautiful maiden. Therefore it is possible through
elaborate feats of daring and bravery to enter the hier-
archy of the spirit world. The very forests of the Indian
were haunted but it was a haunting not so terrible because
of its familiarity. It was an honour to be a ghost, not a
torment.

But it was not so much that the Indians believed that
these great people never left for the Happy Hunting Ground,
but that their return to the earthly world as spirits

created a comforting reassurance in the lives of their earth-bound brothers. And their return lends sound and texture to the landscape. Therefore it is Dawendine's spirit singing in the sound of the wind through the trees.

There can be no fear of the forest at night if all natural sounds are transformed into symbolic personalized phenomena. Every natural setting for the Indians conjures up fantastic fairytale tableaux. "The Sleeping Giant," for example, suggests to Johnson the superb inscrutable spectacle of the Sphinx.⁴⁴ The landscapes she depicts are, in fact, even more unfathomable than the Sphinx because man does not make them and they existed even before time began. It is this perspective that, for the Indian, makes the Western concept of history ludicrous.

To the Indian, there is nothing so deliciously ancient as his own precious landscape. There is nothing more valuable, more archeologically enticing than the prehistoric stones:

Were you lying there on your couch alone
Ere Egypt and Rome were born?
Ere the Age of Stone.....⁴⁵

What glamour is there for the Indian in man-made monuments, cities or inventions? No invention, artistic or technological, can equal for him the mighty and beautiful ferocity of a rolling river or the perennial rains. This recurring miracle of season and weather is amazing and, like all natural phenomena, holds within it the key, the secret of

the universe. For this reason, the Indian has such respect for the land:

You have locked your past, and you keep the key
 In your heart 'neath the westing sun,
 Where the mighty sea
 And its shores will be
 Storm-swept till the world is done.⁴⁶

It is the quaintness of these legends, their fierce simplicity and faith, that draws the white man to them. With this attraction, the Indian is not often pleased. The white man's interest is little more than a vigorous curiosity that seems savage and brutally crude. The white man isn't aware of the tragedy that often underlies the legend. He sees the melody, the quaintness, the childlike faith, and adopts these as curiosity pieces. The truth behind them is lost to him. As in "The Legend of Qu'Appelle Valley"--"I listen heartsick, while the hunters tell / Why white men named the valley The Qu'Appelle"⁴⁷--one man's tragedy is another man's tourist attraction.

Of course there is much more to it than that. The entire poem "Qu'Appelle" could be read as a metaphor concerning the Indian's loss of land. In this way it is a veiled and extended legend--the loss of the Indian warrior on his way home after the hunt is like the loss of the Indian nation that discovered it could be separated from its forests. And just as it is painful for the tragic lover to haunt the lakes steeped in the memory of his dead love, so it becomes too painful for the Indian to travel

the waters, knowing he no longer has a place upon them.

The Indian becomes a curiosity, misinterpreted, his heart's misfortune translated by others into a simple saga of quaint pain. He becomes trapped in this vignette, like an animal in a zoo. His natural setting becomes less real to him because he cannot claim what is rightfully his in spite of arduous work. The white man is in fact ignorant of the hidden deeper beauty of his surroundings. He sees only post-car vistas. It is only perceptive travellers who can detect the presence of spirit, of the real and haunted nature of the forest.

But even though the legends are Indian and the myths are Indian, they are not particularly Western in the way we understand Western myths today. Canada's myths are more authentic, more folklorically-based, than the traditional Western myths of America.

In America, the myth of taming the frontier centred around the wagon master, the cowboy, the cavalry and the settler as heroic figure. Massacres, like great dances on the plains, figured strongly in the bloody tableau of romance and adventure. The Indians were regarded always as enemy, rather than human beings with feelings; they provided, through their attempts to retain their lands, a colourful adversary who was worthy of excitement and fear. The American sensibility made of the Indian a rodeo spectacle but placed him in a central role in the taming of the

West. The Indian was tamed and the white man was the heroic tamer. This often cruel portrait was immortalized in popular literature. Dime novels sold in the thousands, building up the exploits of such famous Indian-routers as Kit Carson and Buffalo Bill Cody. It is the rash General Custer, who led his men to slaughter, who becomes a hero, rather than someone like Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce, who used all his wiles and wisdom to keep both his own people and their white enemies from bloodshed.

The Indian took his place, albeit reluctantly, in the cavalcade of freaks who passed through the travelling Wild West shows. Sitting Bull travelled with Buffalo Bill. With his participation in these performances, the Indian positively admitted his defeat and acknowledged the death of any real Indian existence he might have had. He was a self-admitted museum piece and he had to demonstrate his talents in order to live on a level, if not human, then exotic in its oddity.

Of course, modern scholarship has recognized the sham of this myth and in retrospect regards its perpetrators with disgust. But it is too late. America still has, for all the world, the glaring myths of Indian fighters, gunslingers and buffalo-butchers, and these myths are regarded with attitudes of high romance.

The Canadian problem is not so obvious. Its myths are not so clear-cut. The North-West Mounted Police dealt with

the Indians in manners more subtle than heroic. Canada's treaties with the Indians, like America's, were quickly written with a shrewd eye to sweeping the Indians under the national rug and leaving nothing but paydirt behind. The Canadian reserves, because of their distance from communication and transportation, were not considered a problem. At least the settlers were too interested in mining and prospecting and lumbering and dredging natural resources from the land to notice where the Indian had gone. The greed in Canada may have been far less obvious because the terrain was more treacherous. It was not the Indian who stood in the way of the Canadian prospector and settler; it was the cruel and inaccessible land.

Weather had much to do with the Canadian myth, too, and with Pauline Johnson's poems. There was a preponderance of snow to be dealt with in Canada. America, pictured always in a kind of beatific warmth, always seemed sunny and beautiful, however much this sometimes clashed with harsh realities. In this respect, in Canada the elements return again to steal the place of villain from the red man. Everything here is at the mercy of the terrible natural forces. So Canada's myths are more naturalistic and this is most obvious in the West that Pauline Johnson seeks to perpetuate.

"The Cattle Country," for example, demonstrates her view of Canada as a "dust-enfolded prairie" possessing, because of its vastness, a definite anamalistic quality.⁴⁸

It is not to people this land belongs, for people cannot make their way easily in it. It is to the coyote with velvet-cushioned paws. Men only pass through, trying to control the wild stampede of their cattle.

Johnson paints the land as constant and never-changing, like God. In this case, the land is omnipresent. Men and their preoccupations--particularly white men--use the land and leave it. They travel across it, dig things out of it, cut things from it, take and take and then go on. And still the perfume of the sage oozes through in spite of the blackened soil trail the plunderers leave. The curses they shout that disturb the air, the frenzied flight they make across the country--the land accepts all with serenity. The rampage is only a passing thing after all.

It is always Johnson's first choice to glorify the exploits of animals; the wolf, the bird and even the train dog fall into her concept of natural nobility. It is the romance of the fur-traders and their sledges that prompted her to write "Train Dogs," and while the poem is nearly maudlin in its bravado, it does bear a charming quality of unmistakable romance.⁴⁹

And romance is certainly a major feature of Johnson's poems. From the outset she chooses to establish herself as the most authentic spokesman for Indian customs. She did this admirably. If her pictures of the Indian were less than accurate, they made up for it by their drama and

romance. She always got her point across. Strangely enough, many of the more important points, such as the select glimpses into the Indian's culture and the heartbreak at his gradual loss of it through extinction by defeat, always came through. For example, the death of the buffalo herds* might have been disclosed to, and even discussed by, the public in Canada's urban areas, but it was Johnson, in her poem "Silhouette," who dramatized the meaning of exile in magnificent fashion. The poem is a subtle description of the death of the Indian's life style, a bleak yet starkly beautiful picture of a cluster of tepees in a remote and nearly barren plain. It is the graveyard of the reservation and on its edge chiefs and their people wait to die. Life is an ordeal of suffering. This poem bears grim testimony to the boredom, the hopeless plight, of the reservation existence. Forbidden the natural right to travel on their familiar streams, forbidden the right to roam their forests, the Indians, like deer in pens or eagles in cages, have only the memories of their beloved lands to call their own. All

*In Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West, an account of the death of the herds describes how many tribes were reduced to aimless wandering and starvation. The herding of many skilled Indian farmers into reservations with brackish water and impossible, acidic, arid soil, aggravated conditions. As Wainditanka (Big Eagle) of the Santee Sioux stated:

The whites were always trying to make the Indians give up their life and live like white men-- go to farming, work hard and do as they did--and the Indians did not know how to do that and they did not want to anyway.⁵¹

the words Johnson uses are ominous and tragic. The tent poles "lift and loom in thin relief," with thin trails of smoke ascending between them, suggesting funeral pyres and the quiet smoke of terrible and desolate burned ruins. Near the door-flap there stands, gaunt and lean like a shadow, an Indian chief. The description of him, though subtle, is as grim as that of any concentration-camp inmate: "...with eyes that lost their luster long ago, / With visage fixed and stern as fate's decree." And then comes one of the saddest lines in all her poetry: "He looks towards the empty west, to see / The never-coming herds of buffalo."⁵² With these lines alone, Johnson strikes home to audiences, no matter how sophisticated or naive of the situation, with the perfect tragedy of this ecological and ethnological disaster, this virtual extinction of a species.

The picture is a deeply touching one. The Indian, like a lost child, waits and watches for the return of his mother or a familiar face, some kind of reassurance that he is not abandoned in a strange, lonely place. But this reassurance will not come. He is left, petrified flesh, perpetually watching a bleak horizon. He is the modern vast, inscrutable tragedy. He becomes a sphinx in the desert, locking within himself the secret of rivers and forests, waiting eternally for the return of green and living things. The last stanza of the poem pictures the terrible result of the exile--a cultural, emotional, moral and physical death:

Only the bones that bleach upon the plains,
 Only the fleshless skeletons that lie
 In ghastly nakedness and silence, cry
 Out mutely that naught else to him remains.⁵³

The death of beasts, rivers, plains and forests means to the Indian his own death. This is a striking and perfectly-controlled story of the death of the Indian in Canada. "Silhouette" is Johnson's only poem dealing with reservation life, yet the word "reservation" is never mentioned and because of that, it is a more effective poem than any of her early and more emotional work.

The death of the Indian's physical freedom was preceded by the death of his agriculture. The moving document of the destruction of Navahoe agricultural methods⁵⁴ is only one example of the white man's total insensitivity toward natural living methods.* It is common knowledge that Indian reservations usually were on the poorest land. Outrageous trades were made between land and objects or land and freedoms. Boundaries were continually moved. Indians who had lived only by fishing and hunting, with the odd bit of supplemental farming, were forced to rely on farming alone, being driven from their game preserves or out-hunted

*Unfortunately, almost all records available of white atrocities towards the Indians are American. But the special status of the North American Indian as nomadic bands that wandered to and fro without borders (and in fact the Iroquois Nation was founded across national boundaries and, under treaty, still maintains its right of free passage between the U.S.A. and Canada) gives us cause to consider their extinction in diverse sectors of North America as a general extinction beyond boundaries. Although the treatment of Indians was different in Canada and America, the end results were virtually the same.

by ruthless fur-traders and pelt-dealers.

In most cases the Indians were unaccustomed to farming for subsistence and wound up hungry most of the time. "The Corn Husker" is a moving portrait of an old woman (symbol of a broken and withered people) who is forced to toil relentlessly to eke out a bare existence in the fields.⁵⁵ This is in stark contrast to the eloquent statement of Smohalla, of the Sokulk tribe of the Nez Perce:

My young men shall never work. Men who work cannot dream; and wisdom comes to us in dreams.

You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's breast? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest.

You ask me to dig for stone. Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die I cannot enter her body to be born again.

You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men. But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?⁵⁶

This seems an explicit statement of Pauline Johnson's own emotions in her subtle tribute to the farmers her people were forced to become. Of course it is better to gather easily than to till and sow--as Thoreau points out. The poem "Indian Corn Planter," among Johnson's later work, seems to bear this out.⁵⁷

The Indian method of trapping and hunting was forced to die. As suggested earlier, the white man was determined that the Indian was to adopt his ways. Any white man would have been outraged at this kind of imposition by an Indian.

The resentment felt by the Indians was just as strong, and Johnson reflected this in many of her early poems. Most tribes felt that farming was not a noble way of life, and relegated it to women. Because of this disregard for farming, this secondary food supply, the Indians' fields were often makeshift and scanty, meant to provide only supplemental nourishment.

It is as if the woman in "The Corn Husker" is a symbol of her people and makes an interesting contrast with Minehaha walking naked around the corn-fields in Longfellow's poem "Hiawatha." The proud Indian squaw who fed her people has been reduced to an old woman with brittle hands, stripping the dead husks. The masculine aspect of this same problem is described in "The Indian Corn Planter." The Indian's reason for leaving his hunting ground is veiled in this poem. It isn't necessarily the white man who drives him from his preserves. It is the mating season that prevents him from hunting and the Indian has such respect for conservation that the "mating game his arrows ne'er despoil,"⁵⁸ yet this may be an oblique excuse for going into the fields to wrest some promise from the dormant soil.

Yet in the poem, Johnson seems to retreat considerably, turning the powerful possibilities of human perseverance into a reliance on God and nature. This seems a comment on the Indian's faith, which she calls simple and pagan: a faith that nature will not fail him. He depends on God,

who will provide for him as He provides for the beasts of the forests.

With the death of hunting there came the death of crafts. Poems such as "The Quill Worker" are small vignettes of forgotten Indian handiwork. In "The Quill Worker" a solitary maiden works in a wild, magnificent country with "Never a habitation, save where in the far south-west / A solitary tepee lifts its solitary crest."⁵⁹ To the whites, it was entirely amazing that this woman's work should rival the most sophisticated petit-point of the French court. The materials used are undeniably astounding in their primitive availability and nature. Porcupine quills are woven into intricate patterns; nothing from the hunt is wasted; the woman is a supreme craftsman in spite of her materials.

Even the archer's craft is symbolically artistic. In the precise quality of his movements, the Indian archer is as delicate and graceful as the most romantic Renaissance idea of Cupid, as Johnson depicts him in "The Archers."⁶⁰ Johnson makes many of these crafts seem like perfect rituals in religious grace.

But then in Johnson's poetry the reader is plunged into a different world, one of intrigue and mysticism. The names of the characters in the poems (Ojistoh, The White Star, Dawendine, Ykonwitha, Neykia, Yaada) lend a romantic flavour. And what matron in those days, in a proper frame of mind, would not thrill to tales of "savages" half-naked

performing daring deeds? Compared to the linen-and-starch drawingroom gentlemen these women were used to, the Indian brave was a tawny romantic superman. The mere mention of various tribes--Mohawk, Huron, Cree, Sioux--was enough to elicit excitement. There is something pure, brave and noble about Johnson's rendition of the tragic exploits of her people. She depicts them as a deeply-feeling, gentle folk, proud and fierce, with an elaborate system of customs and beliefs. Anyone would be fascinated.

In poems such as "The Ballad of Yaada" her descriptions manifest themselves in melodic cadences and musical, haunting images. These poems are undoubtedly her best. Some include refrains that suggest Indian chants in their rhythms. In many of the poems, in fact, one can imagine the metre beaten out on a drum:

There are / fires on / Lulu / Island, / and the /
 sky is / opal- / escent
 With the / pearls and / purple / tinting / from the /
 smoulder- / ing of / peat.⁶¹

Myth and music bolster one another beautifully.

MELODY AND SOUND

To the Indian, the lark is no less a star than Jenny Lind was to her Swedish audiences. And so Pauline Johnson, in writing many of her lines, hoped to induce the city-dweller, if not by metre and rhythm, then by direct and positive association, to return to the natural and organic symphonies of nature. Johnson's musical suggestions did not go unnoticed and, in fact, many of her poems were set to music. She was the Leonard Choen of her day, delighting salon audiences with musical interludes in pure language. It is Johnson's symphonic impression of nature that makes the rhythms of her work so unique. And it is, in fact, this very comparison of nature with a symphony that makes her poem "Autumn's Orchestra" so vital. The entire poem is, in its own way, a tribute to the abilities of nature to echo perfectly and originally any sound man is capable of making with his musical instruments.⁶²

This poem seems to be Johnson's answer to someone who would not leave his own music for the subtler versions of the music of nature.* While Johnson's art resides in the recognition of these qualities in nature, the violinist's

*All indications point to the violinist A.C. Rush. Study of a transcript of an article dated May 11, 1892, carried in a portable leather secretary (now in McMaster University Archives) indicates that he was to have given a recital with Pauline Johnson in Paris.

art resides in the active and spontaneous generation of the impression of those qualities through sound.

Of course in the face of the spectacular physical beauty inherent in nature, Johnson could argue that such a generation, though valid, artistic and sound, falls entirely short of the original creation. Yet the musician's expression is far more subtle than the writer's, which moulds or recreates these outward natural beauties through verbal descriptions. Though eloquent and melodious, these descriptions do no better to capture the intrinsic, wild, natural beauty.

Thoreau too tries to describe this natural symphony, but his descriptions are more masculine and simple, less intricate. He talks of the crack of ice in spring as the pond thundering.⁶³ His descriptions are more primitive as they revert to other sources in nature. Johnson, comparing natural sounds to the sounds of men, lures the city-dweller into the heretofore unfamiliar and perhaps frightening expanse of pure virgin forest. There she urges a dance to a different sort of music.

And yet sometimes her music is soothing. Lullaby is a recurring theme. And the lullaby is a symbol of a grander pacification: the gentle soothing the higher knowledge brings. Most obvious description of this sound of spirit appears in "Bird's Song."⁶⁴ All of nature's children, without exception, are put to sleep by the inimitable drone

of perfect natural sound. A human child, like the child of a wild thing, is soothed to sleep; there is no difference between the little brown baby bird and the little brown Indian child. Both are relatives in the natural world. One--nature--sings to the other, who is often alienated from it, as in Johnson's "Moonset":

O! soft responsive voices of the night
 I join your minstrelsy,
 And call across the fading silver light
 As something calls to me;
 I may not all your meaning understand,
 But I have touched your soul in shadow-land.⁶⁵

This comingling of voices of nature and man suggests a symphonic harmony between nature-spirit and the traveller-poet. It is an affirmation of the gentle religious belief in the spirit in the woods.

"Marshlands" also talks of the night, "like a spirit, swathed in some soft veil, / Steals twilight and its shadows o'er the swale,"⁶⁶ putting the marshes to sleep with another lullaby. Nature is a spirit and the spirit has a voice with the power to awaken man or to put him to sleep only to awake to a new consciousness of peace and security. "Shadow River," "Rainfall" and "Under Canvas," in which she says,

Some northern sorceress, when day is done,
 Hovers where cliffs uplift their gaunt grey steeps,
 Bewitching to vermillion Rousseau's sun,
 That in a liquid mass of rubies sleeps,⁶⁷

all personify nature in this captivating musical way.

In fact, Johnson's musical relationships with spiritual

underlying theme leads one to consider seriously the ancient Eastern ideas of music and sound as particular vibrations closely linked to mood and feeling. As one mystic has written:

Both rhythms and melody find their synthesis and their solution in the one profound and all-embracing vibration of the sacred sound Om. Here the apex of the pyramid has been reached, ascending from the plane of greatest differentiation and materialization to the point of ultimate unification and spiritualization, which contains the latent properties of all the previous stages, just as a seed or germ. In this sense, OM is the quintessence, the seed-syllable of the universe, the magic word par excellence, the universal force of all-embracing consciousness.⁶⁸

So it is that all sounds carry within them particular vibrations, and these vibrations have certain powers to induce moods. The bird's song, then, creates a particular vibration which in turn creates a particular mood. To those in tune, the sound of spirit (the usually inaudible cosmic roar of the universe) will create peace and contentment in the perceiver of it. *

*See Paramahansa Yogananda, Autobiography of a Yogi (Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship, 1972)

SOCIAL AND MORAL POLITICS

Besides music, there is politics in Pauline Johnson's Indian world. The very first poem of her writing career, "Ojistoh," deals with a feud between Huron and Mohawk. It deals also with love, physical prowess, revenge and intrigue.

Who can deny the exotic appeal of:

And we two rode, rode as a sea wind-chased,
I, bound with buckskin to his hated waist,
He, sneering, laughing, jeering, while he lashed
The horse to foam, as on and on we dashed.
Plunging through creek and river, bush and trail,
On, on we galloped like a northern gale.
At last, his distant Huron fires aflame
We saw, and nearer, nearer still we came.⁶⁹

In this one stanza alone it is possible to sense a particular kind of lightning (the glow of fire), a sound (the gallop of the horse), a feeling (the slap of passing wind) and, in the capture and subsequent murder, a terror like that in "As Red Men Die." There are terrible phrases thrown in to impress, shock, sicken many a parlour lady who must have cringed at lines like:

...His vile detested captors, that now flaunt
Their war clubs in his face with sneer and taunt,
Not thinking, soon that reeking, red, and raw,
Their scalps will deck the belts of Iroquois.⁷⁰

In this poem, too, Johnson describes a war dance performed as accompaniment to the most excruciating form of Huron torture. Of course it was given as a manly alternative to capture and slavery--a fate only fit for women as far as warriors were concerned. Here Johnson shifts strangely

from a feminine sympathy for squaws to a masculine belittling of women's qualities. In the true chieftain tradition (perhaps taking leave of a portion of his senses), the brave chief resolves that anything, even torture and death, is better than losing face and remaining captive with the women.

Yet the Indian woman is a breed apart--and a separate, volatile entity that is very much the backbone of Indian culture. It is her power of reason and fierce conviction that makes the Indian woman an admirable companion and friend. If the Indian warrior was fearless and proud, his woman was always more adamant and unconquerable. Certainly she had perfected in herself those best parts of her masculine and feminine natures that called for the completion of any human being. Johnson always pictures the woman as a redeemer and the steadfast supporter of her man. "Lady Lorgnette" shows the attraction the simple Indian maiden has by virtue of her wildness, in contrast to her fancy white counterpart in rare old lace.⁷¹ There is passion unrefined but vital in this Indian woman's power.

At the same time, the Indian maiden can be silent and humble, performing her household duties ardently. She still is subject to ancient laws which demand certain ritualistic practices we might consider barbaric. But within the framework of the Iroquois society they were quite acceptable. In the Indian marriage ceremony, for example,

If friends or relatives were willing, the father of the youth prepared a clean skin of beaver, bear or deer which he presented to his son. Provided with this, the suitor went to the wigwam of his prospective bride's father and placed the hide at the back of the wigwam or north. The girl's father then notified his relations and friends and if there was no objection, he ordered his daughter to seat herself on the skin as a sign that the young man's suit was acceptable. The usual wedding ceremonies (a public feasting, dancing and singing) then took place.⁷²

The woman never voiced an opinion, but meekly went along with the decision.

Women had specific duties that included all the really hard work around the camp:

The women were obliged to prepare the land, to mow, to plant, to do everything. The men do nothing except hunting, fishing and going towards their enemies in time of war.⁷³

But it was this hard work which she turned into art and in turn used to catch the eye of an admirer. For a woman who worked well was desirable far above one who was merely beautiful.

This is not to say that those who were skilled were unattractive. They were indeed attractive, but their attractiveness came in large part from their wisdom and nobility. In fact, although most of the warriors Johnson depicts are brave and dauntless, they also seem a little stupid or stunned. The brave talks with the father, not the girl.

("...To rest and smoke with her father, tho his eyes were on the maid."⁷⁴); he is entranced very easily by her charms.

Is it her needle-work or her he loves? The picture of a

beautiful woman doing something with skilled hands seems to astonish him.

While she is strong and faithful, the Indian woman still is feminine. She forgoes none of her rights, yet follows her brave where he tells her. It is appropriate that Johnson should have launched her career with the poem "A Cry from an Indian Wife,"⁷⁵ for it is the Indian wife who speaks on behalf of her home and people. She herself is the mother of a race, and is often the only one left who can give emotional though reasonable appeal to the murderers and plunderers who seek to destroy. A woman's pleas have double meaning here because even though they are eloquent, they go unheeded, and it is this ignoring of feeling which makes the white man even more of an arch fiend because he casts aside these simple words of truth and continues to murder unabashed.

The eloquence of the Indian woman is, in fact, a tradition among the tribes. They always spoke in council so it is little wonder that Johnson makes them eloquent spokesmen for Indian rights. "The Cattle Thief" ends with a woman's vitriolic condemnation of her white oppressors, men who turned proud people into thieves. And while her husband's physical prowess was not enough to turn away the intruders, these powerful words and savage statements were sufficient to arrest the killers:

"...If you mean to touch that body, you must cut your way through me."
And that band of cursing settlers dropped backward one by one,

For they knew that an Indian woman roused, was
a woman to let alone.⁷⁶

In Iroquois society, chiefhood was passed on through the women. None of Pauline Johnson's brothers could inherit their father's title because their mother was white. So the Indian society was not one which consciously demeaned the status of women. "Ojistoh" itself is a testimonial to the fearless, unexpected condition of the squaw. Considered only a weak wife, she proved herself as dauntless and wily as any brave. Though the opposing forces feared the husband, they did not fear the wife:

They dared not walk
In-day and meet his deadly tomahawk;
They dared not face his fearless scalping knife;
So--Niyoh!--then they thought of me, his wife.⁷⁷

The Hurons may have captured her, but there was no victory. At all costs, the Indian wife remained passionately true. There is great power behind this determination, as evidenced in the terrible ferocity of these lines:

He cut the cords; we ceased our maddened haste
I wound my arms about his tawny waist;
My hand crept up the buckskin of his belt;
His knife hilt in my burning palm I felt;
One hand caressed his cheek, the other drew
The weapon softly--"I love you, love you,"
I whispered, "love me as my life."
And--buried in his back his scalping knife.⁷⁸

But women also were peacemakers even though men started and fought the battle. In Indian tradition, after a battle of blood feud, a woman of the losing tribe approaches the victor with a belt of white wampum as a symbol of surrender.

This, White Wampum, as the title of Johnson's first book, was symbolic perhaps of the white man's victory over the Indian and the book a symbol of white wampum in an attempt to make literary peace.

Johnson integrates this white wampum custom in her poem "Dawendine," and describes the ceremony:

And she hears her mother saying, "Take thy belt
 of wampum white;
 Go unto yon evil savage while he glories on the
 height;
 Sing and sue for peace between us:
 At his feet lay wampum white.

"Lest thy kinsmen all may perish, all thy brothers
 and thy sire
 Fall before his mighty hatred as the forest falls
 to fire;
 Take thy wampum pale and peaceful,
 Save thy brothers, save thy sire." 79

And so the girl goes, only to run off with the victor. This poem may be a thinly-veiled parallel to the situations of the red and white man in Canada. It may even be the story of Pauline Johnson's own eventual integration into a white society, even though she told Ernest Thomas Seton,

Never let anyone call me white woman. There are those who think they pay me a compliment saying that I am just like a white woman. My aim, my joy, my pride, is to sing the glories of my own people. Ours was a race that gave the world its measure of heroism, its standard of physical prowess. Ours was the race that taught the world that avarice veiled by any name is crime. Ours were the people of the blue air and the green woods, and ours the faith that taught men to live without greed and to die without fear. Ours were the fighting men that man to man, yes one to three, could meet and win against the world. But for our few numbers, our simple faith that others were as true as we to keep their honour bright and hold as bond inviolable

their plighted word, we should have owned America today.⁸⁰

Unfortunately, integration into white society came to the Indians and especially through marriage. "The Pilot of the Plains" is one of the very few poems dealing with miscegenation among Johnson's work, but it is an effective one. The white lover leaves, but promises to be true. The Indian maiden waits for him, only to be taunted by her tribe:

"False," they said, "thy Pale-face lover, from
the land of waking morn;
Rise and wed thy Redskin wooer, nobler warrior
ne'er was born;
Cease thy watching, cease thy dreaming,
Show the white thine Indian scorn."⁸¹

Naturally the Indian woman remains true and finally gives her own life in trust and understanding for her lost white lover. It was not fickleness that kept him from her, but the elements. This hints at even nature's chagrin at such a mixed marriage. Of course love is love, as the conclusion of the poem indicates, and so the maiden becomes a martyr and something of a saint, coming back to guide other lost souls to their beloveds. Perhaps this hints at a certain necessity for a smoother ultimate union of the races.

But just as Johnson is sympathetic to the love between the white and the Indian, she is never oblivious to the white man's sins. "The Cattle Thief" is a biting condemnation of white exploitation. What white person in Johnson's audience wouldn't quake in terror at that Indian woman in full regalia speaking with fierce determination the lines,

Give back our land and our country, give back
 our herds of game;
 Give back the furs and forests that were ours
 before you came;
 Give back the peace and plenty. Then come with
 your new belief,
 And blame, if you dare, the hunger that drove
 him to be a thief.⁸²

Who would dare applaud at the end of a poem like this? Yet surprisingly enough, white audiences ate it up. They loved to hear about the suffering of the Indian at the hands of the white man. It all brought an inky tear to the eye of many an emotional reviewer. "Cry from an Indian Wife" launched her career. Even in those times it was possible to see that a new, liberal front was forming on the literary horizon that was anxious to make Pauline Johnson a heroine and spokesman for their concerns.

And Johnson made it easy for her audience by acknowledging that it was possible for certain white men to be sympathetic and even aware of their cruelty even if they were incapable of stopping it. The poem "Wolverine" clearly paints the unfortunate circumstances which surround the murder of an Indian brave. Told in the words of a tough white trapper, it is not so much a tale of infamy (which it first seemed) as a kind of friendly bedtime story. It is told in a casual manner, as "the trapper tilted back his chair and filled his pipe anew."⁸³ The trapper's (and Johnson's) audience is treated to a true-life account of what it was really like to live with the Indians. Such accounts were popular reading

in the nineteenth century. The reference libraries are full of antiquated accounts of the lives of white captives who were forced to live cruel and barbaric existences among the Indians. It makes one wonder how the Indians managed to capture such a horde of literary adepts, as though it were their policy only to kidnap the eloquent. Nevertheless, this trapper assures his audience,

"No. Them old Indyan's ain't so bad, not if you treat 'em square.
 Why, I lived in amongst 'em all the winters I was there,
 An' I never lost a copper, an' I never lost a hair."⁸⁴

Poems like this hit home time and time again with the message that the Indians were not prey to the vicious greed from which stemmed all the white man's iniquities and sorrows. In "Wolverine" the Indian performs a good-smart act of pure bravery, saving the trapper from the wolves by lending him his horse. In those days Indians understood that white men were as children in the Indians' home of wilderness, so this may not have been such a daring act by Indian standards, yet the Indian, understanding the bond of love between humans, could not take money for saving a life. It is a comment on the white man that he would offer money for such a thing: "He came to get his horse, but not a cent he'd take from me."⁸⁵ The trapper, undoubtedly was surprised and said these words to show his audience that although he was dull, he was a good fellow.

But the Indian learns the white man's ways:

"Yes, sir, you're right, the Indyans now ain't
like they used to be;
We've got 'em sharpened up a bit an' now they'll
take a fee."86

This is more than a little derogatory. But in the next breath the trapper leaps to the Indian's defence. So it goes, back and forth, until the conclusion of the tale, when the trapper describes the error made by the white's killing the honest Indian and how it didn't seem to bother him. The irony of the thing hits home even more when the trapper discovers the body of his friend. By the end of the poem the chilling comment has been made. It is no longer a polite little fireside tale but is filled with anguish and regret.

The innocent simplicity of generosity isn't all that the white man obliterated of the Indian sensibility. He also did away with much of the natural beauty and the customs of the land. In those days the problems of polluted air, dead water and ravaged land were only nibbling away at the verdant vistas of the Indian's country. Today almost nothing is left untainted. Even in those days it was apparent how the white man's incorrigible greed and habits of waste and ignorance misuse would defile the land, and violate the bond the Indian had kept with nature.

LOVE AND THE SOLITARY SINGER

In Leaves of Grass Walt Whitman wrote,

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.⁸⁷

It is this statement of universality that excludes any concept of loneliness, though it can imply an aloneness. This aloneness is a clear necessity for creative composition. The man apart separates himself to better see the fabric from which he came. This detachment makes him aware of the secret individuality of his atomic separation--a drop of water falling back into the ocean becomes at once the ocean, and yet retains its distinct molecular and atomic structure. So it is with the poet.

Pauline Johnson had been almost notoriously single during the greater portion of her career. Her unfortunate love affair, although not widely publicized--even a close scrutiny of her private papers finds no mention of the unfortunate event*--had subtle effects on her work. Her love poems are not so much personal as vague expressions of a universal love. And although specific mystery men are mentioned stroking her hair or being separated from her, they seem to possess the kind of anonymity that goes with secret and mysteriously absent lovers.

*See pp. 16-17 above for an account of this episode.

Whereas Whitman wrote of love as a celebration, Johnson seems to regard it as a fragrant mood that passes like any other. Looking through her portable leather secretary, it was almost touching to find the photograph of an unnamed, handsome, mustachioed gentleman and a little paper valentine (dated Chicago, 1912) that reads:

The rose to match your sweetness tries,
Exhales its richest breath, and dies.⁸⁸

Johnson also carried a copy of Edwin Arnold's poem "Destiny":

Somewhere there waiteth in this world of ours
For one lone soul, another lonely soul--
Each chasing each through all the weary hours,
And meeting strangely at one sudden goal;
Then blend they--like green leaves with golden
flowers,
Into one beautiful and perfect whole--
And life's long night is ended, and the way
Lies open onward to eternal day.⁸⁹

The poem, hand-lettered on a large red card with hand-drawn and -painted flowers, was attached to a ribbon with which to hang it on a wall. Clearly Johnson did not give up hope of ever approaching perfect spiritual love and I receive a clear picture of her hanging this little poem in each dreary hotel room she visited.

In studying her attitude toward love, expressed by a smattering of less than two dozen poems, it seems obvious that she was the victim of a very painful unrequited love that influenced her whole attitude. Most of her love poems are written in the past tense, lamenting a love that was idyllic. Only one of her poems, "The Idlers," expresses

an imminent intimate relationship.

It is natural too that her trysts take place in the perfect chamber of the open air and in a canoe. Here she seems to admire her lover's ability to draw her attention away from the glory of the scene around her. In his company she is oblivious to homeward wind or the kiss of breezes and sky. She has eyes only for the man who rides in her canoe. Even though there is still a slight intimation that she is in control of the vehicle, if not the situation. In this vein, the poem "Re-Voyage" speaks of an idyllic time. But the canoe has now become hers ("adrift in my canoe") and there seems to be a feeling of guilt on her part:

Oh! well I know that you
 Would toss the world away to be but lying
 Again in my canoe,
 In listless indolence entranced and lost,
 Wave-rocked, and passion tossed.

Ah me! my paddle failed me in the steering
 Across love's shoreless seas;
 All reckless, I had ne'er a thought of fearing,
 Such dreary days as these,
 When through the self-same rapids we dash by,
 My lone canoe and I.⁹⁰

She echoes this sentiment with even deeper regret in "Wave-Won."

In these later poems of regret Johnson depicts herself as a strong and even domineering character:

You trusted I could feel
 My arms as strong as steel.⁹¹

The regret remains constant, though, in such poems as "Thistle Down" and "Through Time and Bitter Distance."

And as in later poems, this regret increases until there is created a mood of almost insurmountable melancholy.

She begins to use words like "starving" to convey her mood in poems such as "Fasting," a poem in which she describes denial of the comforts of sleep and, in this case, the company of her beloved.

Religion seems to alleviate much of her pain. Even so, Johnson seems to be fatalistic about her loneliness. In "Nocturne" she says:

What matters if to-night, if one life treasure
I covet, is not mine! Am I to measure
The gifts of Heaven's decree
By my desires? O! life for ever longing
For some far gift, where many gifts are thronging,
God wills, it may not be.⁹²

She takes refuge in the wilderness about her, trying to transcend her physical bereavement and achieve a higher, more spiritual union. But this attempt at transcendence is not consistent. In "Day Dawn" she admits that the sylvan succoring of the surrounding forest does not always suffice to satisfy her craving:

What care I for the perfect dawn? The blue and
empty skies?
The night is always mine without the morning of
your eyes.⁹³

It seems obvious that Johnson is straining to encompass her emotions in the Emersonian concept of love:

It is thought a disgrace to love unrequited. True

love transcends the unworthy object and dwells and broods on the eternal and when the poor interposed mask crumbles, it is not sad, but feels rid of so much earth and feels its independency the surer. Yet these things may hardly be said without a sort of treachery to the relation. The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust. It must not surmise or provide for infirmity. It treats its object as a god, that it may deify both.⁹⁴

But there are periods where this kind of strength or consolation fails. "Grey Days" is a luckless lament:

Sweet human love for others,
Deep as the sea,
God-sent unto my neighbour--
But not to me.⁹⁵

In spite of her failure to celebrate her unrequited emotions as Whitman did, she is capable of feeble humour and more strident sarcasm. "Your Mirror Frame" is a light-hearted assurance that though her face may be among many that her love cherishes, she feels herself to be the favourite among all his women.⁹⁶

In spite of all this, Johnson has an almost notoriously romantic outlook on love. Though she does not write of it as an all-encompassing sexless domain, she sees it as a symbol of spiritual union between people, as in "Pilot of the Plains." She portrays it as a romantic journey of frequent drama and tragedy. Her lovers bear the stamp of adventurers and romantics. They often are separated by battle or death ("Dawendine," "The Legend of Qu'Appelle" and "The Ballad of the Yaada"), but they remain undaunted, sure in their love. Though this may be a philosophy more

primitive than practical, it is at all times profoundly human. It is a philosophy that believes in the transmutation of time, the breakdown of the barriers of death, and the inevitability of two lovers destined to meet across lifetimes and even centuries. This combines--albeit unusually--with her profound Christian concept of a rewarding Heaven and a withholding God.

It would seem from several of her poems, then, that she was waiting for her great true love to appear. It is a meeting to be anticipated. Yet at the same time, she realizes the importance and often the necessity of capture. In her poem "The Archers" she compares the brave Indian archer downing his game to Cupid downing his.⁹⁷ Love strikes in a manner quite careless, she seems to believe. The whole thing too is a mild diversion, a pleasant series of coincidences.

So there is a confusion in her attitude, a split: she is both the transcendental philosopher and the mild-mannered poet subject to whims and moods. Certainly her philosophy, although trying to transcend her initial human moods, has great difficulty comforting her and she sinks back into melancholy contemplation of a lonely and loveless life.

Whether this is a purely feminine characteristic I would hesitate to suggest. Certainly themes of unrequited love are universal and relevant to both sexes. Yet Johnson is profoundly aware of her role as a woman, although she

never considers herself frail because of it. She is proud of her savage skill in canoeing and natural living. Even so, women do take definite roles in her poetry. All her squaws, although brave and fearless, are squaws nevertheless, and her love poems seem to intimate that she wouldn't mind being one herself.

LOYALTY AND PATRIOTISM

Patriotism itself is a difficult sentiment, especially when one is torn between race and nationality. In this vein, can Pauline Johnson be at one time patriotic to Canada and loyal to her Iroquois heritage? It is an interesting conjecture. There are those who say that she did in fact sell out in the face of ardent Canadian nationalistic pressure (travelling abroad, was she the Indian poetess who also happened to be a Canadian, or was she the Canadian poetess who also happened to be Iroquois?). In most of her recitals she was the Indian. Her recitals relied heavily on Indian costume and passion. Yet it was a reliance more external than internal. The poems she expressed were not entirely passionate tirades for the Indian cause.

Her presentations might have been called by Indian militants today, Uncle Tomish. Yet at the same time they did not detract from the plain and obvious need to bring Indian culture to the forefront. She presented to the sophisticated but ignorant white population a picture of a cultured "savage." Here was an Indian they might understand, one who was not so terrifying because she spoke "their language." And it was a language of poetry besides. This elevated any possible militant tirades to a level of art--acceptable in reserved and polite society because it could always be excused as poetic ardour.

Johnson capitalized heavily on this mode of expression. Only in costume could she present such dramatic condemnation of her audiences. Only under the cover of theatre could such truths be presented to such audiences. "Cry from an Indian Wife," "The Cattle Thief," "As Red Men Die," "Ojiston" --all her early work leaned heavily upon the emotional, powerful and beautiful expression of Indian grief and white indifference. Her performances were stirring, angry, outrageous.

Yet as Johnson became more and more exposed to audiences, her work became more and more acclimatized to their particular desires. Her poems began to bear sentiments of national pride. "My English Letter" is a fine example of attached national love, but it is a love rooted in natural expression of the landscape rather than ceremonial, cultural or theoretical national concepts. Johnson's Canada is often one of fern and forest rather than legislation and order. It is the landscape which becomes synonymous with country:

...Near, for the very grey-green sea that dashes
 'Round these Canadian coasts, rolls out once
 more
 To Eastward, and the same Atlantic splashes
 Her wild spray on England's distant shore.⁹⁸

Yet probably because she does not expect her audience to understand such emotions, she tries to come to terms with the more prosaic and traditional dimensions of national pride. She tries to express in terms both legal and hierarchical, patriotic and symbolic, the love she feels

for the gentle country. The result is distressing and almost vapid. The emotions to which she appeals are traditional ones of pride and bravado. They are shoddy compared to the pure, free emotions expressed in the natural landscape by her Indian characters. It is possible, in an ardent defence of Johnson, to presume that these poems were written ironically, but I would hesitate to argue this, first because such an argument would betray a certain naiveté about the demands made on poetry in public settings and second because from birth she was coached in the stringent tradition of loyalty to Queen and country. Her ardent fondness (and this lasted through her later years) for the Duke of Connaught seems to put her firmly within the realm of passionate patriotism.

Her second book, Canadian Born (her books ultimately were collected and published under the single title Flint and Feather), is flooded with such patriotic sentiments awkwardly expressed. I call this her Maple Leaf period. The poems written at this time were her least inspiring. Rather than eulogizing the chiefs of her own people, she began to eulogize the chiefs who opposed them. Of course with her first book, White Wampum, she had already made a substantial contribution to the Indian cause, and at the same time to white sensibilities, melding the two in an effort to make peace between them. Now, with Canadian Born, she goes beyond peace to subservience. The devotion

that once had gone to tribe now goes to queen. The poems smack of occasional, commissioned verse. It is hard to respect such lines as,

...And theirs is the might and the meaning and
the strength of the bulldog's jaw,
While they keep the peace of the people and the
honour of British law.⁹⁹

from the same poet who earlier wrote,

Go forth, and win the glories of the war.
Go forth, nor bend to the greed of white-man's
hands,
By right, by birth we Indians own these lands,
Though starved, crushed, plundered, lies our
nation low....¹⁰⁰

As if she noticed this obvious deterioration, Johnson began to write more oblique poems that were indirectly patriotic--patriotic only in their veiled expressions of national love. "When George Was King" glorifies the manners and customs of court life in a frivolous way, while "The Man in Chrysanthemum Land" is a rousing little diatribe against the Japanese--derogatorily cute:

So take off your cap
To the brave little Jap
Who fights for Chrysanthemum Land.¹⁰¹

CITY SCAPES

Pauline Johnson's poems, first painting beautiful pictures of natural settings, began to paint less gorgeous tableaux of cities. They seem shoddy tributes meant to be read to the mayor of a city when he presented her with the key. And they seem like attempts on either her part or that of her agent to make her a national poet in the worst sense. In consequence she is less lyrical, less melodic, less rhythmic and picture-oriented.

"Guard of the Eastern Gate" is such a poem. It is hard to imagine that the grandeur of a city rivals the grandeur of a forest or mountain. She tries to bring the same sentiments of nobility and magnitude to the city, the same poetic reactions into play, but fails. Her "A Toast" to Vancouver falls into the same category. It is written with a measure of bravado yet bears none of the lyricism inherent in her other work. Rather, the poem is a waspish white man's wassailing joy. And it is disappointing:

And here's to your hands so sturdy,
 And here's to your hearts so true,
 And here's to the speed of the day decreed
 That brings me again to you.¹⁰²

Her city poems attempt to instill in the man-made metropolis those qualities which make the natural wild landscape electrically significant. The attempt seems slightly half-hearted under the circumstances and slightly embarrassed. Poems such as "Calgary of the Plains," "Brandon" and "Guard

of the Eastern Gate" are much less stirring and beautiful than her poems about wilderness regions or rural settlements. "Golden of the Selkirks" is a lyrical description of the atmosphere of a place; "Low Tide at St. Andrews" describes New Brunswick in terms of its natural attributes. Compare the attitudes of these two excerpts:

Halifax sits on her hills by the sea
 In the might of her pride,--
 Invincible, terrible, beautiful, she
 With a sword at her side.

--"Guard of the Eastern Gate"

The long red flats stretch open to the sky,
 Breathing their moisture on the August air,
 The seaweeds cling with flesh-like fingers where
 The rocks give shelter that all the sands deny;
 And wrapped in all her summer harmonies
 St. Andrews sleeps beside her sleeping seas.

--"Low Tide at St. Andrews"

The first excerpt is rather abstract and its metaphor is hacknied, while the second is concrete and imagistic. Cities for Johnson take on an aggressive air. They do not blend with the landscape, but rather present a fortress-like appearance in the gentle surrounding scene. "The City and the Sea" aptly sums up this contrast. It points out the antithesis between the hubris of the city and the humility of the ocean:

For all the city is the work of man,
 But all the sea is God's....103

While on the surface it would seem that Johnson sold out, a deeper analysis shows that she masked her true feelings out of a sense of necessity (see Appendix A). She admits

to compromise, yet the suspicion is that she did remain true to her heritage--at least as far as the times allowed. It is my contention that should she have continued her militant Indian bent, today she would be one of the more significant Canadian poets. As it is, because the majority of her work is veiled by a pleasant screen of free-flowing transcendental lyric, she is associated with the Group of '61 nature poets and considered, at best, less significant than Bliss Carmen. But her work does contribute considerably to Canadian literature.

In one instance, she expressed the anguish of a minority group in a country that was still establishing itself. Such a divergence is significant. By doing just that, she established a definite country-consciousness in that she forced the reader to take a position when he read the poem and the position is not always on the side of the nationalistic concern. This is particularly true of the tone she used in her city poems.

Her Indian heritage also lent a greater degree of transcendentalism to her work, making it much more intellectually and spiritually interesting than the ordinary nature work. Because of the blending of her Christian mystical concepts and her Indian spiritual and cultural leanings, she has produced an interesting synthesis between the rigid white interpretation of natural environment and the Indian's free-flowing, non-linear interpretation. This renders explicable

the so-called "pagan" ritualistic and mythic Indian sensibility in a form fluid enough to allow for feeling and expression yet structured enough to transmit even the most stringent white audiences the natural experience. This was most admirable in the face of early Canadian romanticism and lyricism.

Chapter III

PROSE

Pauline Johnson's prose is startlingly different from her poetry, in which she possessed a fluidity of style, and expression, a charm of rhythm, cadence, mood and feeling. In her prose, she leaves those things behind and demonstrates, at best, a kind of work that can be read without herculean effort, and at worst, a kind of turgid self-righteousness that is remarkably "adult."

Her legends, based on stories from Joe Capillano, hold more credence and show a marked improvement in writing style, but her stories for boys, Shaganappi and The Moccasin Maker, smack of dry conservatism. In both these books for boys, the white man is depicted as suited and vested, prowling in the land of the Indian. "A Night with North Eagle" in Shaganappi is almost entirely hilarious in its description of a stalled train in Indian country and the white man's reaction to the Indians who come to see it:

"Good morning, friend. I'd like to buy that eagle feather you have in your hair. Will you sell it? Here's a dollar."¹

Undoubtedly a Woolworth's approach to the Wild West.

The father of one of the heroes of the story was, in fact, amusingly enough a "professor in one of the great

universities in Toronto, [who] had shared his studies on Indian life, character, history and habits with his only son."² The son calls the father "pater" and the father is very mild and tweedy about everything, including the Indians outside the train. In fact, he becomes a joke, exemplifying the anemia of academia in the face of the noble Indian father-and-son team outside the train.

Ultimately, though, Shaganappi deals mainly with the terrible burden of proof--the Indian proving his humanity to the white, the weakling proving his strength and his right to survive to the strong, and the child proving his worth to the adult. It is very much in the tradition of the white Protestant and, I suppose, the savage ethic (one and the same to many) that to be worthwhile and human you have to possess a certain kind of prowess or intelligence, a particular gift. And since these stories were written for the Boy Scouts, they smack of the credo that success comes through pain.

The orientation was primarily physical, although it can be racial. The only way to prove your humanity if you were one of the maligned minority (consumptive, artistic, childish, Indian) was to perform--yes, perform--some astounding, spectacular feat that will elevate you in the eyes of the majority. Darwin--or at least Spencer--might applaud the idea that to the fittest indeed were distributed all the accolades, but more sensitive readers might shriek:

presumably, too, this collection was meant to be clutched to the manly chests of those Boy Scouts who, because of some small defect, either physical, intellectual or racial, were made by the rest of the troupe to feel out-cast. The book was a veritable pep rally for miscreants and the ill-begotten. All these weak creatures had rousing successes and the concept of manhood expressed within the collection was altered to include not simply the brawn and daring of the Boy Scout Manual, but a certain tenderness, gentleness and sensitivity. A prime example comes from the story "The Whistling Swan":

Then came the drayman out of the mill--a nice considerate, heart warm, intelligent human being. Oh yes! We humans know so much more than animals, don't we, fellows? And because the big, patient, kindly drayhorse had, in its restlessness, moved twenty feet from the spot the driver left him at, that creature that is supposed to have known him better, just took his whip and licked and lashed that glorious animal, yelling in a frenzy of temper, "I'll teach you to move, when I leave you! You--" Well, boys, you nor I don't care to hear all that he did say! The brute! The big human hulk! The sneak! And he called himself a man! were some of the phrases growled out by the indignant boys.

Heavens! No real man would hit an animal. A real man had a tender streak in him that loved the beasts, children, women, small wounded creatures. He never used rough language and he would defend the defenceless with his own life. An admirable code of chivalry! Such a man even loved his enemies.

The Shaganappi tried to hit home time and time again that it wasn't being a sissy to cry, to love or to be tender.

This is something anyone imbued with the myth of the American West, riding the range with Wild Bill Hickock, Buffalo Bill or Wyatt Earp, would deny. It was a case of the clean-white-shirted hero, all right, and one unusually Christian, because most adventure stories of the time featured desperadoes and great gun-slingers.

But in spite of the Goody Two-Shoes attitude of Johnson's men, it was still a definite fact that cruelty, barbarism and narrowmindedness did exist, if not in the professed beliefs of these gentlemen who went about their daily chores in tweed habits like intellectual monks, then in their hearts or inclinations.

The Indian particularly comes under the fire of the stringent chivalric traditionalist, although he often acts naturally and unconsciously. The Indian is a curiosity to the white--a romantic figure, a gawky sideshow phenomenon--but in each tale he is rendered thankfully and blissfully human through the proof of his sterling white-knight qualities. In "The King's Coin" the Indian even goes so far as to lose sleep saving the white man's gold, and everyone will admit that there is no greater recommendation for chivalry and whiteness than respect for money.⁴ The Indian may be a servant, but he knows his place, is honest, and is willing to lay down his life for the white man's ideals, and this elevates him to a place of equality² and, sometimes, even friendship, in the shorthouses of the suspicious white-

men.

The boys, to whom this truth of equality always strikes home, are always surprised that their Indian friend is just like them or in most cases superior, and this allows a camaraderie to develop between them. Often, too, this bond is founded on mutual weakness--in "The King's Coin" the boy Larry has eye trouble and Fox Foot is an Indian.

It's understandable why physically-unfit whites should want to prove themselves, but it is a bit of a mystery why the Indians should feel that they have to. Perhaps this isn't the case at all. Perhaps Johnson was trying to point out to these noble Scouts roasting their potatoes and weiners around the fire, how it felt to have a handicap, how the Indian's race was to him a handicap just as poor eyes or weak knees were to the whites. It was a fine, subtle way of showing it. "Maurice of His Majesty's Mails" is the story of such daring--a fifteen-year-old carries the mail, ruthlessly suffering all hardships to get it through. And it parallels "Jack O'Lantern," a story of a young white boy who goes through incredible hardships to make sure that the thin ice around a logging camp is marked by a lamp. In most of these stories the boy suddenly becomes head of the household.

In these stories, children seem to be just emerging from the Victorian concepts that restricted them. In those times, children were treated as inferior adults. They were

ignored, unheard, certainly not taken as good company and usually considered helpless burdens on the community, except in certain rural areas where they performed definite roles.

Perhaps that is why Johnson's emphasis on their emergence from the cocoon of incapacity is so effective. But then so is her championing of art and physical weakness.

Seldom has there been a more effective story than "The Broken String," which has for its hero an effeminate weakling of a violin player. How those Scouts must have marvelled. And of course the foreign minority is championed in "The Barnardo Boy," a story which finally proves that although a boy has an accent, he can act just as honestly, as bravely, as the toughest backwoodsman.

"We-hro's Sacrifice," no ordinary story of boy and dog, valiantly describes how a young boy is made to give up his pet to a ritualistic sacrifice that would save face for his people. There is no pampering of childish whims here; in the Indian tradition a boy must prove his manhood from the beginning. A child is just as good as an adult, says Johnson.

In fact, as a reaction to the Victorian ethic, she tends to go to the opposite extreme, and consequently does not put children in their proper perspective. But then she writes for little men, Boy Scouts who yearn to wear long pants and sit in stuffy conference rooms. And this she gives them. There is nothing, it seems, so glorious for a

young Scout as to be given a loving handshake by his seldom-confided-in father. "The Potlach" is a story that has as its hero a young Indian who makes his father proud by dancing before a large festival--an original dance imitating the manner of a wolf. This makes his father proud. What an onus of achievement there must have been on these children.

But children and Indians were engaged in a kind of friendly duplicity. This is evident in such stories as "The Scarlet Eye," which shows the Indian saving a young boy with a broken ankle on the trail while the brother of the injured lad rides relentlessly for help. Children would trust and believe in the red man even if adults did not. Sometimes the effect of this kind of faith was maudlin, but it always was effective.

"The Signal Code" is a story in which the innocent game of children saves a whole train from disaster. It all gets to be rather unrealistic and sometimes funny to watch these young boys performing all these miracles of adventure. But nevertheless it is heartening. The preoccupation is clearly with the acceptance of minorities, and this alone, considering the times, could be considered a daring innovation in literature.

If Johnson considers Indians and children as minorities, she also treats women this way. Yet her concept of them is unusually Indian. The women in the stories of The Shagganappi and Moccasin Maker are always relentlessly

stoic and brave. "Catherine of Crows Nest" in The Moccasin Maker is a woman who walks miles in the snow to a lumber camp to cook and then returns home each evening to care for an infant that isn't hers. And the boss, who likes her, trails her one day and discovers that the child is his. I expected to read of a marriage between the two but discovered that the boss merely allowed the woman to stay on as the child's nurse. Nevertheless, the woman's courage was steadfast and, like the postman, snow, sleet, hail or frost-bite did not delay her.

Johnson's woman is a jolly elf, too. Idealized beyond belief, always smiling at the hearth in spite of hardships (e.g. "The Nest Builder"), she may have ten squalling brats tugging at her apron, but she's sound and sturdy and un-sinkable. And of course loveable!

"The Derelict" is the story of a tragic romance in which the Indian wife cherishes a man debased. In some of the most maudlinly poignant lines ever sloshed across a page, Johnson writes:

And he who had until now been a portless derelict,
 who had vainly sought a haven in art, an anchorage
 in the service of God, had drifted at last into
 the world's most sheltered harbour--a woman's love.⁵

Yet these same mother hens (one woman looked after a thousand and was able to overcome grief at the loss of one of her own by mothering another in "Mother o' Men"), these same paragons, had their mean streaks. Although granted

these streaks usually were demonstrated only in Indian women. Johnson's poems brought this home more than did her prose, however (e.g. "A Red Girl's Reasoning" demonstrated impossible stubbornness; once caught demeaning an Indian, the husband must never be forgiven). "As It Was in the Beginning" even has a woman resorting to murder. An Indian woman crossed is one to be reckoned with. Treachery in love is unforgiveable. The red woman is true above all else and expects her man to be, too. It is a matter of one's word being one's bond, and she stands by this as no white person does.

Johnson's women, in fact, are the most volatile, colourful, interesting characters in her work. Yet while Johnson made the Indian society appear rather matriarchal, she did the same for the white society because she implied that a white man had to remember the ideals he learned from his mother to remain decent and entirely masculine.

But in spite of this vehemence, this stoic strength, there does exist something which tries to tame wildness in Indians, in children and generally in free spirits. This is the white man's civilization and it breeds contempt and weakness. It is the white man's impractical education which forces the Indian's free-running feet into stiff leather shoes. Symbolically, this hits home in "The Whistling Swans," the story of the suffering and death of wild things. And in fact the swans are swept over Niagara Falls and then beaten

to death by onlookers for the dollars they would bring, are certainly emblems of the destruction of wild, free life by opportunists.⁶

Several stories revel in the white man's preoccupation with costume. In "The King Georgemen" it is essential for Ivy to acquire a complete set of western duds in order to fit in,⁷ and in "Gun Shy Billy" it is just as important for Billy to get outfitted in khaki to be accepted by the boys.⁸ In "A Night with North Eagle" the boys finally pledge their friendship by exchanging shirts.⁹ But most blatant of all these comments is made in the story of "Little Wolf-Willow":

Mr. Enderby smiled. "That's good; I like you too, little Wolf-Willow. Now tell me, do you like your new clothes?"

"No good," said the boy.

Mr. Enderby looked grave. "But my boy, that is what you must wear if you are to be educated.... To become educated you must try and wear and do what the white people do--like the English, as you say," Mr. Enderby went on. "Now what about your hair? White men don't wear their hair long, and you see all the Cree boys in the school have let me cut their hair. Wouldn't you like to be like them?"

"No; hair good," said the boy.

"Well; how about a 'white' name?" asked Mr. Enderby.¹⁰

The white man obviously felt that no one could possibly acquire knowledge without submitting his physical person to certain ritual indignities that required, for someone used to freer movement, great suffering. This was coercion

of the worst kind. "As It Was in the Beginning" is a story in which the description of change of clothing and culture can be compared only to descriptions of terror and torture. In this story the heroine has to wear a callico dress and leather shoes, and is forbidden to speak her native language.¹¹

And incredibly, this torture worked. At least on the surface, hordes of Indians were being turned into model whitemen. Little Wolf-Willow, even though he kept his hair and his name, wound up

accustomed to sleeping in a house, in a bed, to wearing shoes, to eating the white man's food; but the blood of the prairies leaped in his veins at the very sight of the great tepee, with its dry sod floor spread with wolf-skins and ancient buffalo hides. He flung himself onto the furs and the grass, his fingers threading themselves through the buckskin fringes that adorned old Beavertail's leggings.¹²

And the girl in the callico wound up almost marrying a white man, wearing corsets and being polite to preachers. Thank goodness, the reader is inclined to exclaim, that she left with her mother's knife dripping blood!

When it came right down to it, Johnson wasn't simply saying that there is no changing basic nature; she was saying that ultimately, in spite of the Indian's valiant efforts to please him almost to the point of absurdity, the white man will turn his back and be unappeased. In the final analysis it is the white man who makes the distinctions that leave the Indian out in the cold. The Indian can wear the white men's shoes, but he still can't marry their

daughters. The Indian has no recourse but to return to the ways of his people.¹³

In these writings, the onus on all children, white or Indian, is responsibility to the social order in spite of everything, any cost to them. This is a heavy load to bear. And all of this provides delicate insight into the relationship between the white man and the Indian. The cultural struggle going on was felt most by children. Too young to be brought up entirely under their parents' old customs, they still were too naturally Indian to become white. They were torn in two directions and finally returned to their parents' way of life disillusioned and confused.

And the transition was violent. The Indian child, wild and free by white standards, often was physically carried off to take the white man's medicine of education--a cure totally useless in his life, since his own people still followed the old ways on their reservations. But then the Indian's milieu was growing smaller. Already the buffalo were gone. Already the railroads were coming dangerously close to the Indian tepees and this threatened their whole way of life. Perhaps the Indian child, the parents reasoned, needed the white man's education for protection against the white onslaught. What good could wood-lore possibly be if there were no more hunting grounds? So the Indians sadly gave their children over to new religions and new ways of life.

Yet they saw the evils of the city. Even to the Indian, the wilderness was becoming a legend:

...the young redskin seemed inspired; a perfect torrent of words rushed to his lips, then his voice saddened as he concluded: "But they will never come again, the mighty buffalo my father and my grandfather used to chase. They have gone to a far country, for they loved not the ways of the paleface. Sometimes at night I dream I hear their thousand hoofs beat up the trail, I see their tossing horns, like the prairie grass in the strong west winds, but they are only spirits now; they will never come to me, and I have waited so long, so many days watching these trails, watching, watching, watching--but they never come; no, the buffalo never come!"¹⁴

This description is superbly poetic. And all of Johnson's Indian characters are remarkably lyrical compared to the stuffy whites she describes. Yet she herself seems torn between these two extremes because she, after all, was half white and educated in the white man's tradition, even though she was treated as an Indian curiosity throughout her career.

The Indian's lyricism seems to spring from his wisdom. He is profoundly moved by the absence of wild things. He is angered (although stoically so) by the disappearance of a natural way of life. He laments this continually.

The white man, too, the more enlightened he is, is aware of the terror of the city:

"Madam, if your boy is as safe from danger and harm and evil in the city of Toronto as he will be with North Eagle in the prairie country, why, I congratulate you."¹⁵

In Johnson's day these stories warned of corruption, destruction and upheaval, of alienation and the determination

to fight the terror of oppression. Today these stories have even more poignant meaning. Although simple and often vulgarly overplayed, they possess that same somber ring of truth that cries for understanding, even though it may be too late. Woven into the stories are descriptions of simple crafts that have all but disappeared or have been corrupted into tourist souvenirs through economic necessity, churned out for the sake of survival instead of art.

It is difficult to know how much of her own life Johnson put into these stories. "My Mother" certainly was autobiographical, but perhaps in these stories she talked more about what it was like to be a child growing up in Brantford. Although she never mentions her childhood directly, except to expound its homey glories in stories concerning her parents, perhaps these prose pieces are telling comments on her life as a child. She never admits to hatred or oppression personally, but perhaps we can see it happening to her through the eyes of her descriptions of other children who suffered terribly at the removal of their heritage. And this heritage was transmitted to Johnson primarily through legends. This is why Legends of Vancouver was such an important book personally for Johnson as well as for our own conceptions of Canadian myth.

These legends were transmitted to her through Joe Capilano, an Indian chief whom she met in London, where she was treated as a white woman. Perhaps he stirred a patriotic

nativism in her, but whatever the reason, the two became close friends and in her later years she moved to Vancouver to live and die near the heritage she could not find in the east. She said to friends in Vancouver many times that when she died she couldn't stand the thought of her body being "dragged off to Brantford to be buried."¹⁶

Her legends stand quite apart from the prose if only by virtue of their inimitable style. Certainly they are more poetic and descriptive than any of her other stories. The language she used to relate them is one entirely packed with musical description and emotion.

In these stories she takes the part of the intermediary between the Indian and the white man, and she plays this role well. Never intrusive, always humble and taciturn, she acts as a channel through which these legends pass and she takes no credit for the flowering metaphors, the brilliant allegory, the romance, the perceptions or the intuitive beauty of the legends. Rather, she insists time and time again that she is simply a stenographer, a professional listener, and exalts the power of Capilano and the other Indians who have given her the "privilege" of hearing these legends.

One of the most valuable features of the legends is that they reveal the customs, beliefs and habits of the tribes they describe. Anthropologically, these descriptions are invaluable, because so little authentic documentation

of them is available elsewhere.

Many of the legends spring from the Indians' close association with ritual and many are, in fact, mystically oriented. But it is a natural mysticism that is supported by natural proof. In these legends men turn into stones which can be seen today, into mountains, into monsters whose tracks have left crevices on the landscape. Their ghostly voices become the hum of familiar rivers, the whistle of the wind. Ask one of these Indians for proof that his story is true and he can point to a nearby tree or show you the exact spot, complete with appropriate markings, where the incident occurred. In modern Western myths, this is almost unheard of.

The kind of person the Indian chooses for his hero is interesting, too. It is not the famous explorer, hunter or marksman who makes these legends noble, but rather the unknown warrior or obscure but beautiful maiden. And usually these heroes remain unnamed. Nature is the true hero. The rock, the stone, the star, the sound--these are heroic because they have incorporated within them the spirit of men as well as the essence of God.

And all these legends have to do with God. It is a god who is capable of anything but does everything with love. The Indians are his children and they live at peace with him. Even in the legend of Napoleon that Johnson records, Napoleon isn't the hero; a magic charm is. For

the Indians realize that all their power comes from the great Sagalie Tyee.¹⁷

The legends construct a framework which punishes evil and cultivates good in its people. But the good is cultivated out of a love for God. Although there is fear of repercussions if evil is allowed to reign. Many of the legends turn evil people into monsters (evil witches turn into stones in "The Lure of Stanley Park" and greedy men turn into reptiles in "The Sea Serpent").

Many of the legends have to do with birth and the rituals which surround it. "The Recluse" is the story of a man who must live a hermit's life in the mountains because he fathered twins--a sign of coming peril for the tribe. And he lives there until he receives a sign that evil has been conquered.¹⁸

"Siwash Rock" is the story of a man who must

swim, swim, swim, swim through this hour when his fatherhood was coming upon him. It was the law that he must be clean, spotlessly clean, so that when his child looked out upon the world it would have the chance to live its own clean life. If he did not swim hour upon hour his child would come to an unclean father. He must give his child a chance in life; he must not hamper it by his own uncleanliness at its birth. It was the tribal law--the law of vicarious purity.¹⁹

And these tribal laws are sacred. The heroes of the legends never question them but perform even the most impossible tasks in spite of dangers and tortures and death. The chief swimming in "Siwash Rock" defied even the great Sagalie Tyee

to make good his responsibility and was rewarded (although the nature of this reward's merits is questionable) by being turned into a rock. "The Recluse" spent ten years in the forest waiting for the sign. These people were dauntless in their convictions that their beliefs were valid.

One thing is clear in these legends--that the Indian people have a high regard for honesty, integrity, fearlessness, determination and responsibility for women and children. They revere responsibility and consider that bravery is exemplified not only by a mighty hand but by a tender heart as well. How far removed this is from the white ethic. Little wonder that Johnson found these legends so inspiring to her.

"Deadman's Island" is the legend of how two hundred braves unflinchingly gave their lives in return for the lives of two hundred women and children. "The Sea Serpent" is the story of a man so good that he was willing to fight a sea monster to rid his people of greed and corruption. All these brave men and women go into battle single-handed, usually against great odds. And they are as persistent and faithful as enemies as they are as lovers. They never forget a single slight until it has been avenged. They never forget a love even though it has been removed by death. "The Great Archway" tells how a lover leapt to his death with his lover, and "The Tulameen Trail" tells how an Indian revenged the death of his lover by killing her murdering

brothers and then imposed exile on himself out of grief.

This same willingness to perform one's duty without either coercion or thought of gain, and with pure unselfishness, seems true of the women in Johnson's legends, too. In fact, the place she and the Indians give to women in society is one of the most remarkable aspects of the legends. Constantly glorified in her stories and poems, woman is held almost sacred in the legends because she is the mother of men. "Two Sisters" glorifies women as peacemakers and this was in fact a strong feature of the women in Johnson's poetry. The legend "The Lost Salmon" shows respect for their abilities ("she was an indefatigable workwoman, rivaling her husband as an expert catcher"²⁰) and their innate biological function:

Very good luck to have a girl for first grandchild. Our tribe not like yours: we want girl children first; we not always wish boy-child born just for fight. Your people, they care only for war-path; our tribe more peaceful. Very good sign first grandchild to be girl. I tell you why: girl-child maybe sometime mother herself; very grand thing to be mother.²¹

The war-path statement above is a slight to the Iroquois and again glorifies women as peacemakers. Johnson didn't seem to mind this statement about her own people. Certainly this description of women adds new dimension to the Western myth and shatters the white Western ethic that women were unfit for frontier life and, even to this day, unwelcome firstborns in families.

Preference for a male child in the story "The Lost Salmon Run" is punished by the disappearance of the salmon. In the early 1900s this attitude toward women was rather astounding and is epitomized in the following:

"Evil will fall upon you," wailed the great Tyeq.
 "You have despised a mother-woman. You will suffer evil and starvation and hunger and poverty, oh! foolish tribespeople. Did you not know how great a girl-child is?"²²

It can be argued that these bits of vehemence were Johnson's own insertions. If so, it suggests that she did not care whether or not this would alienate her reading public. In any case, she was at the time the first Canadian poet and writer to champion, even in this subtle way, the cause of women's rights.

In the years the legends were compiled (c. 1910-1912) the suffragette movement was beginning to swell in this country and the papers were full of debates and letters by women demanding rights as human beings as well as the vote. Strong movements were present in Vancouver and letters (both irate and sarcastic) appeared in most Canadian newspapers.²³ Johnson's literature, in retrospect, becomes powerful and unique in its subtle yet candid condemnation of a nation that places women in inferior positions to men. At the time of its writing it is doubtful that this would have drawn much attention.

The difference between eastern and western tribes is very marked in the legends. Johnson, although eastern,

wanted to record only the life of the western Indian peoples. Perhaps she felt that the West was purer, more isolated, and freer than the polluted, increasingly-overpopulated East. In her satires she laments the lost traditions of these western tribes and writes poignant pieces of rhetoric which bemoan the polluted rivers, forests and air, and mourn the lost pride, bravery and strength of their people. "Lost Island" is the most obvious of these lamentations. It describes an island where an old chief asks God to secrete all his courage and fearlessness so that his people may one day find them and "be strong enough to endure the white man's rule."²⁴ Even before the white men came in great numbers, the Indians had visions of the future:

He looked across a hundred years, just as he looked across what you call the inlet, and he saw mighty lodges built close together, hundreds and thousands of them; lodges of stone and wood, and long straight trails to divide them. He saw these trails thronging with Palefaces; he heard the sound of the white man's paddle dip in the waters, for it is not silent like the Indian's; he saw the white man's trading posts, saw the fishing nets, heard his speech.²⁵

The Indians had to learn to fight the creeping wasteland of machines and concrete and "long straight trails," and they could not do this because they did not understand the principle of greed. This was the essence of "The Sea Serpent" legend, where Johnson describes the Indians' political and socio-economic conscience:

All red races are born socialists and most tribes carry their communistic ideas to the letter. Amongst

the Iroquois it is considered disgraceful to have food if your neighbour has none. To be a creditable member of the nation you must divide your possessions with your less fortunate fellows... an Indian is an Indian, no matter what his tribe; shows that he cannot or will not hoard money; shows that his native morals demand that the spirit of greed must be strangled at all cost.²⁶

Certainly these are high ideals, and in these legends, perhaps because she feels once removed from their sources, Johnson expresses herself most explicitly both personally and morally, as well as politically. We learn in them, for instance, that she cannot swim, that she often ate alone, and that she often travelled alone.²⁷ We get the impression that she found herself a silent observer in the land of the Indian, and yet loved and understood it all. She obviously hated pollution, male supremacy, greed, cowardice, coercion and unfaithfulness. And she was proud. We learn that she made an historical and cultural study of the Indian just as white men who were interested might have done. In her letters she talked of compiling photographs of Indians and, in fact, people would send her such photographs; her papers at McMaster University include quite a number of these photos. And we learn, too, from her private papers that she made dictionaries of the Indian languages and collected Indian crafts.²⁸ She recorded their mannerisms (for instance, Indians point with their palms upward²⁹) and remarked on the universal nature of their legends. The Indians, like the whites, have a story, for instance, of a great deluge.

We learn, too, that Johnson has perspective and discrimination when it comes to legends and prefers those that deal with human beings rather than with animals. Many Iroquois legends deal with the latter, but apparently this subject matter doesn't satisfy her, since it does not come to terms with basic universal emotions. The legends she collected are in fact highly humanistic and moralistic.

Ultimately and most important, they are entirely Canadian. The customs described and the beliefs inherent in the pieces are indigenous to Canada. These legends are purely their own and so, perhaps for the first time, provide a mythic basis for Canadian literature to follow. Clearly, these are unsophisticated folk tales, yet in them are recorded customs, landscapes, beliefs purely Canadian.

Chapter IV

CONCLUSION

In her poetry and her prose, particularly *Legends of Vancouver*, Pauline Johnson established herself as the first authentic Canadian writer.

In the *Group of '61*, a collection of the more somber and respected nature poets of the time, she was the only woman capable of writing naturally about nature. True, Susanna Moodie, who lived in another time, wrote about nature, too; but for her it was always a wild, unconquerable stranger. To Johnson nature was hospitable; she was at home in it and it suited her well. Her descriptions took on greater life because she lived them. There is no lake she describes that she did not experience sensually, no scene in which she did not breathe, listen, paddle, roam. She had a personal relationship with everything she described and this relationship was far more involved than a merely physical one. It functioned on the instinctual level, as well, and this made it all the more real and vital.

The fact that she was a woman, one who fought for women's rights by proving she was more intuitive, sensitive, peaceful and reasonable than a man and just as good a sportsman, made her even more rare.

Her poetry--especially her early work--had a certain primitive strength and vibrancy. Her words may have been dulcet, charming and lyrical, but they never were soppy or tired. Behind them lay strength and purpose. And she mixed her lyricism with talk of blood, battle and death, talk that was as violent as any man might have made it, but she lent to the descriptions of these things and of her country a tenderness and poetic grace that few men could.

Yet always she remained personal, private, a rather mysterious figure. Her love poems, although volatile, were couched in generalities. Like an Indian, she did not bare her soul and sell it, but her emotions always were evident. So was her pain. She may have been isolated, lonely, even tragically lovelorn, yet she maintained her proud bearing and unflinching, noble Indian stature.

Mysticism, magic, myth--she believed in them all, fervently, faithfully, as an Indian would, as the legends and poems prove.

Her only flaw was that she was too eager, too anxious to bind white and Indian in common understanding. This is why many feel she sold out. Privately she never did. In a letter to a Mr. O'Brien she explains why she catered to white public taste as much as she did:

The public will not listen to lyrics, will not appreciate poetry, will in fact not have me as an entertainer if I give them nothing but rhythm, cadence, beauty, thought. You will not like your friend--(am I not) to bend to public favour,

when she has the power and ability to arise above it, and yet you know, tho' thank your guiding star and saint you have not experienced my reason for this vulgar "catering" to an applauding crowd. Ye Gods, how I hate their laughter at times, when such laughter is called forth by some of my brainless lines and business. I could do much better if they would only let me. I have had dreams of "educating" the vulgar taste to poetry not action. I will do it some time, when this hard, cold soulless "reason" for bending to their approval ceases to exist.¹

The letter goes on to explain that economic necessity demanded this catering, this selling-out. Yet she admitted it honestly and asked to be forgiven. In spite of her concessions (and many of these are obvious in much of her work) her true literary integrity and talent manage to shine through, to remain.

Ultimately, it was this integrity and effort for poetic excellence that won out and caused her the sacrifice of much fame and gain. She died in poverty and alone.

Yet she believed in that spirit of Canada which she had helped to identify (and rightly so) with its wild and intractable people, with the great birds and fishes and natural land formations. She was a natural Canadian. She loved Canada:

This "great, lone land" of ours is so absorbing, so lovely, so magnificent, that my eyes forget the beauties of the older land. Ah! There are no such airs as these in England, no such skies, no such forest scents and wild sweet perfumes. These August days are gorgeous. The atmosphere is rife with amethyst, amber and opal tints, parented by the far-off bush fires, and the thin north air. The sun lies like a ball of blood, and oh! the stillness, the silence, the magnitude of this country impresses me as it never has before. I cannot tell you how I love my

Canada, or how infinitely dear my native soil
is to me since I started on this long trip.²

Many say that Johnson owed a debt to Longfellow, who wrote of Hiawatha. Indeed she did, for she read him as a child. But what Longfellow transmitted in his poem, Johnson had lived or had seen others living. It was pride of heritage that caused her to remain singularly unscathed and unpolluted by the white man's education. In the end this same pride and love helped her to win the friendship of those Vancouver Indians who told her their simple tales in spite of her familiarity with the salons of London. This was a remarkable achievement.

Perhaps Joe Capilano, after all, brought her back to the place she should have kept to, both artistically and literally. Clearly, her last works are marked with a maturity of style yet with the same Indian quality (but even stronger and more defined) of her early work. Had she lived longer, her poetry might have returned to championing the Indian cause.

I sometimes think of her as the literary Paul Kane, even though she is so familiar with her subjects that they are no curiosity. And she tries to familiarize us with them honestly and gently, always making allowance for our white scepticism and nervousness.

Her work has many flaws. The legends sometimes are clumsy, awkward in expression, even wadlin. Her prose often is flat and depressing. Some of her poetry is

snivelling in its obsequience to flag and country. But these flaws are minor in the face of her obvious talent. The skeleton of her work, the very backbone, is vibrant with colour and vitality. She was, after all, the first Canadian Indian writing in English to make herself at once popular, refined and primitively natural. She must be respected for this.

Her style of living--travelling around the country reciting her work in small-town meeting halls--made her unique among the lace-curtain lady poets of her day. Her familiarity with her subjects made her outstanding, a curiosity among the sofa-sitting matrons who read her pieces. She could stand beside any robust Canadian author (Carmen, Lampman, Smith) and be unflinchingly sure of her subject.

Because of these things, because of her heritage, her understanding of the land, her intense feeling for geography, atmosphere and spirit, she is perhaps the first true, purely Canadian writer to have lived.

APPENDIX A

Home, Feb 4th '94.

My dear Mr O'Brien--

Why do I write to you--perhaps to thank you for your personal interest and kindness in attending to those railway tickets for me, and yet I think it is more for another reason, to exonerate myself from a self-asserted failing, and yet I know you would partially understand me, tho' not quite, not thoroughly.

I felt that you looked at me with unforgivable eyes when I tricked myself into the confession that I "played to the public." That I must make myself a favorite, whether it reflected credit upon my literary work or not.

More than all things I hate and despise brain debasement, literary "pot boiling" and yet I have done, will do these things, though I sneer at my littleness in so doing. Believe me it is not degraded choice, nor do I wittingly and knowingly descend to smallness of expression in my work--do not look that puzzled little way you have, I am not fencing with you personally in this last remark. I am thinking of other things not "stepping stones." And you know well that I am honest in my desire to improve and am in appreciation of my friends keen sight and ear where perhaps my own are dulled with routine and the repetition that blunts one's finer senses in all, that never occurred

to me before, that repetition of evil is what kills conscience, that repetition of good is what makes moral heroes.

But where am I? Ah! I was writing of "Literary pot boiling," and drab padding, for which--don't deny it, you feel a certain sense of disappointment in me. You thought me more of the true poet, more the child of inspiration I have proved to be-- The reason for my actions in this matter? Well--the reason is that the public will not listen to lyrics, will not appreciate poetry, will in fact not have me as an entertainer if I give them nothing but rhythm, cadence, beauty, thought. You will not like your friend-- (am I not?) to bend to public favor, when she has the power and ability to arise above it, and yet you know, tho' thank your guiding star and saint you have not experienced my reason for this vulgar "catering" to an applauding crowd. Ye Gods, how I hate their laughter at times, when such laughter is called forth by some of my brainless lines and business. I could do much better if they would only let me. I have had dreams of "educating" the vulgar taste to Poetry, not action. I will do it some time, when this hard, cold souless "reason" for bending to their approval ceases to exist.

What am I writing? You see I am in a "mood" I often have them. I have no excuse for writing to you like this-- save perhaps the ever recurring haunting memory of your silent disapproval, when I confessed that I "played to

people." Please do not think hardly of me. You do not know, your life has never been touched by certain grimnesses that people such as Osen and I have been surrounded with. Grimness, did I say? So grim that the hollow comedy of it has often struck us so strangely that we have laughed together until we were exhausted--but that was a year ago. Now? Well, now we are trying to look an audience more honestly in the face, with the confidence that success, and demand, always assures.

You have helped me too, for not withstanding my inner consciousness, of your momentary disappointment in your new friend, I have never felt so near the borders of your real fellowship as when you helped me to see the thin--almost invisible bar lying in my literary pathway, the little bar that would make my intellectual feet totter--that would perhaps grow into a giant obstruction in time--I wish too you would not stop here, that you would feel confidence enough in me and my good judgment, and liberal ideas to know that of all things I desire--improvement is the greatest. I do not accept all suggestions, nor would you or anyone else have me do so, but I hope I readily see the blurr upon the sun, the little cloud that renders its rays less lustrous, and if it lies in my power, to sweep this cloud, this bitterness, this unworthiness away, and give expression to true poetry, clearer sentiment, in all my writings, I shall do so.

Goodnight, what a strange woman you will think me--
And yet as I said before I believe you will understand and
excuse me. At all events come and pay your respects to me
next Friday afternoon--

Faithfully I am yours,

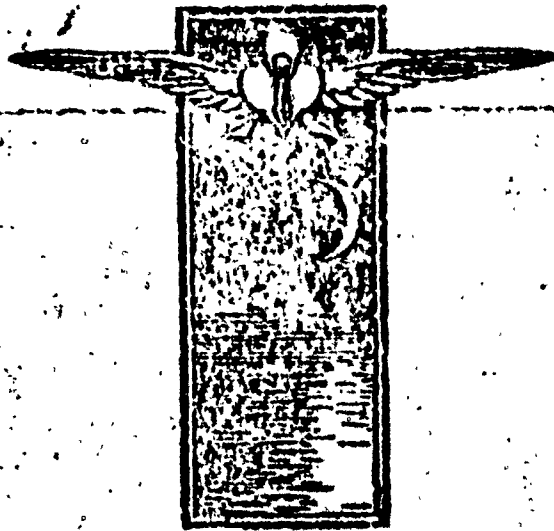
E. Pauline Johnson--

My cold is dreadful, I am really quite ill with it.
Oh, I forgot to tell you I altered "Stepping Stones." It
is pretty, even dainty now, but you demon--I shall always
think of you when I am reading those lines.

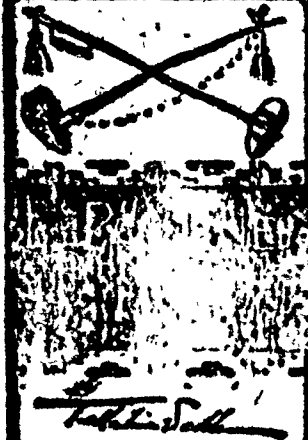
E.P.J.

APPENDIX B

THIS THEN IS TO ANNOUNCE
 AN AMERICAN TOUR OF
E. Pauline Johnson
 "Tekahionwake," the Mohawk Poet-Entertainer
 IN SKETCHES, POEMS AND LEGENDS, AND
Walter McRae
 I m p e r s o n a t o r



IN SKETCHES FROM DR. DRUMMOND'S
 "HABITANT" FOLK LORE POEMS OF
 FRENCH CANADA



IROQUOIS INDIAN
POET RECITER

London, England, Editor of *New York World* says of these Artists

ONWANONSYSHON, the Indian girl in whose veins runs the fiery blood of the Mohawks (who is herself the daughter of the late Chief G. H. M. Johnson, "Onwanonsyshon," Head Chief of the Iroquois Confederacy in Canada) was one of the sensations of the past London Season. For this gifted daughter of the red Indian race, is not only an accomplished reader of her own verse, but her poems are of a quality that stamp them as of unusually high order. Clad in her native costume, she appeared before some of the most fashionable English audiences and her rendering of her own compositions captured their admiration. Civilization has touched her with its finer qualities. She is Cultivated and Brilliant. Her figure is imposing and sets off to advantage the Indian trappings of her rich Buckskin garments. The force and dramatic vigor of her work has a barbaric swing of primal emotion. Outlined against the wild picturesqueness of this Mohawk woman's rendering of the Legends, Wars and Romances of a savage people, is the work done by her fellow artist

Walter McRaye

T. P. O'Connor says of him in *M.A.P.*, July 28th, '06. : This Canadian Grossmith possesses rare faculty in depicting the

quaint character of the French Canadian as portrayed in Dr. Drummond's delightfully humorous and pathetic verses. He possesses the rare gift that is sometimes called, "getting over the footlights" and described as, "creating an atmosphere."

MISS E. PAULINE JOHNSON, known as "Tekahionwake," the Iroquois Indian Poet-Entertainer, will begin an American Tour in October, Nineteen Hundred Eight, assisted by Walter McRae, the celebrated Canadian Humorist. These great artists come fresh from their London vocation, and will be the best novelty entertainment ever offered to the American Lyceums. Miss Johnson will appear in native Indian buckskin costume, presenting her own poems and legends of Red Indian life. Theodore Watts said of her in the London Athenaeum, "The most interesting English-speaking Poetess now living." Assisted by Mr. McRae she made her first London appearance Monday, July sixteenth, at Steinway Hall, before a large and distinguished audience, including Lord and Lady Strathcona, Sir Charles Lupper, Sir Gilbert Parker, M. P., Sir Charles and Lady Rivers-Wilson, Sir Daniel and Lady MacMillan, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton the great literary critic, the High Commissioners and their Staffs of South Australia, Tasmania and Natal, Captain and Mrs. Baker, and Mr. Courtney Thorpe, and were instantly endorsed by the entire London Press, as the most *Unique, Original and Unhackneyed* performance of the season.

Graphic, London, July 18th, 1908.

There was an interesting program at Steinway Hall on Monday evening for the recital of Miss Pauline Johnson. Clad in a handsome dress of buckskin and red, with silver ornaments, and blanket, Miss Johnson recited with great spirit her poems of "Ojateh" and "Qu'Appelle" and other pieces. The entertainment was enjoyed by a crowded audience.

Obit, London, July 17th, 1908.

Miss Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake, who is descended from the chiefs of the Iroquois race of the American Indians, appeared at the Steinway Hall last evening in her native costume, and gave a vivid rendering of "Ojateh" and a "Legend of Qu'Appelle." Both were fine pieces of declamation, and were received with evident appreciation.

Morning Post, London, July 17, 1908.

An entertainment of an unusual kind was provided at the Steinway Hall last evening by Miss E. Pauline Johnson, who is descended from a former member of the Iroquois nation of Red Indians, from whom she derives her native name of Tekahionwake, recited, or rather enacted, a number of Indian stories of which she is the author. These little pieces are powerfully descriptive, and they gain considerably by the admirable manner in which they are interpreted. Miss Johnson has a dramatic manner, and she carries out her work with the aid of much picturesque, natural, and remarkably effective gestures.

*Full Moll Gazette, July 18th, says:—*Walter McRae has made a special study of the French-Canadian "Habitant," with his rolling patois and charming simplicity. His work was excellently rendered and enthusiastically received.

*KR, in Toronto, Canada, Moll-Enquirer:—*Walter McRae is richly armed for the entertaining game. His sense, his golden, is his, and his also is genuine. He is per-simplicity—the best reader I have ever seen of heart, and I pretty well know the readers the world over.

Free Press, London, Canada, Feb. 24, 1907.

How Dr. Drummond would have delighted in Walter McRae's interpretation of his "When All's Done," "The Bell of St. Michael," and "Little Baboon." Many among the Habitants shudder and weep full miserably. Mr. McRae's debut is perfect, and he possesses a dramatic instinct and a delicate sense of humor that betrays itself in "When All's Done" and is coupled with the pathos of "Little Baboon."

Just a Line O' Type Written after Hearing and
Seeing Mr. Walter McRaye Read Drummond

WHEN DR. DRUMMOND began to write his habitant poems, lovers of literature saw a new star in the East. ¶ Here was a people, poor, lowly and superstitious, that the writers had overlooked. Drummond saw them with the eyes of a poet and a humanitarian, and lo! their rags became picturesque, their lives full of tender fancy, and their struggles, longings, fears and ambitions were intertwined with a humor so subtle that we did not know whether to laugh or cry, and so simply sighed and said nothing. ¶ "You cannot paint a picture and leave a man out," said Ruskin. And the man who hopes to produce literature that lives must perforce be a lover of men and one with them. Drummond when he wrote was the Habitant. They were his people and all of their little foibles and follies were his. ¶ Walter McRaye interprets Drummond far better than any man I ever saw or heard. McRaye is the Habitant telling his story. Quaint, subtle, absurd, tenderly foolish and sublimely strong—as only natural people are—McRaye interests, entertains and instructs, and we never suspect at the time he is reading just for us. ¶ No one ever feels sorry for McRaye—he just takes us and wraps us round, hand and foot with a poet's fancy and we are lost for the time in the picture. After a while the reader brings us back safely to where we started from, and we rub our eyes wondering whether we have been doing things while in the trance. ¶ Great is Drummond—gone on his Long Journey—and great is McRaye, who is with us yet, for he is giving the Athenians a day of pleasure.

Edwin Hubbard

Programme.

PART I.

Piano - Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2. - *Beethoven*
First Movement.

MR. SHAPIRO.

Poem

"Ojstoh"

MISS JOHNSON.

"Ojstoh" in the Iroquois language "A Star" often used as a girl's name.

Sketch

"Wines Albany Sang." - *Dr. Drummond*

MR. McRAYE.

Marie Louise Emma Cecile Lajunesse (Madam Albani Gye), the well-known Prima Donna was born in the little French Canadian village of Chambly. She takes her name from the city of Albany, N.Y., U.S.A.

Poem

"The Legend of 'Qu'Appelle'"

MISS JOHNSON.

Founded upon fact. The story was told to Miss Johnson by his Lordship the Bishop of Qu'Appelle.

"Tepé," the Northwest term for wigwam."

Piano

Ruusconi, No. 12. - *Liszt.*

MR. SHAPIRO.

Sketches

(a) "Hard a Plouffe" - *Dr. Drummond*

(b) "Johanne Courteau"

MR. McRAYE.

"Hard a Plouffe," a small French Canadian Village.
"Rote Sauvage," Rude-Hair's Skin Moccasins, used by the "Habitant."

Mekinic a lumbering district in Michigan, U.S.

PART II.

Poem - "A Soul was in the Beginning"

MISS JOHNSON.

The Term Priest as used in this Poem does not apply to any particular denomination. Among the less civilized Tribes, the Minister of any Church is called Priest or "The Black Coat"

Sketch

"Le Vieu Temps" - *Dr. Drummond*

MR. McRAYE.

The whole scene is typical of rural French Canada.

Burlesque - French Canadian Sleighs,
Carols

Piano

(a) "My Joys" - *Chopin Liszt*

(b) "Spinning Song" - *Mendelssohn*

MR. SHAPIRO.

Comedette

"The Success of the Season"

MISS JOHNSON.

A Society Satire Composed, Arranged and Presented exclusively by Miss Johnson.



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

¹A. Leon Hatzen, The True Story of Hiawatha and a History of the Six Nations (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1925), p. 34. The spelling of Aganyshioni varies from publication to publication (W.D. McRaye in his book Pauline Johnson and Her Friends writes it "Akaonsioni"), but the most common usage is Aganyshioni.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 36-37.

⁴Ibid., p. 38.

⁵Arthur C. Parker, The Constitution of the Five Nations or The Iroquois Book of Rites, New York State Museum Bulletin, Number 184, 1916, p. 14.

⁶Ibid.

⁷The Iroquois Book of Rites, ed. Horatio Hale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 115.

⁸Ibid., p. 181.

⁹Hatzen, p. 41.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 40.

¹²Ibid., p. 44.

¹³Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴Walter McRaye, Pauline Johnson and Her Friends (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), p. iv.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁶J.D. Logan and Donald G. French, Highways of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924), p. 195.

¹⁷Hale, p. 39.

- 18 Ibid., p. 41.
- 19 McRaye, p. 17.
- 20 Mrs. W. Garland Foster, The Mohawk Princess (Vancouver: Lions Gate Publishing, 1931), p. 22.
- 21 McRaye, p. 18.
- 22 Ibid., p. 22.
- 23 Pauline Johnson, Legends of Vancouver (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961), p. x.
- 24 McRaye, p. 26.
- 25 Foster, p. 38.
- 26 Ibid., p. 41.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid., p. 42.
- 29 McRaye, p. 42.
- 30 Ibid., p. 72.
- 31 Ibid., p. 47.
- 32 Foster, p. 47.
- 33 McRaye, p. 57.
- 34 Private files of W.D. Rutherford, founder of The Institute for Iroquois Studies, Brantford, Ontario.
- 35 London Free Press, March 7, 1895.
- 36 Rutherford files.
- 37 Foster, p. 73.
- 38 McRaye, p. 67.
- 39 Ibid., p. 88.
- 40 Ibid., p. 90.
- 41 Ibid., p. 86.

⁴²Ibid., p. 92.

⁴³Marcus Van Steen, Pauline Johnson: Her Life and Work (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p. 32.

⁴⁴Foster, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 134.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 136.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 142.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 147.

CHAPTER II

¹William Wordsworth, Complete Writings, Riverside Editions (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 446.

²Ralph Waldo Emerson, Complete Writings, Riverside Editions (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 36.

⁴Wordsworth, p. 111.

⁵Ibid., pp. 446-447.

⁶Ibid., p. 447.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 448.

⁹Emerson, p. 195.

¹⁰T.C. McLuhan, Touch the Earth (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 6.

¹¹Wordsworth, p. 455.

¹²E. Pauline Johnson, Flint and Feather (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), p. 35.

¹³Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴Henry David Thoreau, Walden, Civil Disobedience,
Riverside Editions (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. 12.

¹⁵Emerson, p. 197.

¹⁶Johnson, p. 89.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 113.

²⁰Ibid., p. 127.

²¹Emerson, p. 48.

²²Ibid., p. 32.

²³Johnson, p. 47.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 48.

²⁶Ibid., p. 68.

²⁷Ibid., p. 58.

²⁸Ibid., p. 108.

²⁹Ibid., p. 141.

³⁰Ibid., p. 100.

³¹Ibid., p. 38.

³²Ibid., p. 152.

³³Ibid., p. 170.

³⁴Ibid., p. 36.

³⁵Ibid., p. 71.

³⁶Ibid., p. 73.

³⁷Ibid., p. 76.

³⁸Ibid., p. 124.

³⁹Ibid., p. 31.

- 40 Ibid., p. 98.
- 41 Ibid., p. 9.
- 42 Ibid., p. 20.
- 43 Wordsworth, p. 112.
- 44 Johnson, p. 114.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid., p. 132.
- 48 Ibid., p. 152.
- 49 Ibid., p. 107.
- 51 Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1970), p. 33.
- 52 Johnson, p. 107.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Brown, p. 36.
- 55 Johnson, p. 97.
- 56 McLuhan, p. 56.
- 57 Johnson, p. 140.
- 58 Ibid., p. 97.
- 59 Ibid., p. 115.
- 60 Ibid., p. 159.
- 61 Ibid., p. 166.
- 62 Ibid., p. 143.
- 63 Thoreau, p. 206.
- 64 Johnson, p. 102.
- 65 Ibid., p. 43.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 44.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁸Lama Anagarika Govinder, Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1971), p. 22.

⁶⁹Johnson, p. 4.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 6.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 87.

⁷²The Iroquois Book of Rites, ed. Horatio Hale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 124.

⁷³New Historical Society Collections, Second Series, (New York: Appleton and Company, 1892), Vol. III, Part I.

⁷⁴Johnson, p. 116.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 14.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁰Mrs. W. Garland Foster, The Mohawk Princess (Vancouver: Lions Gate Publishing, 1931), p. 97.

⁸¹Johnson, p. 9.

⁸²Ibid., p. 24.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, Riverside Editions (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 1.

⁸⁸McMaster University Archives, Paulina Johnson Papers.

- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Johnson, pp. 66-67.
- 91 Ibid., p. 70.
- 92 Ibid., p. 76.
- 93 Ibid., p. 158.
- 94 Emerson, p. 23.
- 95 Johnson, p. 54.
- 96 Ibid., p. 71.
- 97 Ibid., p. 62.
- 98 Ibid., p. 79.
- 99 Ibid., p. 105.
- 100 Ibid., p. 19.
- 101 Ibid., p. 162.
- 102 Ibid., p. 125.
- 103 Ibid., p. 123.

CHAPTER III

- ¹ E. Pauline Johnson, The Shaganappi (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), p. 72.
- ² Ibid., p. 71.
- ³ Ibid., p. 171.
- ⁴ Ibid., p. 40.
- ⁵ E. Pauline Johnson, The Moccasin Maker (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 221.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 176.

- ⁷ Shaganappi, p. 193.
- ⁸ Ibid., p. 207.
- ⁹ Ibid., p. 80.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 249.
- ¹¹ Moccasin Maker, p. 147.
- ¹² Shaganappi, p. 251.
- ¹³ Moccasin Maker, p. 146.
- ¹⁴ Shaganappi, p. 75.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 74.
- ¹⁶ McMaster University Archives, Pauline Johnson Papers.
- ¹⁷ E. Pauline Johnson, Legends of Vancouver (Vancouver: Lions Gate Publishing, 1923), p. 141.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 139.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 33.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p. 53.
- ²¹ Ibid., p. 55.
- ²² Ibid., p. 60.
- ²³ D. White and M. Nunez, The Lace Ghetto (Toronto: New Press, 1972), pp. 11-35.
- ²⁴ Legends, p. 94.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 93.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 78.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 70.
- ²⁸ McMaster University Archives, Pauline Johnson Papers.
- ²⁹ Legends, p. 118.

CHAPTER IV

¹Queens University Archives, Pauline Johnson Papers
(see Appendix A).

²Ibid.

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