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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

The Social Perspective of Joseph Schull 1944-1961

Faith Langston

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in
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ABSTRACT

The Social Perspective of Joseph Schull 1944-1961

Faith Langston

This exploration of Joseph Schull's social perspective will begin with a short overview of the author's life and work. In the second and third chapters of this thesis I will examine the author's concerns more specifically. Schull's use of dramatic and literary techniques to approach his major concerns — post-war disillusionment, the implications of nuclear proliferation for the individual and the breakdown of marriage and the family — will be considered. The social history included in these chapters has been added with the intention of further clarifying Schull's point of view.

The fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis will provide a more general idea of Schull's perspective. Examination of the author's tragic vision in chapter four will show that Schull saw men as victims of an inexorable fate. In chapter five of this thesis I will consider Schull's novel The Jinker. Based on an earlier radio drama, this work can be seen as describing a voyage towards self-discovery.

In an appendix to the thesis I consider the television version of two of the plays discussed in my chapter "Love and Alienation." By examining the changes which have been made in the television adaptations of "Kennedy's Quest" and "Alexandra's Island," I hope to bring some of the distinct features of Schull's radio drama into clearer focus.

Acknowlegements

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Joseph Schull was born in Watertown, South Dakota on February 6, 1910. He grew up in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, where he wrote his first book, The Legend of Ghost Lagoon (1937). He came to Montreal and began a career of radio writing which branched out in later years into the fields of stage, screen, and television. Schull served as an Intelligence and Information Officer in the Royal Canadian Navy during the war, mainly on the Atlantic coast. He later wrote The Far Distant Ships (1950), an official account of Canadian naval operations. The author's book Laurier (1965) won the University of British Columbia Medal for popular biography in 1966. Schull died in Montreal in 1980.

A prolific writer, Schull is the author of 81 radio dramas, 28 television plays, 38 short stories, three film scripts, five stage plays, 10 articles, and 11 books. Evidence of Schull's versatility is found in the fact that he often adapted his work from one medium to another; half of the author's television plays and three of the author's stage plays ("Shadow of the Tree," "The Concert," and "O'Brien") are adaptations from his radio dramas. The author's long-standing interest in Canadian subject matter is also apparent; five of his television plays, for example, deal with national history. Two of the author's three film scripts are concerned with Canadian subject matter, specifically the lives and work of William Lyon Mackenzie and Joseph Howe. In a similar vein, Schull considers subjects of national interest in his articles; he explores topics such as the opening of the Dominion parliament ("The First Dominion

Parliament") and Confederation ("Nightmare — the Dream that Changed into Reality").*

Schull looked to the historical past of his adopted country for most of the subject matter of his novels. With the exception of I, Jones, Soldier (1944), a work in which he uses a lyrical style to examine a soldier's experiences of war, all of the author's books are concerned with our national history. In The Salt Water Men (1957) Schull describes the highlights of Canada's greatest period of seafaring; the lives of seamen such as Billy Forbes and W. D. Lawrence are brought to life in this work. Battle for the Rock (1960) is an account of the battle fought between the English and the French on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. In Ships of the Great Days (1962) Schull describes Canada's navy during the Second World War. The Nation Makers (1967) is an account of the political events and the men who brought Canada to nationhood, while The Jinker (1968), a novel based on the 1955 radio play of the same name, is concerned with a national tradition, for it is set around a sealing hunt in Newfoundland. Rebellion (1971) is an account of the uprising in French Canada in 1837; the explosive situation caused by political tension between the French and the British and the growing distrust between the appointed governors and the elected assembly are documented in this book. Edward Blake — Leader and Exile (1976) is the story of the Liberal

*No other citations are available. These articles were found in a collection of the author's work in the Radio Drama Archives of Concordia University.

leader who opposed the Conservative government of John A. Macdonald, the C.P.R. project, and the National Policy.

Among the 81 radio plays which Schull wrote are 31 original dramas and 28 adaptations of novels such as Under the Terror (Honoré de Balzac) and Hetty Dorval (Ethel Wilson). True to his interest in the Canadian past, 11 of Schull's 16 documentary and historical dramas deal with national subject matter; for example, The Great Song is the story of the Canadian national anthem, while She Never Was a Lady concerns a New Brunswick clipper ship.

Though Schull dealt mainly with English Canada in his work he was not unaware of the situation of Quebec. Some indication of his perspective on Quebec is revealed in his radio play and biographical novel on Laurier and in a later play entitled The Vice President (1973). In these works Schull approached some of the problems involved in French cultural and linguistic rights in Quebec.

Schull's somewhat naive treatment of the Quebec question in his biographical novel Laurier, The First Canadian is partly a result of his empathy with the former prime minister. As Donald Creighton has pointed out, Schull describes the former prime minister with a sympathy which borders on commiseration; he is depicted as "the innocent, resigned but heroic victim of the weakness, self-interest and malevolence of a group of corrupt, ambitious, intolerant, scheming and disreputable men."[1] As the prey of Imperialists, Orangemen and Conscriptionists, Laurier is seen as being right in a world of wrongdoers; at one point in the novel, for example, he is attacked by

the "blind, reckless, backward looking absolutism that seemed to inform the ultramontane mind" (p. 328). Schull's tendency to side with Laurier is also made evident in the author's treatment of matters such as the Manitoba School Question. Schull focuses on Bowell's vacillation rather than Laurier's indecision; the Prime Minister stands firm while Bowell furiously "back peddles" (p. 297) with a government which "shifts and evades" (p. 286, 287). A shrewd and perceptive politician, Laurier's awareness of the contradictions in his role is indicated by his statement "I am branded in Quebec as a traitor to the French and in Ontario as a traitor to the English." The fact that the conflict between these two peoples persists today casts doubt on Schull's contention that Laurier was able to prove their purposes were reconcilable.

The less idealized portrait of Laurier found in Schull's radio dramas — "Laurier," part I (January 14, 1959), and "Laurier," part II (January 21, 1959) — results partly from the fact that certain contraditions in the Prime Minister's character are made apparent. For example, a juxtaposition of the Prime Minister's early denunciation of the C.P.R. with a later, more compromising public address brings the listener to the realization that Laurier's policies were not entirely consistent (Laurier, part I:58). In the same vein, we are told that Bourassa's voice accusing the Prime Minister of following the path of conciliation with regard to the Manitoba School

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[1]Donald Creighton, review of Laurier, The First Canadian, by Joseph Schull, The Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 47 (1966), p. 357.

Question could be that of a younger, less compromising Laurier (Laurier, part II:51). Schull's narrator also serves to undercut politics in general. "Politics is politics. Rouge and Bleu, Tory and Grit, the great wheels turn in mud. Who can ride on the wheels and not be splashed" (Laurier, part I:82). Like all nationmakers, Laurier is "Quarried from the depths of flawed and faulty men" who work to make the nation, "imperfectly, inexorably" (Laurier, part I:58).

Schull's concern with the problems of French Canadians in contemporary Quebec is again manifested in his stage play The Vice President (1973). The plot revolves around the life of Jean-Pierre Allard, a 42-year-old executive who, after having spent many years abroad, returns home to fill the position of vice-president with his corporation, Imperial Ajax. When it is reported that dynamite has been stolen from an Imperial Ajax warehouse Allard's younger brother André is suspected. The family crisis triggers other events; Allard resigns from the corporation; his wife Lise leaves him. The police arrest six terrorists none of whom are André. Allard decides to continue working with the corporation; he and his wife are reunited. Lise informs Allard that they await their first child.

Schull uses the terrorist crisis to create tension in the play; several clues point to the fact that André is involved with the young people in the group. This disturbing event also induces Jean-Pierre to make a much needed assessment of his life.

The fact that French needs have been compromised is manifested in the characterization of Allard. The protagonist sees himself as a

"performing bear" (E5); it is evident that his English education has made him a stranger in his native Quebec. In a crisis the protagonist is weak and vacillating; his realization, made at the end of the play, that he is "smashed," "empty" with "nothing left" (E 47), can be seen as a starting point for his self-discovery.

Schull's depiction of a society in the process of transition is made through characters of diverse ages. The wooden quality of these characters indicates that Schull's comprehension of Quebec took place on an intellectual rather than emotional level. Allard's father remarks not only on changes such as the Pill and the fact that Catholic dietary laws are no longer observed but on a general lack of communication among his friends and aquaintances. "We don't even listen to each other; it is just noise. We don't know anything anymore" (E 20). Like Allard's father, the curé has also seen a great deal of change in his lifetime. This transition has been the source of spiritual torment; the curé questions the old ideas of hell, chastity and birth control; in his own words he "gropes" his "way with the rest" (E 26). Allard's brothers also contribute to this portrait of Quebec. François, Allard's older brother, is a notary with five children who feels that Jean-Pierre has sold out to the English. Unlike his brother, François has a sense of belonging in his native Quebec. "I have nothing. I have been nowhere. But I am alive in my own soil. A man in my own skin" (E 24). The most positive character in the play is Allard's younger brother, André. The young man does

not participate in the terrorist activities of his friends; instead he chooses a non-violent course of action — "to live in the world and live French" (E 45).

Laurier and The Vice President are among Schull's few attempts to describe the French point of view in Quebec; most of the author's work concerns English Canada. In this thesis I will explore Schull's social perspective with regard to this milieu. In the main body of the thesis — chapters two and three — I will examine Schull's attitude towards social issues of his day. More specifically, I will consider how the author used structural elements such as plot and other elements such as images, symbols, and character portrayals as a means to approach subjects such as post-war disillusionment, the implications of nuclear proliferation for the individual, and the breakdown of marriage and the family. The plays I will use for these chapters were written in the period between 1944 and 1961 and are found in the archives at Concordia University.

In my fourth and fifth chapters I will consider Schull's work from a more general perspective. My examination of Schull's tragic vision, for example, will bring to light the author's notion of man's place not only in society but in the universe. Though my analysis of Schull's novel The Jinker in chapter five will be a psychological one, certain aspects of it can be seen in a social context. In facing Tim Mahan, Robert Torrance comes to terms with his antisocial impulses. This act becomes in turn a social one when it leads to the healing of his marriage.

CHAPTER TWO

POSTWAR DISILLUSIONMENT

"At Auschwitz not only man died but also the idea of man"

Elie Wiesel

One of the most prevalent themes in Schull's postwar plays centres on a pervasive disillusionment with men and society. In this chapter, I will consider both the author's treatment of this sentiment and the aspects of Canadian society which contributed to it. Because it allows insight into the emotional climate of war, I will begin this chapter with a brief look at Schull's lyrical war-time novel, I, Jones, Soldier. It will become apparent that the idealism expressed in this novel is essential to the understanding of the disenchantment with society which is voiced in Schull's postwar plays. In later radio dramas postwar disillusionment began to take a new form. Examination of plays such as "The Little God" (March 1947) and "The Heat Wave" (June 1949) will show that as time passed this disenchantment became a fear for the future.

Because it stands as one of Schull's early attempts to examine the impact of war on the individual, I, Jones, Soldier (1944) will make a useful starting point for this chapter. In this work the author juxtaposes the thoughts of Jones — "a responsive prairie boy" with an "unashamed liking for verse" (p. 20) — with the action of war. War is described as a time when values undergo a transformation. On the front Jones sees only "life and death" and "the moving river" (p. 29); his lips become hardened with the sight of "casual meaningless death" (p. 32); his "mild thoughts" become

"terrible voices which cannot be drowned" (p. 16). Though Jones abhors the brutal reality of war, he, at the same time, sees it as a means of upholding his ideals. He fights for truth which "ancient wise and unrelenting" (p. 49) sees "all men equally" (p. 50). While truth is seen as absolute, falsehood is described as volatile. Lies erupt like "grey lava"; "they breed and breed" (p. 49). As part of a generation "born in hate" (p. 44) then, the young soldier goes to war in order to fight for "one earth ... one man" (p. 55). "It is better to let truth stalk again in new flames than to build a half-house of lies to burn around my children" (p. 31).

Like Jones, George Grant, the protagonist of the radio drama "The Sound of the Weeds" (May 1945), sees war as a means of realizing his idealistic hopes for the world. George leaves for the front with the belief that he is fighting for a "new world"; he feels that afterwards "we'll find a world of men who have learned to live together" (Weeds:10). Unlike I, Jones, Soldier, however, Schull's radio drama does not end on an optimistic note. George Grant returns home to find that men have not changed; his subsequent disillusionment becomes the central theme of the play.

George can be seen as representing many young veterans who had to come to terms with the fact that conditions which followed the first world war would not recur. The visionary belief in a better future which had inspired new programs, new parties, and social unrest after the earlier war was not to be found in the period after 1945.[1]

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[1]Donald Creighton, The Story of Canada, pp. 253, 254.

Two developments contributed to this maintenance of the status quo: the first centred on the reforms which the Liberal government made in the field of social security, while the second involved the growing power of the bourgeoisie.[2] It was apparent that capitalism would not be challenged; any support for communism was curtailed by the developing cold war. The public's reaction to national and international events is indicative of the political climate of this time.

> Almost as soon as the war ended, the process of disillusionment began .... The evidence, assembled by a Royal Commission of inquiry, of an extensive spy ring operating in Canada, and the subsequent trial and conviction of eight Canadians and others shocked and bewildered as well as angered the nation .... These negative signs of hostility were bad enough: but infinitely worse was the growing positive evidence culminating in the terrifying coup d'état in Czechoslovakia of an expansive and aggressive revolutionary purpose. Even the careful, guarded postwar reliance on the new collective security system was shaken; and the nations of western Europe and North America drew together for defense.[3]

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[2]Philip Resnick, The Land of Cain, p. 92.

[3]Donald Creighton, The Story of Canada, p. 255.

George refuses the role of hero in a postwar society he cannot accept; his position is dramatized at the opening of the play when he abruptly leaves a dinner party given in his honour. Flashbacks to the protagonist's war-time experience are used to provide insight into his unexpected action. At the outbreak of war, George is appalled by the indifference around him; he sees his fellow men as "a billion monkeys on motorcycles never looking out for anyone else" (Weeds:8). During battle men's potential for good becomes evident; George feels that a "new world" is "within reach." "It happened a hundred times in a hundred ways men so great they made a dwarf out of death. Dirty, lying, lecherous, drunken men. Like gods" (Weeds:11). Schull uses anonymous voices to convey the attitudes which George encounters in postwar society; one voice expresses confidence in the idea that things will soon be back "in the old groove," while another congratulates the young veteran on having "freed the world" (Weeds:4). George's inner torment is juxtaposed with the complacency around him; the protagonist cannot reconcile himself with the fact that capitalism has once again re-established itself and that the unfair distribution of wealth remains — "While others starve ... the fat man will grow rich" (Weeds:19).

The image which begins and ends the play both alludes to its theme and ties its episodic structure together. The young veteran hears the "sound of the weeds" (Weeds:1) "growing back over the battle fields feeding on the flesh of the very dead" (Weeds:19). Men return to their old ways just as surely as old weeds grow back; the

apocalyptic vision of a "new world" where men are "like gods" (Weeds:12) is overshadowed by its nightmarish opposite.

In "The Land of Ephranor" (November 1945), Schull gives a mythical dimension to a theme which is similar to that of "The Sound of the Weeds." Like George Grant, Othran, the protagonist of "The Land of Ephranor," has hopes for a "new world." His notion that the "ills of the world are simple and obvious and that men will mend them when they know" (Ephranor:5) is deflated by the events in the play.

Othran begins his quest to find the source of evil in the world with a visit to a wise man named Halgor, the Hermit of the Hill. Halgor advises Othran to go to Ephranor where he will find as "fine a crop of ills as any in the world" (Ephranor:7). Accompanied by Naina, a slave girl, Othran sets off for the new land. At the gates of Ephranor, he meets a beggar who has no shoes. Othran leads the beggar and other shoeless people, first to the cobbler, then to the tanner, then to the rich farmer, and then to the king. When the king refuses Othran's request for shoes, he is killed and Othran is made ruler. Disagreement about ownership of property soon begins to take place, however. Realizing his life is in danger, the protagonist flees the land and returns to Halgor's residence. Othran and Naina decide they will be wed to beget "more fine fools" (Ephranor:21).

By setting "The Land of Ephranor" outside of historical time and geographic place, Schull gives its commentary a general sense. The play takes place in "the nineteenth year of the son Meesir" (Ephranor:2) in the exotic sounding Land of Ephranor. The

uncomplicated economic structure of the pre-industrial society serves to illustrate the author's point. The simple pattern of social organization found in Ephranor allows Othran to come to a correspondingly straightforward conclusion with regard to the nature of man.

The tale of "faded follies" (Ephranor:1) is told in part by a narrator whose updated archaic language and detached perspective cast an ironic light on the characters. The ivory tower idealism of Othran is presented thus: "Once upon a time a foolish man had a wise son to whom learning was better than laughter and a syllogism more shapely than a fair maid" (Ephranor:2). Wry description of a similar nature is found throughout the radio drama; Halgor's head, for example, is said to be "bald and wrinkled with a matting of leaves on it" (Ephranor:4); his habit of cracking walnuts between his teeth and his short sarcastic laugh serve to cast him in an undignified light. Halgor's pronouncements on life are no more inspiring than his eccentric habits. "Earth. Mud. Was man, is man, will be man. You think a man's three score and ten years away from it. You'll see" (Ephranor:5).

Naina acts as a kind of moral opposite to the protagonist; her perspective forms a contrast with Othran's high hopes for the world.

OTHRAN: (Joyfully). Is it not as I said?

NAINA: What did you say, wise one?

OTHRAN: That the ills of man are simple and obvious and that man will mend them when they know how.

NAINA: Oh obviously.

OTHRAN: Look back upon the multitude. See how joyful are their faces.

NAINA: They seem as dirty and greedy as ever to me.

OTHRAN: You are an ignorant slave girl.

NAINA: True. And I would not trade brains with you (Ephranor:19).

Othran's pursuit of "justice and reason" (Ephranor:10) is enhanced by the sound of the mounting excitement of the swelling crowd. Cheers and the gay music of an inebriated dance are heard when Othran is made king. This exuberant state of affairs does not last for long, however. Othran watches in dismay when he sees how his good deeds seem to reverse themselves. "The shoeless fell upon the Cobblers to take the shoes that were their due, and the Cobblers upon the Tanners and the Tanners and Butchers upon the Tallow-makers ..." (Ephranor:18). What was the sound of the crowd's excitement now turns to anger against Othran.

SOUND: CLATTER & BANGING UPON IRON GATE. CRASH OF STONES & MISSILES.

OTHRAN: (Fading) It is not reasonable ..." (Ephranor:19).

Though the Cobbler, the Tanner, the Butcher and the Tallow-maker have all stated that the system is "obviously wrong," it is finally Othran who must conclude that the men who turn against him are "obviously unjust" (Ephranor:19). In the Land of Ephranor, then, idealism is for the foolish; the wise know that men do not change their ways readily. Though Othran's quest leads him back to his point of departure, his journey has not been completely in vain, for, like a

true archetypal questor, the young man is rewarded with a bride. The play concludes with Halgor's realistic view of life.

> Earth it is and earth is man. Muck of the muck. Slime of the slime. But there is the sound of growing in it: a breaking open of hearts; a slow and quiet sound and only a lifetime is long enough to hear it in (Ephranor:22).

Schull's treatment of idealism and its obverse, disillusionment, did not end here. In "The Concert" (March 1948), this theme is approached through a juxtaposition of two world views: that of Anne Rivers, an idealistic young woman who has been blinded in the war, and that of her neighbour, the novelist Richard Jennings, who is both more skeptical and more experienced. The novelist's explanation to a friend concerning his hasty departure from an apartment he has rented serves as a structure for the play. His reasons centre on his relationship with Anne Rivers, a woman who lives in the same building. While we are led to an understanding of the roots of Anne's idealism, the source of Richard's cynicism — the fact that he is black — is not revealed until the end of the play.

The flashbacks to Anne's experience which are dispersed in Richard's narration serve to develop the young woman's character. Anne's account of her spiritual journey from the isolation of blindness to the achievement of self-sufficiency brings the audience to an awareness of her exceptional courage and determination. Anne's story also contributes an intensity to the play; at one point in the

radio drama, for example, she tells of her "house of horrors" — a vision of hell which she saw just before she was blinded.

ANNE: (Slight pause: quietly gathering intensity): My last look at the world was the sight of falling walls and writhing bodies and the whole sky red with flame ... walls of flame ... closing in the world ... and the gasping throats ... and the staring eyes ... and reaching up toward the sky ... (Concert:41).

Anne's notion that "brotherhood" is the only "real thing" that will deliver her from this "memory forever" (Concert:36) suggests that her idealism is rooted in despair. The young woman's consistent efforts to educate herself are directed towards the opening of a school for the blind in Argentan, France, the town where she was blinded.

The fact that Richard is telling his version of the story to his friend Standish allows the former to express his candid impression of Anne. His attraction for her is made apparent. "She was lonely — and God knows I was lonely enough ... I didn't want to stay away. I couldn't stay away" (Concert:14). Jennings' view of Anne's plans for the future is also made evident.

JENNINGS: It was like an athlete's training; a preparation.

STANDISH: Preparation for what?

JENNINGS: (Dry, unhappy irony). Service. Service to mankind (Concert:33).

More experienced and more knowledgeable than Anne, Richard feels that she is dedicated to "a false god" or "a god that's dead" or "a god

that's already come into the world" (Concert:18). Though Jennings senses "the grandeur" of Anne's commitment, he finds it unrealistic; in his opinion mankind is "pretty refractory material" (Concert:40).

JENNINGS: Love for men is a hard thing to retain. It isn't returned in any great measure.

ANNE: Must it be? Isn't the mere loving enough? Isn't that the gift of loneliness?

JENNINGS: (With difficulty) I — perhaps. Perhaps on some icy, intellectual plateau! But you haven't been driven there, girl. Stay in the warm valleys live with your family and your friends — get what happiness you can and let the rest of the world do the same (Concert:40).

Unlike Anne, who has chosen a life of isolation, Richard has been forced to accept solitude. Richard's notoriety as a writer has not made him feel any more accepted; he see his novels as having brought him "the kind of respect you have for a good statue" (Concert:9).

When Anne invites Richard to attend a concert with her family, the relationship is forced to a crisis point. Richard refuses the invitation and decides to move away from his apartment. Though he makes no explanation to Anne, he does account for his behaviour to both Standish and the audience.

JENNINGS: Blind! But her sister isn't. Nor her sister's husband. Nor the people in the concert hall. Nor her family. (Pause: biting the words off harshly): Doctor Richard Jennings — Master of Arts — Doctor of Philosophy. I could have ten more degrees after my name — I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels — and for most of those people I still wouldn't be a man. I'd be a buck nigger.

STANDISH: Jennings ... !

JENNINGS: (Unheeding ... anguished): If I'd only told her at the beginning!? If only I'd told her .... (Pause: harsh emotion). Brotherhood! Maybe her conception of it's big enough. But if it weren't ....

STANDISH: (Suffering and indignation): You could give her a chance ....

JENNINGS: (Almost shouting): I won't risk it! She's honest ... intelligent ... she has a conscience. She's built a life out of dust and ashes .... Maybe if I were my great grand- child. Maybe in another five generations (Concert:47).

For Richard Jennings, then, the new world is still "far away" (Weeds:10); his experiences have made him more aware of men's limitations than of their potential. Much of the poignancy of the play is derived from the fact that in the real world a marriage of true minds cannot exist. Anne's notion of brotherhood — itself

reminiscent of George's hope for "a world of men who know how to live together" (Weeds:10) -- is too frail to withstand the compromises which reality demands. The two must go their separate ways before Anne's idealism is corroded by bitterness.

Although three later plays contain fragments of the dream of a "new world," a difference in perspective is discernible. Schull was acutely aware of the dangers which the atom bomb posed, and in plays such as "The Shadow of the Tree" (September 1957) and "The Heat Wave" (June 1949), the author's disenchantment with postwar society became a fear for the future.

The anxiety was not unfounded. Although the establishment of N.A.T.O. had been an impressive demonstration of cooperation between Europe and North America, the defeat of the Kuomintang and the victory of the Chinese Peoples' Republic produced two great rivals in world politics - the Communist and Capitalist world.[4] In this new power struggle, Canada stood behind the United Nations' principle of collective resistance; she supported its attempts to stop armed aggression and to protect the Southern Republic of Korea. Later, during the Suez Crisis, Lester Pearson's proposal for an Emergency International Force, which would bring about a ceasefire between Egypt, Great Britain, and France, helped to win him a Nobel Prize for peace. Despite these attempts at autonomous decision-making, it was clear that Canadians were becoming more dependent on the United States

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[4]Donald Creighton, The Story of Canada, p. 270.

for both their economic well-being and their military defense. Though Diefenbaker made a stand on Canadian sovereignty, American control grew at an accelerated rate during the Conservative tenure.[5] The Americans financed the building of the Distant Early Warning Line which was completed in 1959, and, when the N.O.R.A.D. agreement was signed in 1958, a joint command with an American in charge and a Canadian as deputy was set up. Canadian factories became part of the American military establishment acting as sub-contractors in joint defense projects.[6]

Implicated in global politics, Canadians had to come to terms with newly discovered powers of destruction which dramatically changed the concept of war into a threat to man's very existence.

> The destructive force of the two bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki equalled that of two-thirds of all the bombs dropped on Germany during the whole of World War II. And this was only a modest beginning. The first hydrogen bomb, tested at Eniwetok in 1952, was more than three megatons — two hundred Hiroshimas.[7]

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[5]Greg Nielson, "Cultural Praxis in Anglo Canada: 1939-1961," Unpublished working paper, Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies, p. 16.

[6]William Kilbourn, "The 1950's." The Canadians 1867-1967, Careless, J. M. S.; Craig R. Brown (editors), p. 332.

[7]André Fontaine, The History of the Cold War from the October Revolution to the Korean War, 1917-1950, p. 266.

Scientific achievement was no longer external to man but integrated with him; in the words of Jacques Ellul, it was not the "frontiers of science which were at issue but the frontiers of man."[8] Men had acquired new knowledge, but no cohesive set of values to guide them in its use. Dr. Farrel, a personage in "Shadow of the Tree," sums up the feeling generally expressed in this group of plays when he refers to the human race as:

> Idol worshippers — madmen tending the machine of life — sitting cross-legged before it — worshipping it — giving it their hope of happiness — and knowing it's a lost experiment, a failure. The design was out of proportion. Hands too clever and hearts too small (Tree:28).

The theme of "Shadow of the Tree" (September 1947) centres on a reasseasment of contemporary social and spiritual values. A family crisis provides an occasion for this re-evaluation. At the opening of the radio drama it is evident that Nora Maybury, the central character in the play, has just been informed by her family physician, Dr. Farrel, that she is pregnant. At this time too, we are made aware that the prosperous Maybury family is contributing to a community hospital which is soon to be built. It is revealed that Nora's husband, Ted, is having an extra-marital affair with Janet Grayson, a contributor to the hospital. This situation is exacerbated by the

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[8]Jaques Ellul, "The Technological Society; Some Human Problems." Social and Cultural Change in Canada, Vol. Two, W. E. Mann (editor), p. 333.

fact that the senior Mayburys urge their son not to break with Janet until the hospital deal has been closed.

When Nora goes to Dr. Farrel's office and tries to steal some sleeping pills, she is caught in the act by the doctor. Upon her return home she finds that Ted has been questioning his behaviour. The couple resolves to try to face the future honestly and to be guided by their own values and not those of their society or their family.

Part of the conflict in the play is found in the opposition between two ways of life. Nora Maybury, the central character in the play, and her brother-in-law, John Maybury, question the "back slapping business getting world" (Tree:4) of the other Mayburys. Early in the play Nora's growing disenchantment is suggested by her tone of voice.

TED: Yep. The old man's connections sure help.

NORA: (Wearily sardonic). Money makes money, he always says (Tree:11).

The fact that Ted now considers his pre-war hopes for "a brave new world" an unrealistic dream for "starry eyed dopes" (Tree:12) distresses both Nora and John who are dissatisfied with postwar society. Nora's search for meaning brings the complacent attitude of Mother Maybury into focus.

NORA: (Intensely quizzical). How much do you have to give, mother, to make things go well? (Pause) Three sons? ...

MOTHER: (Hurt puzzlement). Nora, really ...

NORA: (As before). You did once, you know.

MOTHER: (Drawing up dignity). If you're speaking of the war, Nora, I did gladly.

NORA: What for?

MOTHER: (More dignity). They were proud to go, Nora. I was proud to have them go. Because we knew that everything was at stake. Our whole way of life was threatened.

NORA: Yes. And it cost you a son and a son's eyes. But it saved your precious way of life. You've got it now. I've got it. We've all got it. What is it? (Tree:31).

Events in the play serve to bring Nora's negative feelings about the Maybury family to a head. It becomes apparent to the young woman, as it does to all members of the family, that Father Maybury's real motives for making a contribution to the hospital stem from his wish for tax deductions and for commissions. Nora's awareness of a pervasive spiritual emptiness around her is heightened by her realization that the senior Mayburys are more interested in guarding their reputation than in seeing their son act in a morally upright way. Like Nora, Ted is also brought to re-examine his values. The events in the play bring him to the understanding that his way of life has given him little in terms of inner strength. The oncoming birth of his child forces Ted to face the future; he realizes that he has:

nothing to face it with ... nothing ... nothing ... nothing .... You'd been scrambling in the mud for pennies ... seeing nothing but mud. Suddenly you'd looked up ... and there it was ... silent, and immense and terrifying (Tree:32).

John's criticism of his family's values is more direct and more caustic than is that of Nora and Ted; at times in the play his remarks undercut conventional standards of politeness. At a family dinner, for example, when Father Maybury proposes a toast to his son Captain Harry Maybury, who has been killed in the war, John responds with a malevolent one.

JOHN: To the great cause we fought for ... to the hospitals we build and the money we make ... (drinks: pauses) I don't hear you drinking ... Go ahead ... the sherry is alright ... or are you afraid it'll taste like blood ...?

SOUND: (Abrupt Movement; Glass thrown and smashed) (Tree:15).

Blinded in the war, John has made little attempt to overcome his handicap; his half-finished improvisations to the piano reflect his non-committal attitude to life. The young man wills all life to end with his own loss of sight; his apocalyptic vision is not of a "new world" where brotherhood exists, but of a world destroyed by the atom bomb. "How I'd love to see it smashed, blasted forever in one sheet of flame ... the way it was for me. And I will if I live long enough. As sure as God made little apples and men made atom bombs" (Tree:38).

Though the brusque, unemotional Dr. Farrel urges both Nora and John to cling to life, he does not offer an alternative to the materialism of the Mayburys. Nora questions the doctor's concern with "healthy babies and stronger bodies" (Tree:49).

NORA: (Wildly): There'll be more Mayburys — more greed and filth — bigger and better wars. You don't think of that. You don't dare to. You're as blind and soulless in your way as they are in theirs! (Tree:49).

In his own words Farrel is a "mad man" who forgets his painful awareness of a dead-end future by keeping "his hands busy and one-half of his brain turning over so loudly it drowns out the other half" (Tree:43).

The symbol of the shadow of the tree gives unity to this radio drama. It is introduced as part of the setting of the play; we hear the sound of the wind stirring through the branches of the tree which overshadows Dr. Farrel's office. We are told that men and women pass through the small-town doctor's office as they pass through life itself; as adults they return to sit where their parents once sat. The image takes on a more universal and more abstract sense towards the end of the play when Dr. Farrel equates it with the atom bomb.

FARREL: Ever look at a photo of the explosion at Bikini? Mushroom-shaped cloud they called it. It never looked like that to me. It always looked like a tree — a tree with a great scabrous trunk and enormous overshadowing branches. The Tree of the Power of Good and Evil. Full grown. The fruit ripe. And look at us! Look at the hands that shake the tree! Figure on the odds of the choice (Tree:50).

Although they are not overly optimistic about the future of both the world and their unborn child, Ted and Nora resign themselves to what Dr. Farrel calls the "noble lunacy" of living. Our sympathy is directed towards the couple and their efforts to surpass both idealism and despair, to face the future with courage despite "the long, long odds" (Tree:53).

The awareness that the future was threatened brought with it a nostalgia for a simpler past. "The Little God" (March 1947) describes an escape to a culture where reverence for God and for life still exists. The play begins at an international conference in Rio de Janfero where an attempt to meet on "some grounds of mutual trust" (God:2) has failed. On their way home from the meeting, His Excellency, Carraman, a journalist, and Mona, his girlfriend, are involved in a plane crash. The three survive the accident and are taken by members of a tribe to the City of the Little God. The tribe practise a religion centred on the Little God who is felt to be "all good, all loving and all powerful" (God:20). When Carraman uncovers the fact that the object of worship is actually a radiator cap, he

feels he has discovered that the Little God is a "bill of goods" (God:32). The three visitors leave the village.

Schull dramatizes his notion that mankind is facing a stalemate by setting the first scene of his radio drama at an international conference which has reached an impasse. His Excellency's plea to the delegates is made in light of "a terrible new age"; his expressed hope that men be "different and better" is met with a "long, stony silence" (God:2). The City of the Little God forms a marked contrast with this hopeless state of affairs, for here George Grant's dream of a "new world" takes on material form. The goal of brotherhood had been realized in this legendary lost city where the outcasts from many tribes "who were hungry and afraid and sick" (God:26) have created a new way of life. The worship of the God is brought to life through chanting which is heard several times in the play.

As in "The Land of Ephranor" and "The Concert," Schull uses two main characters to embody the idealistic and skeptical points of view in the play. While His Excellency is accepting of the tribe's beliefs and unfamiliar culture, Carraman is cynical about what he sees. The diametrically opposed perspectives of the two men are made evident early in the play.

H. E.: Has any great man of any great movement ever arrived at the place it set out for? I don't believe you could name me one. The star moves and the man follows; and in the end the light rests above the place he never dreamed. A wider place; more distant, and nobler.

CARRAMAN: Only you lack the star.

H. E.: (Simply): We lack the star.

CARRAMAN: The fact is, we're not travellers at all. Travellers are heading somewhere. We're just circling around in a fog, making pompous noises (God:6).

For His Excellency, faith is an entity which endures despite men; it is "created of the gods ... creating the gods ... creating men like gods and godlike works of men" (God:46). Although the Ambassador sees "cynicism, disbelief and despair" as "the breath of the world" (God:5), he does not accept these values for his own. Like His Excellency, Mona is inclined to believe in the divinity of the Little God; she is impressed by "the deep heart's peace ... the feeling of purpose and unity ..." among the tribe (God:31). "They work ... they build this city ... they grow their crops ... and they love one another" (God:31). As she becomes involved in the tribe's activities, Mona's jaded personality undergoes a change; she becomes receptive to the love which surrounds her.

Huayana, the tribal leader, serves to remark on the spiritual emptiness of men living in industrialized society. In his allegorical language their "hearts starve," their "hunger is a dry weeping in [their] eyes" (God:43). In Carraman, Huayana is quick to see a wisdom that "devours all things and is fed by nothing" (God:31); the journalist's propensity for "discovering the facts and missing the truth" (p. 40) is shown through the events of the play. As a materialist, Carraman feels he must see the physical form of the diety

in order to believe in it. At one point he steals into the temple but is caught by Huayana, the tribal leader; at another he prods Harris, a guide from a nearby village, for information about the Little God. When the physical form of the God is finally revealed, Carraman's disrespectful manner and emotional vacuity are also made apparent.

HUAYANA: (Slightly off). Silence: The god is near.

CARRAMAN: Well, I'm damned ...! (Bursting out with loud laughter). Huayana! You damned swindler ... that's a radiator cap! ...

HUAYANA: (Loudly, sternly). Silence! You mock the god!

CARRAMAN: (His laughter rises with a delight which becomes almost hysterical: echoing in the vault of the temple. Suddenly he breaks off: uncertain: as though feeling the oppressive silence about him) (God:42).

Because the glib journalist is unable to transcend the confines of his cynicism his world is ultimately an empty one. Like His Excellency, Schull is aware that materialism has left modern man with "the saddest laughter in the world" (God:4).

As the apocalyptic vision of a "new world" receded, another one began to take its place. In "The Heat Wave" (June 1949), Schull depicts a science-fiction world of wasted work, one which is on the brink of nuclear holocaust. The impending war is averted, however, when a mysterious scientist named Dr. Alphega causes a heat wave to occur. A primeval civilization begins to flourish and, much to their embarrassment, human beings develop tails.

A narrator begins the play with a matter-of-fact description of a disturbing scenario — the world on the brink of nuclear holocaust. His point of view is both detached and ironic.

> There were pointing arrows and big notices in black paint on every street corner, half the public buildings were being commandeered and wherever you looked there were men digging holes in the ground or pouring concrete or filling sandbags ... (Wave:2).

A mood of fatalism prevails; we are told that bulldozers will be necessary to clear away the dead (Wave:5) and that one-half a million people have not picked up the medical packets which would allow them to survive the war. Imagery is used to create a bleak atmosphere; missiles are described as nightmarish creatures — "heavy- bellied sharp nosed things" poised on scaffolding which towers up "in half dawn light" (Wave:20). Sound effects such as air raid sirens, the whistle of jets, and radio bulletins also contribute to the menacing mood of the radio drama. A countdown of minutes helps to create tension in the play. War is scheduled to begin at midnight.

An overview of a society facing impending destruction serves to give a realistic quality to the radio drama. Brief scenes zero in on labourers who work with sandbags, patrol forces who check alerting devices, and doctors who prepare beds for the "burned, shocked and psychos" (Wave:3). Characters from diverse social backgrounds help create the effect of a cross-section of society; Pete and Sylvia, a typical young couple, and Professor Kirwin and Dr. Marlow, two

scientists, provide varied perspectives on the expected war. Details from a conversation between Pete and Sylvia call attention to the fact that these two personages have been forced to live in the present; Pete comments that he is drinking what might be his last cup of coffee while Sylvia spends all her holiday pay on a new dress. It is evident, too, that war has dampened Pete's ardour for Sylvia. The young man explains his unenthusiastic attitude in these terms.

> I don't want no little white house. I don't want no little pink kids that'll prob'bly be turned into dirty brown cinders. I don't want to start nobody growing up like I grew up — never knowing the score, never knowing what to do about it, never with nothing ahead but a great big "boom" or maybe just a quiet little cloud that settles down and peels the skin off your bones (Wave:18).

At a nuclear plant Professor Kirwin and Dr. Marlow provide a more philosophical perspective on the impending war by anticipating a concern for a civilization on the brink of destruction. Both scientists share the awareness that "history — science — all of it will soon become a dwindling folktale" (Wave:55). Like the grim prophet Dr. Farrel, Dr. Marlow finds that knowledge necessitates a detachment from his feelings. He describes seeing his first grandson. "I looked down at that week-old infant, and I didn't give a damn if he was burned or blown out of existence before his brain had a chance to form. If he'd known what I know, he'd have welcomed it anyway" (Wave:25). As midnight approaches, the anguished outburst of

Dr. Kirwin seems to sum up the feelings of every person in the play. "The thousands of years — the glories and the agonies and the strivings! They can't all end with such horrible, purposeless insanity!" (Wave:26).

With the arrival of the mysterious, awe inspiring Professor Alphega, events in the play take a sudden turn. As the alpha and the omega — a human incarnation of Christ — the professor is able to change the destiny of man. Rivers begin to boil; pavements start to melt; an unseasonable growth in vegetation occurs. The characters' futile attempts to hide their newly sprouted tails give this play a humourous ending.

In this radio drama, then, the apocalyptic vision of the City of God is replaced by a return to nature; men are seen as both "supremely adaptable and gloriously indestructable"; they reach into a "forgotten past" to "save themselves" (Wave:52). Without willing it, humans have returned to a simpler state. Men who have, in Dr. Farkel's words, "hands too clever and hearts too small" (Tree:50), have been set right.

* * *

The hope that war would bring about a just world was dispelled in the postwar period when most aspects of life returned to what they were before 1939. In retrospect, the notion of "one earth, one man," expressed by Jones in I, Jones, Soldier (p. 55), seemed unrealistic. A statement made by Anne Rivers in "The Concert" can be seen as

reflecting Schull's retrospective doubts about the value of the ideals of war. "How much of the fine words had we believed? How much had we meant what we were doing? There'd been nothing real about it. Nothing honest" (Concert:19).

Men did not change their ways readily. The "Sound of the Weeds" and the "Land of Ephranor" reflect the disillusionment which resulted from this knowledge. In both these plays the young protagonist sets out with the hope of changing the world and finds that it stays much the same despite his efforts. George Grant must reject a postwar society which does not conform to his dream of a "new world," while Othran discovers that, contrary to his expectations, men do not "mend their ways when they know" (Ephranor: p. 5). Although the theme of "The Concert" does not deal directly with war, the play reflects the same concerns as Schull's previous radio dramas. Here, an idealist is seen as someone who has not had to make the compromises which the world requires. While Anne Rivers hopes to realize her dream of brotherhood, the more experienced Richard Jennings expresses skepticism with regard to man's potential for change.

In practice, then, brotherhood was a difficult goal to achieve. Richard Jennings expresses this awareness in his statement "love for men is a hard thing to retain. It isn't returned in any great measure" (Concert:40). While Schull was drawn to the notion of equality, some of his protagonists are intellectuals who look down on common man. George Grant cannot accept the complacency around him; at the outbreak of war he feels he wants to kill every "fat indifferent

fool in the country" for not accepting responsibility for the world situation (Weeds:8). The fact that a fellow commuter reads the sports page instead of thinking of the world situation angers the young man. In "The Land of Ephranor," Naina looks back to see that the multitudes are as "dirty and greedy as ever" (Ephranor:19), while in "The Little God", the Ambassador describes the common man as having "impregnable ignorance, blank indifference and ineluctable greed" (God:5).

If the notion of brotherhood was somewhat ambivalent in Schull's work, the issue of capitalism was not. The author remained unequivocally opposed to the business ethic. George Grant returns from war and is distressed by the fact that business concerns will re-establish themselves: "while others starve the fat man will grow rich" (Weeds:19). In "The Shadow of the Tree," "the back slapping business getting world" (Tree:4) of the Mayburys is shown to be shallow and compromising. In later plays such as "The Little God" this issue is seen in terms of a material way of life versus a spiritual one. While the spiritual is seen as life-affirming, the material is viewed as both a negative short-sighted and prevalent philosophical position.

The achievement of global consciousness and technological discoveries such as the atom bomb brought with them new questions. In "Shadow of the Tree" John Maybury and Dr. Farrel have forebodings of a doomed future, while Nora and Ted Maybury resolve themselves to face the "noble lunacy" of the world. The characters in "The Little God" escape from a political stalemate situation to a society where peace

and brotherhood still exist. In "The Heat Wave" this return to the past is seen as irrevocable; a primeval civilization grows out of a world on the brink of nuclear holocaust. Men had knowledge but few guidelines to help them in its use. The protagonists of the plays written later in this period reflect this awareness; Carraman, in "The Little God," is cut off from his emotions and from spirituality by what Huayana calls "the greed and guile of wisdom," (God:39) while Dr. Farrel in "Shadow of the Tree" and Dr. Marlow in "The Heat Wave" are portrayed as characters who know too much.

Schuil's notion that man had potential for a peaceful coexistence was offset by a feeling that humanity was "on the run." "Headed for the rat hole, the rat hole closed" (Wave:23). Men were complex; in Dr. Marlow's words they were "wonderful, horrible, lopsided, toppling ... ratlike and marvelous, alternating exclusively between terror and venom" (Wave:25).

CHAPTER THREE

LOVE AND ALIENATION

Postwar disillusionment and fear of nuclear war are two of the major themes which Schull dealt with in his radio dramas. The plays I examine in this chapter are of interest because they reflect the third major theme. This concerns certain changes in marriage and the family; while the wartime play, "World Without End" (June 1944), is a straightforward depiction of love and marriage, the last play in this group, "Alexandra's Island" (November 1961), is an exploration of relationships in a broken home.

In "World Without End" love is portrayed at its most romantic. The action of the play is conveyed by means of flashbacks: a soldier's memories of the night he met his wife are recalled on the front. On military leave, the soldier John attends a party where he meets Maureen. The couple fall in love at first sight and escape the crowd; they visit a night club, an all-night restaurant, and cap the evening by getting married. The newlyweds return to Maureen's house and announce the news to the bride's parents. The two spend the last day of John's leave at Maureen's family cottage by the lake. The young soldier returns to military duty the next day.

The contrast between the treacherous reality of war and the stable world of remembered love is emphasized through sound effects: machine gun firing and the rumble of distant artillery are juxtaposed with the tenderness which John remembers. The fact that the young man is scheduled to begin battle at the end of the play adds poignancy to the radio drama. The straightforward love and marriage plot of the play is matched by characters who are not highly individualized. We

learn little more than the most superficial details about John, who is portrayed as a "typical" young Canadian.

MAUREEN: When did you start to smoke?

JOHN: When I was twenty.

MAUREEN: Did you play baseball and hockey and all that?

JOHN: Uh-huh. Baseball and football ... wasn't much good at hockey (End:15).

In similar vein, when John light-heartedly expresses his happiness at finding Maureen, he could be describing almost any young woman. "Eyes, ears, nose, legs, teeth, a good dancer, healthy, not bad for a blind date" (End:9). Warm and supportive, Maureen can be seen as an ideal war bride. John describes her as having the attributes of a good soldier; she is, in his words, "brave and strong" (End:18). This reversal of roles takes place on a superficial level, however; certain details reveal that traditional sex roles are not challenged in this radio drama. It is assumed, for example, that Maureen will cook and mend when her marriage is resumed (End:13,14). While love and marriage are not questioned in this play the values of war are. John's love for Maureen causes him bitterness at the thought of returning to military duty; he feels that he and his wife have done nothing to deserve having their "lives smashed to pieces" just when they have "made them" (End:18). The young man cannot condone what he sees as lip service to the ideals of war; the terms which he hears bandied about — "freedom" and "justice" — (End:18) have little meaning for him.

The "World Without End" of John and Maureen did not outlast the war. A later play, "Kennedy's Quest" (February 1947), is concerned with a lack of commitment to love and marriage. The protagonist in "Kennedy's Quest" sets out in search of adventure and finds love in an unexpected situation. Kennedy cuts his train trip across Canada short in Oak Grove, Manitoba, the home of Martha, an attractive widow with two children. The young man is not tempted by family life, however, and decides to continue his journey with Celia. His plans are thwarted when he contracts German measles and Celia leaves without him. Kennedy decides to settle down with Martha.

Notes from an Arcadian flute, heard both by Kennedy and by the audience, are used to guide the young man in his search for love. Pan's pipe provides an external motivation for the protagonist's quest; it lures Kennedy away from his mechanic's job, towards Martha, towards Celia and finally towards Martha again. The notes from a toy flute, played by Martha's young son, mirror the music which Kennedy has been hearing in his mind. They alert Kennedy to the fact that love can be realized in the everyday world.

In contrast to "World Without End," where love is removed from day-to-day reality, love in "Kennedy's Quest" is seen in relation to stability and family life. The sounds of a garage, of a pool hall and of Martha's boisterous young children help make this everyday world tangible. Early in this play it is apparent that Kennedy rejects marriage along with the monotonous routine of a regular job. It is evident that war and travelling have given the easy-going veteran a

taste for adventure. "Stick at the same job all your life; eat at the same place; go to the same movie. Marry some dame just because she gets in your way often enough. That ain't life" (Quest:8).

Kennedy's convalescence with Martha's family familiarizes him with the comforts of domestic life. The motherly young widow treats Kennedy with tender care, and he concludes that his ultimate goal had always been marriage. "First or fiftieth, it's where I was headed for. It ain't a matter of mileage, Martha. You go till you get there" (Quest:63). While Kennedy is brought around to accept home and family, Celia's future remains unsettled. The young woman's articulate manner of speaking contrasts with Kennedy's informal language.

CELIA: Nothing's ever going to be permanent again. We feel it in our bones. So what's the use of spending two-thirds of a life-time building a life?

KENNEDY: It's what you have to do, isn't it?

CELIA: Maybe it was once. The laws of nature seemed to work pretty well for our grandfathers. They planted a lot of hard work and sober living and church-going and doing the right thing; and when harvesting time came, they reaped a home and family and a nice house with a lawn to mow and kids to play on it. Today ....

KENNEDY: It ain't the same?

CELIA: The whole business is upside down. The more you put into life, the more you'll have to regret when it blows up in your face (Quest:26).

Celia's perspective is tempered by the down-to-earth ideas of Martha and Pop Whelan. While Martha urges Celia towards love and commitment, Pop Whelan views the young woman's outlook as simply a result of her youth: the elderly man's more conventional perspective is expressed through natural imagery. "Darn near any seed feels like that, Celia, drifting along free as the air ... all of a sudden it comes to a little stop ... the roots go down ... and zing ... it's a plant .... Forty years later it's a tree, still wondering how it happened" (Quest:28). Celia leaves traditional values behind her while Kennedy stays behind in Oak Grove, a small town which is, in Celia's words, "far from the centers of disturbance" (Quest:27).

Though much of the content of two comedies — "O'Brien" (January 1948) and "Whatever You Do" (May 1950) — is not relevant to the subject of love and alienation several excerpts from these radio dramas are of interest to this discussion.

The plot of "O'Brien" centres on estrangement in marriage. The two main characters in the radio drama, Maguire and Lyn, have been unable to resolve their differences during their short marriage and have separated. With the help of O'Brien the couple is reunited.

Most of the play is narrated from Maguire's perspective. The flashbacks which are used to describe his life with Lyn serve both to emphasize the fact that Maguire is still preoccupied with his marital

problems and to bring these problems to light. Maguire and Lyn are faced with conflicting professional interests; while Maguire proposes to move to the country where he feels he can better pursue his artistic career, Lyn can only work as a dress designer in the city.

If marriage is seen as difficult, separation is also a lonely proposition. Maguire turns to a life of dissipation in his country home. Though Lyn continues working in the city, she is warned by O'Brien of the long term ill-effects of her life as a divorced career woman.

O'BRIEN: Bust it up (pause)... Don't want a husband and a home ... little kids ... only you won't be no good without either. One of them dames with the tight lips; chewin' it over in their minds all the time. Get to lookin' at all men like they was a bad smell. Play bridge with the girls and work hard at the office. Get lines on your face; pretty soon your legs start to get skinny ... old aunt Lyn ... sour puss ... (O'Brien:38).

O'Brien's traditional perspective triumphs over Lyn's hopes for a career. The young woman decides to become a "wilderness wife"; she envisions herself as a mother and a grandmother in the future.

In "Whatever You Do" love is seen in terms which are opposite to those in "World Without End." Marriage is described as endless strife between two highly individualized personages. David Remington, a foreign correspondent, returns from overseas with the hope of beginning a tranquil relationship with his old friend Alice. He

finds, however, that he is still attracted to his former girlfriend and fellow writer Celia. Celia and David recommence a stormy relationship despite the prediction that their marriage will be "forty years of Bedlam" (Do:56).

We are made aware that part of Celia's ongoing dispute with David revolves around his careerism. At one point in the play she confronts him on this issue.

> You're a clever man. You're a brilliant man. And utterly selfish, arrogant, — and for all anyone can tell — a rattling vacuum at the core .... I know a dozen men like you. Not bad. No more selfish, perhaps, than anyone else. But so completely wrapped up in some work that takes the best of them that they have absolutely nothing to share (Do:23).

Though David's assessment of Celia — "assertive, arbitrary with brains sticking out like warts" (Do:32) — does not correspond with the traditional idea of a woman, he is brought to realize his preference for an egalitarian relationship. Celia realizes the inevitability of marriage with David but does not feel assured of its success. Her fears are not allayed by Alice's counsel which is "whatever you do you'll regret it" (Do:57).

Much of the humour in the comedy "Ladies Choice" (April 1952) is derived from the attempts of Edna Mayes to woo her elderly, next door neighbour Peter Wilkes. The determined Edna resorts to extremes such as doing Peter's household chores while he is away and bringing

him lunch while he is on the job. Though Peter is determined to maintain his state of celibacy and his self-sufficient rural life style, he does not succeed in doing so. With the resolution of the play, he is not only engaged to Edna Mayes but evicted from his property.

Peter is introduced as an unwilling patient in hospital; it is made apparent that he has been injured through his unsuccessful attempts to defend his property. The story of Peter's life is told in flashback form. His solitary existence with his pet goats and his work as the town handyman are made concrete through sound effects such as the bleating of goats and a lawn mower motor. As the Alderman, the Police Chief, Peter's daughter and Edna Mayes all exert pressure on Peter, the old man lapses into memories of the past. This split from reality helps to justify Peter's final and absurd effort to discourage city authorities with a shotgun which backfires.

While Edna Mayes is characterized as aggressive and wordly, Mary is portrayed as a gentle unselfish woman. We are shown that Peter's past marriage with Mary was a happy one; it is evident that his wife sustained him through failures in the grocery, insurance and contracting businesses. Peter has amassed little in terms of material goods and in retrospect regrets the fact that he was only able to provide Mary with the bare necessities of life. We are made aware that though Peter was in love with his wife, he was reluctant to express his feelings.

MARY: (THIRTYISH: BRISKLY IRRITATED) You love me Peter Wilkes?

PETER: Oh now Mary — we have to go into that? I'm tired.

MARY: I'm asking you a civil question.

PETER: Be a danged bad business if I didn't — ten years married — two kids -

MARY: (FRETFUL, HURT) Oh — woman never can get a straight answer out of you — never can get a little comfort when she needs it (Choice:13).

Peter's independence is threatened not only by the widow next door but by his daughter who wants him to live with her family. It is evident that the bourgeois mentality of the household holds little attraction for Peter; the old man finds it unnecessary to drink coffee on the "verandy" (Choice:9) and despises the thought of living in his daughter's "rabbit papered attic" (Choice:43). Letitia's upward mobility is conveyed partly through the fact that her speech contrasts markedly with that of her father.

LETITIA: Dad, I don't like your language.

PETER: Language never bothered you till y'married the preacher.

LETITIA: (ominously) Are you finding fault with William, Dad?

PETER: (Satiric) How could I? William — (The name always gags him a little) — ain't got any (Choice:8).

Peter's character is revealed not only by his candid manner but through monologues. At one point in the play his musings make the audience aware of the importance which he attributes to his rural

lifestyle. As the town handyman Peter has outlived many of his success-oriented friends.

> What's wrong with a man wantin' t'stay on in his own house? What's wrong with a man keepin' a few goats if he likes? ... (SIGH: DREAMILY). Waterin' his own goats in his own backyard on a Sunday mornin' a man felt like he had something — like he was somethin' ... (Choice:2).

Peter is forced to contend with a society which no longer values his needs; his awareness is of the impersonal and threatening aspects of change: "seen it coming for five years. Seen it all my life, everything goin' past rollin' over a man — grindin' him down in the dirt" (Choice:42). The elderly man's expressed wish — "all's I want to do is stay where I am" (Choice:13) — and his increasing loss of hope lend a tragi-comic aspect to the play.

The plot of "Glass Walls" (July 1952) centres on the essential solitude of the individual. The barriers which exist between people are seen not only as inevitable but desirable; in the words of Charlie, the protagonist, the world is "hot and sweaty enough without everybody rubbing up against everybody all the time" (Walls:2).

Glass walls, the central symbol in the play, are concretized through a musical impression of glass breaking. This sound effect accompanies incidents from the protagonist's domestic and social life which are used to illustrate his personal theory of human relationships. A flashback to Charlie's wedding day serves to reveal his essential feelings about his marriage; though he is in love with

his wife he realizes he will never be able to understand her completely. "Even when you stood there with words being said, and you looked into her eyes and knew that every word was true for her and true forever — there was still that wall" (Walls:18). Later in the play, walls are viewed in less abstract terms; they consist in the unspoken differences between Charlie and his wife.

MUSIC: THE BRITTLE IMPACT: FAINTLY

CHARLIE: (FOR HIMSELF, MUSING: SIGH: DISCONTENTED DISSENT) 'Perfect!' There's plenty of things even I'd change — must be a million on her side. Wish she'd sing something else besides 'Blue Heaven' when she's getting breakfast — wish she wouldn't read in bed, does keep me awake, even though I always tell her it doesn't — ... (PAUSE: SIGH). What about her? What'd be the beefs on her side? (Walls:26).

The existence of "glass walls" is not confined to marriage; though Charlie has known Art for years, certain barriers have always existed between them. The protagonist confides that he is unable to comment on Art's aggressive manner and his success-oriented materialistic attitudes; he feels he would get "all tangled up" trying to explain his point of view (Walls:6).

Schull chose an unusual subject — the grooming of a television "whiz kid" — for his radio drama "World of His Own" (November 1952). Philip's parents hope that their nine-year-old son will astound the world with his photographic memory. To this end, the Mathews keep their child insulated from an ordinary child's life and involved in a

rigourous training program. When a television appearance is scheduled for Philip, he is subjected to increasing pressures from his parents. It becomes evident that the boy's mind is beginning to be affected by the demands made upon him when he starts to confuse the Shakespearian play he is memorizing with reality. The final proof of the boy's unbalanced state is found in the disturbing conclusion of the play; in a misguided attempt to enact Othello, Philip kills his parents.

David Ryerson's opposition to the way Philip is being treated forms much of the conflict in the radio drama. The professor's concern increases as Philip's mental and physical health deteriorates. At one point in the play he questions Gerda's long-term plans for Philip.

RYERSON: You mean you plan to have him go on indefinitely — parroting Shakespeare?

GERDA: Of course not. That's a beginning. The whole world of books is just opening for him. We thought of introducing him to Dickens next.

RYERSON: But these same air-tight surroundings go with him wherever he goes — you — the tutors — the rest of it?

GERDA: Of course. I've insisted on it. This gift of his is a very delicate thing. A drastic change — a shock of any kind — might simply annihilate it.

RYERSON: You mean if you let him lead an ordinary child's life he couldn't be a prodigy and make a fortune?

GERDA: (Coldly) I've considered everything (Own:29).

It is evident, then, that in the Mathews family the traditional values of love and nuturing have been lost. While Gerda thinks of her son as a delicate machine, Bill Mathews thinks of Philip as an investment. "To think a big, dumb, moron like me should have a wife like Gerda. And a son like Philip. Gordon's the biggest agent in New York, Dave. The boy'll make a hundred thousand in a year" (Own:7). Scenes depicting Philip with the neighborhood children further convey the extent of the boy's isolation to the audience. Philip is not only rejected by his peer group but is unable to discuss this situation with David Ryerson, his only confidant.

Just as Philip lives in an emotional vacuum, cut off from friends and a normal life, so Gerda seems to lack fulfillment in her marriage with "a big, insensitive hulk of a man" whom she dominates (Own:37). Bill Mathews is characterized as jovial and simple-minded; it is obvious that he cannot provide intellectual companionship for his wife. All Gerda's energy has been channeled into helping Philip develop his mental capacities; she has given up a university professorship to this end. While we are not given reasons for her choice, it is evident that Gerda has refused marriage with her intellectual equal -- Professor David Ryerson. In "World of His Own," the predominant values of a consumer society are shown to eventually lead to the destruction of the family. With the resolution of the play, Philip is allowed to lead an ordinary boy's life; the genuine concern of David Ryerson triumphs over the distorted values of Philip's parents.

As is the case with "World of His Own," "Alexandra's Island" (November 1961) is an exploration of isolation in the family. The plot of this play centres on the day-to-day events in the life of a college student named Alexandra and serves to bring familial relationships in a broken home into focus. Spurred on by Professor Phillips, Alexandra tries to bring about social change by participating in activist groups. The young girl disapproves of the values of the older generation, and when her mother comes to visit, Alexandra makes her disenchantment with her parents' lives known. After an abortive attempt to run away with her boyfriend Kenny, Alexandra returns home. She and her stepmother begin to establish a more loving relationship with one another.

The discrepancy between the values of Alexandra and those of her family forms the main conflict in this radio drama. Alexandra's critical perspective is partly developed through her description of her family; her assessment of Lorna's life is made through a visual impression: "Nice tan, lovely hair, cool as a cucumber, the best golf swing in town and what else ..." (Island:16). Alexandra disapproves of her father's resigned attitude towards nuclear proliferation; she cannot come to terms with the fact that the "best answer" he can think of is a "hole in the ground" (Island:14) — the fallout shelter he is building in the backyard. The young girl feels that her parents lead empty lives; she sees through the appearances which they present to the world. In her own words, the protagonist is "scared to grow up" (Island:23); she finds no model in the adult world to emulate. Like

Alexandra, Kenneth, the protagonist's boyfriend, disapproves of the adult world. At one point in the play Kenneth confronts Alexandra's father on the subject of nuclear proliferation.

FATHER: (Mollifying chuckle). Sorry if I've libelled the younger generation. I'm a bit out of touch.

KENNETH: (Gloomy magnanimity). Not your fault, sir. We live on our own little island.

FATHER: Oh, it's not so bad as that, is it?

KENNETH: (Growing intensity). With all the bridges washed away and all the warheads zeroed in on us. You've had all your life, sir — the part that counts —

FATHER: (Dryly) Thanks very much —

KENNETH: But here we are, not even started yet, with the whole world whirling down the highway to ... (Island:19).

Kenneth's preoccupation with the idea of nuclear holocaust is further emphasized through repetition. His contention that the whole world is whirling down the highway to dissolution is heard at several different points in the play (Island:3,10).

Professor Phillips substantiates the perspectives of Alexandra and Kenneth. Like his precursor Celia in "Kennedy's Quest," Phillips feels that few values or ideals exist in the twentieth century; modern man has been left with "nothing to supply an honest drive ... no literature, no drama, no philosophy and no religion" (Island:8). Schull's use of religious terminology to describe secular problems helps to give them a dramatic emphasis; as the professor sees it

nuclear armaments have created the possibility of "a brand new hell ... just when we've quit believing in the old one." This threat is exacerbated by the growing economic disparity between the rich nations and the third world countries; a new sense of the concept of sin has come into being:

> It's a sin to be fat when half the world goes round with its ribs sticking out. There's no joy left in our gadgets and our chrome, because we think of the wooden ploughs; we feel the eyes on us from the paddy fields and the jungles. It's a sin even to be well when a billion children walk on rickety legs. And not only a sin — it's dangerous — that's the real discovery (Island:8).

Portrayed as both understanding and uncompromising, Phillips has won the respect and the affection of his students. His point of view lifts the concerns of the play to a global level.

As the central symbol in the play, an island helps to concretize Alexandra's feelings of isolation. The young girl searches for true love in a world which seems devoid of feeling. Alexandra finds that her boyfriend Kenneth is too preoccupied with his own problems to give her any emotional support or physical affection. The fact that her father and step-mother sleep in separate bedrooms also disturbs the girl; she senses the resignation in their relationship.

Alexandra is not the only person who experiences feelings of alienation. The fact that Schull introduces Lorna's perspective allows us to see that the protagonist's perception of the marriage has

some grounds. It is evident that Alexandra's father is still in love with his first wife despite the fact that she deserted the family many years previously.

LORNA: (LITTLE PAUSE: SHRUG) she can't find you — and you can't help her. It just won't translate, will it? (Little pause: effortful, QUIET: IT HURTS) one life smashed up — one woman gone. Finding another — and finding it doesn't work in spite of everything. And still going on with it — because there's nothing else to do (Island:21)

When Alexandra confronts Lorna with her disdain for both her father and her mother, however, she finds that her assessment of the adult world has not been entirely correct.

LORNA: Fifteen years ago, Alex, he came home to an empty house — with his back full of shrapnel and his whole world smashed. He hasn't picked up many of the pieces, I guess, but he's kept one thing—he's a human being — a man.

ALEXANDRA: (Scornfully). A man! He acts like one doesn't he?

LORNA: What do you think life is? — being loved? She's not much of a woman — maybe she never was. And she's hungry and desperate now, clinging to both of you to save herself. Do you think that changes him?

ALEXANDRA: (Intensely). It should! Don't you really despise him, Lorna? He just curled up and died — like a stepped -on worm! — (X) — oh — ! SHARP SLAP AT (X) ABOVE

LORNA: (Coldly: gathering herself). Good night, Alex. I've never slapped you before. It's not the housekeeper's place. (Going). But you live a little before you say a thing like that again — if you ever want to (Island:39).

Alexandra finds that love exists not as a visible entity, but in Lorna's quiet respect for her father. Though the tone of the play is essentially a pessimistic one, it ends on a positive note. Lorna gives Alexandra's father her keys to the liquor cabinet — a gesture which signifies that she will reduce her drinking. Alexandra, too, is able to overcome her critical perspective to embrace a more life-affirming feeling.

> You wake up in the morning and everything's so beautiful and life's so wonderful and mysterious and exciting you'd think people would fight to keep it — you'd think they'd grow ten feet tall (Island:43).

* * *

In his book entitled Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth Century Canada, S. D. Clark has written "It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the Second World War marked the end of the old order of Canadian society. What we have been witnessing in the years since is a wave or avalanche of social changes which, for the country as a whole, not inappropriately may be called the quiet revolution."[1] Among the many social changes which Clark documents are

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[1]S. D. Clark Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth Century Canada, p. 410.

several which have relevance to the radio dramas in this chapter. The fact that an increased number of women entered the work force,[2] for example, is reflected in the characterization of several of the female personages in the plays in this chapter; Celia in "Kennedy's Quest," Lyn in "O'Brien" and Alexandra's mother in "Alexandra's Island" are economically independent career women. This social transition is, in turn, seen as influencing traditional values; Celia questions marriage and family while Lyn and Alexandra's mother leave their marriages — the former on a temporary and the latter on a permanent basis. While Celia, Lyn and Alexandra's mother are directly involved in careers, in two other plays women are depicted in unconventional terms. Both EdnaMayes in the comedy "Ladies Choice" and Gerda in "World of His Own" dominate their relationships with men.

Other social transitions were to have their impact on the role of the individual in society. The large scale shift of the population from rural to urban communities, for example, which enabled many people to enter the middle class[3] was to bring about new attitudes towards status and money. We have seen that the rural Peter Wilkes is not only out of step with a fast-changing urban society but must come to terms with the fact that he has not achieved economic success in a society where this aspect of life is emphasized. Like Peter Wilkes,

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

Charlie in "Glass Walls" is portrayed as a little man who must contend with a competitive world.

The newly emerging consumer society was capable of alienating not only the individual but the family. In the well-known study of Crestwood Heights an attempt to explain this phenomenon is made.

> In a period of rapid social change, parents and children may no longer share attitudes or beliefs. The isolation of each family acts to decrease the ability of the family to transmit traditional patterns of behaviour which might otherwise be absorbed from close contact with, for instance, grandparents. The absence of kinship bonds also tends to concentrate the emotional life of the family on a few individuals; institutions are now emerging to give the support once given by kinship ties.[4]

In "World of His Own" Schull depicts a family which is both isolated from kinship ties and unbalanced. With the resolution of the play the values of a consumer society are taken to their ultimate end and the family is destroyed.

Schull concerned himself with the plight of the individual in a world where there was "no deep loam ... no philosophy, no faith ... no ideals ... no confidence in the future" (Quest:38). With the breakdown of these moral precepts, relationships had become more tenuous; men had created a new hell for themselves; it was "the

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[4]John R. Seeley, R. Alexander Sim, Elizabeth Loosly, "Family and Socialization in an Upper-Class Community," p. 104.

absence of love" (The Loves of Alexandra:19). In "Alexandra's Island" Schull uses the perspectives of both Alexandra and Phillips to work towards a formulation of new moral standards. If love is not possible, loyalty, respect and social concern emerge as values which are attainable in this complex world.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS A TRAGIC VISION

As perhaps the best example of Schull's mastery of radio drama technique, "The Jinker" (March 1955) also marks the achievement of a traditional tragedy. By using insights derived from Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism and by tracing elements of Schull's tragic vision in three earlier plays — "The Life of a Man" (October 1945), "The Bridge" (April 1947) and "The Flower in the Rock" (March 1951) -- I will show how this vision evolved.

The basic elements of Schull's tragic vision are found in "The Life of a Man." In this play the author describes the life of his protagonist through the main events; we see John Heath as a young man leaving England, at his engagement and at the death of his wife and his only son. Lyrical language is used to universalize the life of the protagonist; John is both an ordinary man and "all the ages that are and shall be swimming blindly down the river of time" (Man:2). His engagement is described in these terms: "this is the diamond and the drop of water. This is the moment shimmering and exquisite and frail and all enduring" (Man:11). At times, Schull makes use of natural elements in his figurative language. When John leaves his family in England to go to North America, he is described as having "broken off as a seed from a tree" (Man:6); his psychological isolation is expressed in terms of "cold voids in space" (Man:3); his life moves as "a fleck of spume upon a river" (Man:9).

Though "The Life of a Man" cannot be considered a tragedy in traditional terms, Schull works with an idea which is basic to this mode; it is "the narrowing of a comparatively free life into the

process of causation."[1] John Heath is a victim of "the mighty forces that move the world that stir and transform and heal it" (Man:9); the protagonist's youthful dreams of financial success are not realized during his life time (Man:13); the invulnerability which he feels as a young man seems illusory in old age (Man:9). John's isolation is underlined at several points in the play; after fifty years with his company, he still finds it impossible to communicate with his boss, Mr. Fredericks (Man:16); the death of his only son is described as "a dividing again, a separation, ... a passing into a new solitude" (Man:14). "Like all men," John is described as "a vast lonely and impenetrable mystery" (Man:1). He dies alone after having lost both his wife and son in war.

The protagonist's destiny is seen not only on an individual level but on a universal one. War and class struggle will continue as long as men inhabit the earth; despite the dream of a "new world" the future cannot be altered.

> ... The riders of the whirlwinds, the masters of the good furies, the leaders who bid us follow them — tell of a world where the furies will be stilled and schooled and guided, where we will move through the journey of our days in peace, in equality and in freedom. I wish them well. It is a good dream. But we shall move upon the same journey (Man:17).

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[1] Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism, p. 212.

In "The Bridge," Schull's vision is expressed in less abstract terms partly because the play is set in a specific place — postwar France — around a concrete situation — the reconstruction of a bridge. One of the main characters in the play is Captain John Marshall, an Englishman who, while working on a reconstruction mission, is billeted with a widow, her daughter, Lili, and her daughter's son, Jean. The captain is soon to learn that the family has problems in the village. Because of the fact that Lili has fraternized with a Bosche soldier she and her child are ostracized by the villagers.

When Renner, the father of Lili's child, is brought back to the village as a prisoner of war, his objectionable nature is soon made apparent. With the help of his natural son, he burns the family barn and persuades Lili to run away with him. Though Levesque, the village prefect, is authorized to arrest Lili for these actions, he finds himself unable to do so. Levesque and the family decide that there must be an end to the hate which has existed; they resolve to put their memories of war behind them.

A narrator furnishes the time and setting for the play; the radio drama takes place in postwar France, "a land smashed by war ... struggling slowly back to life" (Bridge:2). Captain Marshall provides the audience with more background; the psychological effects of war are made apparent through his discovery of the details of Lili's situation. Sound effects contribute to the harsh tone of the play.

We hear the strokes of the lash which are used to punish Lili's young son and the child's frequent crying.

A description of low mimetic tragedy or pathos made by Northrop Frye in the Anatomy of Criticism is useful for consideration of this play in terms of Schull's tragic vision. The "root idea" of this mode, Frye writes, is "the exclusion of an individual on our own level from a social group to which he is trying to belong."

> Hence the central tradition of sophisticated pathos is the study of the isolated mind, the story of how someone recognizably like ourselves is broken by a conflict between the inner and outer world, between imaginative reality and the sort of reality which is established by a social consensus.[2]

As victims of society's intolerance, Lili and her son are subjected to severe reprisals in the community. We are shown how the protagonist is the object of the town's people's "scorn and hatred" (Bridge:15).

CAST: THE HISSES RISE.

VOICE: (OFF) Throw her in the pond again!

VOICE 2: And the brat!

VOICE 3: LAUGHS.

WOMAN: Drive her from the village ... for good ...!

WOMAN 2: Now ... what are we waiting for ...?

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[2]Northrop Frye, Ibid., p. 39.

SOUND: STONES AGAIN.

JEAN: (WHIMPERS) Maman ... they are throwing stones ...

LILI: Silence! Walk close to me ...
MEN/WOMEN: Very fine she looks ...! She is proud of herself ...
Strip her! She needs another reminder ... (Bridge:17).

As a central figure in pathos Lili is "alone and free" (Bridge:22). The young woman's alienation is reflected both in her immaculate appearance and in her detached relationship with her mother and her son. At one point in the play the kindhearted, somewhat naive Captain Marshall intervenes on the boy's behalf.

MARSHALL: PAUSE. ABRUPTLY. HARSHLY.
But you shouldn't treat the boy the way you do. It isn't his fault.

LILI: (COLDLY). He is not ill-treated. He has everything that we have.

MARSHALL: Except the one thing he needs ... love ... kindness.

LILI: There is little kindness left in the world, Captain.

MARSHALL: Perhaps not. How could there be if you keep killing it every time it shows up?

LILI: You cannot believe that it is dead, uprooted, gone forever, can you?

MARSHALL: Of course I can't. I don't, I know better.

Lili sees humans as "sports of the gods"; her God is "a beast ... who mocks and pursues and tortures while there is still life in his victims" (Bridge:41). Animosity is the predominant emotion in the young woman's world; it is expressed in her reflection that there is

"only pride and hate" left (Bridge:22) and is reinforced by the grandmother's expressed feeling that there is "nothing beyond" hate — "a black river flowing across the earth lapping at our feet" (Bridge:58).

Renner, the father of Lili's child, is the source of much of Lili's suffering. He is described as a kind of evil incarnate — as having "come back from the devil" (Bridge:24) to haunt the family again. Renner's sinister actions show that the family's assessment of him has not been far wrong. The defiant young man takes obvious pleasure in the fact that he has incited the burning of the family barn; he coerces Lili into running away with him by threatening to kill his natural son. While Lili tries to resist Renner's advances it is obvious that she is sexually attracted to him. This attraction, in turn, generates an inner conflict; she sees her son, Jean, as a reminder of her "weakness" and "shame" (Bridge:47).

Captain John Marshall brings a new point of view into the family; in helping its members to rediscover emotional bonds he constructs both a real and a symbolic bridge. As is the case in "The Life of a Man" Schull uses natural imagery in his description; the family's old way of thinking is seen as "a darkness" which is "going now ... slowly ... and in the twilight there are many shapes of terror" (Bridge:59). Captain Marshall's words evoke a more positive side of nature; he emphasises its healing powers. "The wind smells clean again. There's new grass in the craters. The earth buries its memories ... builds over them. But not us! We go on — burrowing

among the sorrows ... dragging the past after us like a rotten corpse" (Bridge:35). Though the family and Levesque decide to adopt a new perspective, the author does not opt for a traditional happy ending. Lili refuses Captain Marshall's offer of marriage, and we are left with the impression that a bridge "of mercy and forgetfulness from the good past to the days ahead" (Bridge:58) will be built slowly and painstakingly.

Though "The Flower in the Rock" (1947) is a murder mystery it, like "The Bridge," contains elements of a low mimetic tragedy. The characters in this play are victims not only of their society but of an inexorable fate which is expressed through Canadian landscape. The plot of the play concerns the tragic consequences of the disinheritance of Captain John Mason II.

When Captain Mason returns to England in 1919, he decides against his father's wishes to marry Catherine Patenaude, the family governess. As a reprisal, the father offers his son an allowance on condition that he reside with his new wife in Saskatchewan.

Time elapses. In 1941 a detective named Ovrum pays a visit to the Mason household in England. We learn, at this time, that Captain Mason was murdered twenty years earlier. Ovrum arrests Phillip Graves, a former neighbour of the Masons. Certain details point to Graves's culpability; we are told that he has been living in London under an assumed name and that he fled the area directly after the crime. Graves's interest in Catherine and the fact that he kept a picture which Catherine painted, for so many years, also seem to imply

that he was involved in the murder of Captain John Mason. When it is revealed that Catherine has been killed in a car accident, Graves discloses the knowledge he has been hiding for years — Catherine murdered her husband.

The high excitement of the Mason household at the opening of the play contrasts with the somber mood of the couple's life on the prairie. The ominous punctuation, which marks the passing of years, also helps to build a feeling of desolation in the play. Schull uses the background of the Canadian prairie to give form to his vision of life; nature brings John and Catherine face to face with an inexorable fate.

GRAVES: It was a bad summer — dry, dusty — and then one wicked hailstorm, knifing over the narrow, mile-wide strip where Mason's land was. Slashing what crop he had. If you were bitter or superstitious, if you felt something poisonous hanging over your life ... you could listen to those dry miasmal winds and feel there was a special malevolence marking you down (Rock:43).

John and Catherine are forbidden to take their rightful place in English society; it is the hope of the authoritarian John Mason I that "the bitterness" of what they have done will "eat away at them" (Bridge:19). In the course of the play this vengeful wish is realized. On the Canadian prairie, John Mason II feels himself to be "an exile and a pariah" (Rock:59); he feels alienated from his neighbours and rebuffs their overtures. Graves provides an outsider's

perspective on the couple. "He wouldn't ask, he wouldn't learn ... the town knew he was a remittance man, thought he was a little "queer" and pitied his wife" (Rock:47).

While Catherine is portrayed as a sincere and devoted wife who would enjoy the prairie social life if given the opportunity to participate in it, John is described as a self-centred rather shallow young man who is unable to cope with the difficulties involved in farming. John is jealous of any contact which Catherine has with her neighbours, and when he discovers that his wife has attended a prairie social event in his absence he judges her, as his father once did, to be "worthless, treacherous and scheming" (Rock:58). He forbids Catherine to leave the farm house.

Graves is aware that "something terrible" (Rock:49) is going on in the Mason household; though he notices Catherine's growing desperation, he is powerless to help her. He remembers her suicide attempt.

CATHERINE: ... I was walking ... until the sleep came ... until the sleep came and I was free ... of the reproach ... and the bitterness ... and the hatred ... and the suspicion ... it is the wickedest of all ... even when he is asleep the horrible thing works on his mind ... it makes us like beasts in a trap ... tearing at each other (Rock:50).

Catherine's inner reality is expressed through a painting of a flower in a rock. The picture is based on something she once saw; "a flower growing in the bare crevice of a rock ... which should have

died but didn't" (Rock:56). The painting gives form to what Northrop Frye would term "a failure of expression"[3] — Catherine's inability to communicate her feeling to the outside world. It tells of survival pitted against the "whole ruthless mechanical, meaningless surge of life" (Rock:64).

When Graves tells of seeing Catherine for the last time, we are made aware that her life of isolation has transformed her. She has become "sheer stark need ... a force thrusting, driving toward escape" (Rock:63); she must kill in order to survive psychologically (Rock:15). "She talked ... I couldn't stop her ... it was a flood of words ... the whole story in a low, icy monotone that was no more human than the sound of a waterfall. She wasn't human at that hour" (Rock:63).

The tragic universe glimpsed in "The Flower in the Rock" becomes all-encompassing in "The Jinker." When Robert Torrance sets off to sea he encounters "the ceaseless rhythm of it all, vast inexorable in which man's life and death were as the falling of a snowflake" (p. 15).

The play is set in the seafaring province of Newfoundland around the annual seal hunt. As a revenge-tragedy, its plot is both

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[3] "Pathos is a queer ghoulish emotion, and some failure of expression, real or simulated, seems to be peculiar to it." Northrop Frye, Ibid, p. 39.

uncomplicated and powerful.[4] Robert Torrance reluctantly sets out in the same flotilla as Tim Mahon, the man whom he suspects of murdering his father on the previous year. Torrance is soon to realize that his suspicions are not unfounded; Mahon first steals his pelts, then later rams Torrance's boat, killing some of his men. After undergoing considerable inner conflict, Torrance brings himself to kill his enemy. He returns to port in Mahon's ship bringing the news of the loss of men and pelts. The play ends with the tragic revelation that men are sports of the gods and with the calm of catharsis.[5]

While the distancing of action in "The Flower in the Rock" serves to introduce an ousider's perspective into the play, the same element gives an archetypal dimension to "The Jinker." The fact that Robert Torrance recounts the events of the play to his grandson fifty years after they have occurred and that these events are, in turn, narrated by Charles twenty years after he has heard them gives a timeless quality to the play. This distancing of action produces a framework more typical of fiction than of traditional drama; it reinforces the larger-than-life, archetypal quality of the events.[6]

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[4]"The revenge-tragedy is a simple tragic structure, and like most simple structures can be a very powerful one, often retained as a central theme in the most complex tragedies." Northrop Frye, Ibid, p. 204.

[5]Howard Fink and John Jackson, "Radio Drama and Society, Homologies: An Analysis of Joseph Schull's 'The Jinker,'" Canadian Drama, p. 7.

[6]Howard Fink and John Jackson, Ibid., p. 7.

In creating Mahon Schull has used a character similar to Renner in "The Bridge." Like Renner, Mahon can be seen as representing an archetypal evil; he is spoken of as "the devil"; he brings "darkness (Jinker:13) and "the feel of evil" (Jinker:3) with him. Mahon's actions, like those of Renner, reflect a gratuitous destructiveness; his theft of Torrance's pelts and his attempt to demolish Torrance's ship are both absurdly inappropriate actions for a sea captain. The fact that his actions cannot be justified on a realistic level points to his deeper mythic significance. Unlike Captain Marshall in "The Bridge," Torrance is "a leader of men" (Jinker:6); he must risk his life to show that there is "no fear in the tribe" (Jinker:16). Having embarked on his voyage, Torrance is aware that his real confrontation is not with Tim Mahon but with "the power that moved the seas and the great ice" (Jinker:15). The centre of the tragedy, then, does not lie in Torrance's battle with Mahon but rather in Torrance's isolation.[7] Though Torrance appeases the gods of nature by his offering of Mahon's dead body, his moral questions are not put to rest. He is left with an awareness of an inexorable fate — a universe where certainty cannot exist (Jinker:47).

In "The Life of a Man," the author's attempts to universalize the events in the life of his protagonist through lyrical language result in a kind of abstract description. As a kind of everyman, John Heath is not highly individualized; he is a victim of societal forces

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[7] "... the centre of tragedy is in a hero's isolation not in a villain's betrayal." Northrop Frye, Ibid, p. 208.

and does not achieve the status of a tragic hero. As characters of pathos, Lili in "The Bridge" and Catherine in "The Flower in the Rock" are more developed. The fact that Lili is isolated by a weakness which is not far removed from our experience allows us to empathize with her. Catherine is not only isolated from society; her life on the Canadian prairie brings her face to face with an inexorable fate. In "The Jinker" landscape, themes, and a distancing of action work together to give an archetypal dimension to the life of Robert Torrance. A leader of men, Robert Torrance proves himself superior in degree both to the other men and to his environment. His actions, however, do not serve to resolve his moral questions.

Schull felt that men could not alter their tragic destiny; they would move upon the same journey despite superficial changes. Canadian landscape gave the author a means through which he could express this notion of an inexorable fate. Robert Torrance's awareness is of a universe in which there is "no sureness yet — no sureness ever. Only the hard spent calm of the great ice moving with the great current on the breast of the greater sea" (Jinker:47). Only art allowed man to triumph over nature.

CHAPTER 5

THE JINKER: A VOYAGE TOWARDS SELF-DISCOVERY

Based on the 1955 radio drama of the same name, Schull's novel The Jinker was published in 1968. Though the novel, like the play, is set in Newfoundland in the 1890s, the distancing of action,[1] which is found in the radio drama, does not take place in the later work. This fact results in the novel's somewhat awkward narrative; what serves as a justification for the larger-than-life events in the play is missing from the novel.

There are, however, some close parallels between the play and the novel. In both works Robert Torrance hesitates to embark on the annual seal hunt because he knows that Tim Mahan, the man whom he suspects of having murdered his father, will be sailing in the same flotilla. As is the case in the play, Robert is anxious about his new role as sea captain; it will be the first time he has acted in his father's place.

When the seal hunt begins, the protagonist discovers that his forebodings were not unfounded. As in the play, Mahan challenges Torrance by appropriating some of his pelts. In the ensuing confrontation, other incidents are brought to light; it is revealed that Mahan has not only killed Elijah Torrance but that he raped Torrance's wife, Maura, on her wedding day. Overt hostility breaks out between the two men; Mahan first attacks Torrance and later rams Torrance's boat, killing some of his men. Both the radio drama and the novel

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[1] In the radio drama, Robert Torrance refrains from telling his story to Charles until fifty years after they have occurred; we learn of these events from a mature Charles twenty years after he has heard them.

have a similar ending; after much inner conflict, Torrance kills his enemy and returns home.

Though the notion of an inexorable fate found in Schull's radio drama is present in his novel, the main focus in the later work is on an exploration of self. The novel format allows for an account of the long-standing relationship between Robert Torrance and Tim Mahan. While, in the radio drama, Mahan can be seen as representing a kind of archetypal evil, in the novel Mahan is depicted as a young man who has been deprived of love and material security. Mahan strikes out with sexual aggression against a world which degrades him; his rape of Maura helps to communicate his anger. This rape is, in turn, partly responsible for the alienation which Torrance and Maura experience in their marriage.

Like the radio drama, the novel can be seen as a "consciously-contrived-acting-out of a primitive anthropological ritual of coming-to-manhood, against the background of an irresistible and demanding fate."[2] Robert Torrance must take his dead father's place; he must fulfill the role of sea captain "for no man but a Torrance had ever taken a Bracebridge ship to ice" (p. 112). In undertaking the voyage the protagonist must leave behind his familiar world; he becomes part of a tragic universe where "a man's life and death in all this were less than a falling snowflake" (p. 123). Both the novel and

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[2]Howard Fink and John Jackson, "Radio Drama and Society, Homologies: An Analysis of Joseph Schull's "The Pinker," Canadian Drama, p. 8.

the radio drama describe a journey towards self discovery; Robert Torrance can be seen as embarking not only on a physical voyage but on a spiritual one. These two themes are given different emphasis in the two works, however. While the events of the play serve to underline Torrance's confrontation with an inexorable fate, the details of the novel emphasize Robert Torrance's coming-to-terms with his inner centre.[3]

Certain details at the beginning of the novel suggest that the protagonist is in need of regeneration both in his life and in his marriage. Torrance experiences an "enormous weariness" (p. 6) when he thinks of the oncoming trip. He is aware of an estrangement which has taken place in his relationship with his wife; the couple remain "islanded in their separate hells" (p. 80); they have lain "together and alone" for the past year (p. 80). We are given a sense that a cycle in the couple's barren seven-year marriage has come to an end.[4]

> Another night of seven years of nights and this was the last of them now; if ever there were any others they would not be the same (p. 82).

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[3]I have found "The Process of Individuation" by M. L. von Franz in Man and His Symbols useful for a general perspective on this subject.

[4]M.L. von Franz writes that "many myths and fairy tales symbolically describe this initial stage in the process of individuation by telling of a king who has fallen ill or grown old. Other familiar story patterns are that a royal couple is barren." "The Process of Individuation." Man and His Symbols, p. 170.

It is apparent that Tim Mahan is implicated in the couple's marital problems. On the most realistic level of the novel, the fact that Mahan seems to overshadow the couple's sexual relationship can be explained by the fact that Mahan raped Maura on her wedding day. Though the young woman has kept this knowledge secret, Torrance is conscious that Maura is preoccupied with Mahan (p. 76). At the same time, Mahan's interest in Maura is also evident; he is envious of Robert's marriage and feels that he could have won Maura if he had met her first (p. 43).

Maura, then, binds the life of Torrance and Mahan together; the desires of both men are met in her. The inextricable connection between the two men can be seen on a symbolic level; Mahan is not only Torrance's life-long friend and rival but his shadow self or evil side. Certain textual references suggest this relationship; Mahan is the "one black space which gapes in Robert's life" (p. 25); Mahan's thoughts are, as he says, "half Robert's" (pp. 28, 29). Maura's notion that her husband's life is somehow bound to that of Mahan and that the unresolved relationship interferes with her marriage is suggested by her statement that Mahan is "a part of Robert, the key to all the rest" which locks "him away from her as she from him" (p. 48).

Torrance's task is two-fold; he must not only confront Mahan with the knowledge that he has murdered Elijah Torrance but also must come to terms with certain incidents in a past which he has shared with him. His attempts to do this in the port of St. John's are unsuccessful. Robert finds that Mahan will not admit to the killing

of Elijah Torrance and that the past he has shared with Mahan cannot be approached easily. The fact that Robert's memories are described as being locked with a "double lock" (p. 44) suggests that they remain on an unconscious level.

Robert does, however, recognize the need for discovery and change. Already he has been borne "monstrously far" (p. 115); it seems inevitable that he risk his life "against the sinuous and deadly current" (p. 115).

> Snowflake and spume-fleck locked in the iron rhythm, each was bound to his end. One would go down and both at last go down before the power that moved the seas and the great ice (p. 125).

Even after he has embarked on his journey, Torrance experiences feelings of ambivalence; he is a man "with a mind divided, smoke blurred, thought blurred, thinking of turning back" (p. 144). Ernest Johns, the second captain, who acts as a guide to Torrance at this time, advises him that he cannot escape his past. "You've no part of it and you still can't break free of it. Ye shut your eyes to it, and still it stares you in the face" (p. 162). Johns also casts Mahan in a symbolic role; as a scapegoat Mahan carries "the weight of all that filth — Dogstown and Kevin Mahan and the whore that mothered him" (p. 163). The young man must be sent away from "the safe, fat lives" of the clean men and the clean ship (p. 163); his death in "a land not

inhabited" is prophesized in Leviticus 16.[5] Though Robert resents the fact of social inequality (p. 163) he must come to terms with his inherent guilt as "the possessor" (p. 18).

Though the long awaited confrontation between the two men takes place over Mahan's shifting of Torrance's pan flags, it soon becomes clear that this is not the only matter which the two men must settle. Mahan now admits to killing Elijah Torrance; he also brings to light certain injustices which Robert, his only affective link with the world, has made him suffer. Mahan recalls how, as a youth, he was unjustly accused by Elijah Torrance of exposing Robert to a whore and was summarily expelled from the Torrances' boat. He remembers, too, how the young Robert callously rejected his amorous advance — an action which resulted in deadening Mahan's sensibility. Robert in turn shares an incident with Mahon; he remembers his boyhood visit to Dogstown in which he saw the brutal beating of Tim's mother's lover by Kevin Mahan. Robert's memory of "a man no longer a man, stark naked. The broken back sagged, blood gushed with the sobbing breath, there was no sight left in the eyes" has haunted his adult life (p. 37).

In facing Mahan, Torrance has brought to light part of his reality which was previously "not to be borne not to be lived with" (p. 42). Robert has come to terms not only with Mahan's socially

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[5] "And Aaron shall lay both hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the inequities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. And the goat shall bear their inequities into a land not inhabited" (p. 164).

unacceptable impulses but with his own; Robert's homosexual feelings and essential vulnerability are brought into consciousness.

Having conquered himself, Robert is able to act the role of hero. Though Robert is not able to kill Mahan for the sake of his ownpersonal revenge, he finds the strength to confront Mahan when the lives of his men are threatened. When Mahan rams Torrance's boat, killing some of his men, the protagonist kills him. He offers the body of Mahan to the primitive god of nature.[11] "He lifted the body in his arms, staggered up the deck through an opening lane of men, and with a great sobbing heave flung it over the windward bulwark. He saw the groaning, tortured mass of the ice, reddening as it took its offering to itself" (p. 212).

Robert returns home to a marriage that has been healed; his renewed sense of life has, paradoxically, made his apprehension of death more acute.

> The years-to-be marched over him, rumbling under their weight. The house crumbled, sagging on rotted timber, muttering with falling stone. He saw with the unborn eyes that would come to see it the gaping windows and the parting ribs of the walls, the thrust of sand and weed through heaved up plants .... The rocks stood bare again, even the memory gone blown from it, washed from it, buried under it (pp. 215, 216).

Though Schull used his radio drama as a basis for his novel, it is evident that his focus of interest changed in his later work. In

his move towards the exploration of the self the author describes a process of self-discovery which is both personal and social. Intrinsic to Robert Torrance's coming-to-terms with his inner centre is the recognition of a shared past with Tim Mahon - a recognition which, in turn, involves the acceptance of an equality which a class system has denied him.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In his early book of verse I, Jones, Soldier, Schull describes truth as "a hard master."

> whose eye goes to the world's end and sees all men.
> Equally — and weighs in a grim equal balance
> And masks all wrong and terribly repays,
> Terribly repays the wrong-doer and the blind fool standing by ... (p. 50).

The ideals of equality and justice were to remain important in Schull's work. They are manifested in various forms; in "The Sound of the Weeds" and "The Land of Ephranor," for example, they are expressed in the hope for a "new world," while in "The Concert" and "The Little God" they are embodied in the idea of brotherhood. It was Schull's sense of justice which caused him to be critical of an ideology which neglected the needs of the individual and favoured the ruling elite. In plays such as "Kennedy's Quest" and "World of His Own" nuclear proliferation and a consumer society are seen as the cause of rootlessness and alienation.

In plays such as "The Life of a Man" and "The Jinker" Schull explores the notion of justice in a larger sense. In the earlier radio drama John Heath is portrayed as a "victim of the mighty forces which move the world..." (Man:9) while, in the later play, Robert Torrance must contend with an inexorable fate. In the last analysis, social change could not alter the metaphysical condition of men. Life took place within the framework of a tragic destiny.

Schull's novel The Jinker represents an attempt to approach the issue of equality from a new point of view. In this work the author not only develops the perspective of Robert Torrance, "the possessor," but also that of Tim Mahon, "the hungering one" (p. 104). While Robert Torrance is the product of a comfortable sea captain's home, Tim Mahon bears the "weight" and "filth" of Dogstown, the poor district of St. John's (p. 163). Though their boyhood experiences together have brought Tim and Robert to realize an equality which extends beyond class distinctions, this friendship is destined to end. Mahon's background is the cause of his unjust expulsion from the Torrances' boat and from "the safe fat lives" of his fellow seamen (p. 163). The young man is condemned to "empty the world and walk alone in it" (p. 110). If evil existed in Schull's world it was found in a society which rendered some of its members powerless.

> The books .... A man could wash the Dogstown smell away, a man could build; a man could climb with these. A man could go wherever he wished take what he wished. He had wrenched this power from the guts of the fat world. Pay for his pain he — yes — food for his hunger. Hunger. His hands went limp ... he could do nothing. He could go nowhere (p. 104).

Schull was aware that man's future remained precarious; the dialogue between pessimistic and optimistic perspectives which takes place in some of the radio dramas can be seen as representing the author's own inner questioning with regard to this subject. On one hand he saw men as victims of a tragic and inalterable fate. Although

they dreamed of "peace, equality, and freedom," they would move upon "the same journey" (Man:17). This pessimism, however, was counteracted by a firm faith in man's potential. Only by believing in a "new world" could men surpass themselves.

> The star moves and the man follows. And in the end the light rests above a place he never dreamed. A wider place; more distant and nobler (God:6).

APPENDIX

This appendix considers what changes were made to the original radio versions in the television adaptations of "Kennedy's Quest" and "Alexandra's Island." I hope to bring the distinctive features of Schull's radio drama into focus through this comparison of plays.

We have seen in chapter three that the themes in the radio version of "Kennedy's Quest" (1949) centre on a lack of commitment to love and marriage. Though initially both Kennedy and Celia reject the possibility of marriage, a period of convalescence with Martha and her children brings Kennedy to the realization that family life has its advantages. Unlike Kennedy, Celia does not choose to settle down; her professed reasons stem from her notion of her generation as one which has been left with "no philosophy, no faith, no confidence in the future" (Quest:25). Celia acts as a kind of spokesperson for young people contending with the implications of the atomic age; the fact that she is both socially aware and sympathetically portrayed leads us to believe that she expresses the author's point of view.

In the television adaption of this play, "Midsummer Melody" (March 1955), the quest form has been eliminated. Kennedy has already arrived at Oak Grove — a small American town. Though he frequently talks of leaving, it is apparent that he has been boarding at the Whelan home with Martha, a childless young widow, and her father for about a year. When Celia arrives in town Kennedy falls in love with her at first sight; he forgets his desire to leave Oak Grove and asks Celia to settle down with him. The young woman refuses Kennedy's

offer; she sets off on her journey across the United States in pursuit of indigenous music. Kennedy begins a romance with Martha.

While the issue of instability versus marriage is approached in "Kennedy's Quest," the concerns of "Midsummer Melody" centre on an idealized past as a source of inspiration. Early in the television play it is made evident that Oak Grove has a special significance for Kennedy.

> This is where Gran'pa settled down — right by this crick. Nobody near him those days — no reason for pickin' the place, that he knew of. But his heart knew I guess.... Because this's where he found my grandma. She come by in one of them covered wagons, headin' over the mountains for Oregon... (Melody, I:26).

Kennedy, a mechanic who plays the banjo, wants to be just like his grandfather who "wandered all over pickin' up tunes" (Melody, I:25). Like the mythical Johnny Appleseed with whom he is linked, Kennedy's grandfather "sowed a song" wherever he went. Like Kennedy, Celia has an interest in American history; the young woman's professed goal is to gather up the indigenous music of the United States and "give it back to the world" (Melody, I:14). Celia's confidence and patriotic pride are made evident during the play; she aspires to make use of her research material to write "the greatest ballet symphony ever written" (Melody, I:17). The young professor does not reject marriage on account of the unstable conditions which the atom bomb has produced,

but rather because she is involved in her work and feels that she is too young to settle down.

While the Celia of Schull's radio drama is a somewhat eccentric intellectual who, to Kennedy's embarrassment, insists on playing poolin the local hall, the Celia of the television adaption is an attractive 22-year-old professor who must wear glasses in order to be taken seriously. Kennedy is smitten by the good looks of this ethereal dancer and singer. The visual nature of the young man's infatuation is underlined by a nightmare in which youth and beauty have ended. He tells his dream to Celia:

> I had a long white beard...and you was all wrinkled up and wearin' false teeth — they'd come loose and rattle — ! ... Sure was grim (Melody, III:4).

Events in the television play also serve to emphasize the shallowness of Kennedy's affection. When Celia disappears from the young man's life, Kennedy falls into the arms of the slightly older and somewhat less accomplished Martha as soon as she is out of sight.

Schull's later radio drama "Alexandra's Island" (1961) was adapted into a television play entitled "The Loves of Alexandra." The plot of both the radio and television play revolves around the day-to-day events in the life of the young protagonist, Alexandra, and serves to bring into focus familial relationships in a broken home. In the radio play Alexandra is a college student who, along with her boyfriend Kenneth, tries to bring about social change through participation in anti-nuclear demonstrations. The two young people

are spurred on by Professor Phillips who shares his political awareness with his students. The protagoniat is critical of the older generation in general; the fact that her father is building a fallout shelter in the front yard disturbs the girl. When her mother comes to visit, Alexandra expresses her disenchantment with the adult world in no uncertain terms. After an argument with her stepmother, Alexandra attempts to run away with her boyfriend Kenneth. When Kenneth's car runs out of gas the two young people are forced to return home. Alexandra accidentally tumbles into the fallout shelter which her father has been building. The play ends on a positive note; Alexandra establishes a more loving relationship with her stepmother who, in turn, decides to cut down on her drinking. Alexandra's father considers filling up the hole which he has been digging. The young girl resolves to write a letter to her mother.

One of the most important changes made in Schull's television adaption of "The Loves of Alexandra" is that no mention of nuclear proliferation is made in the later play. Alexandra and Kenneth are high school students who stage protest marches aimed at drawing attention to the poverty in their city. As is the case in the radio drama, Alexandra runs away with her boyfriend after an argument with her parents. In the television version of the play, however, the protagonist and her boyfriend rent a room in the tenement which the young people have been visiting. Alexandra finds that unforeseen problems are associated with living in the new habitation; she is terrified to see a rat in the room. Phillips appears and urges the

two young people to return home. Alexandra writes a self-deprecating letter to her mother.

The title of the radio version of the play gives a clue to an important theme found in it; Alexandra's "island" or isolation is central to the radio drama. The young generation feels that it does not "connect" to the older one, for "all the bridges have been washed away, all the warheads are zeroed in" on them (Island:19). Though the events in the play are described from Alexandra's point of view, Professor Phillips provides a kind of confirmation of the young people's perspective. As the professor sees it, nuclear armaments have created "a brand new hell just when we've quit believing in the old one" (Island:28). It is Phillips' belief that modern man has been left with "nothing to supply a modern drive...no literature, no drama, no philosophy and no religion" (Island:8). The fact that Phillips has an astute social awareness which he shares with his students and that he is sympathetically portrayed leads us to conclude that he expresses the author's point of view.

Like the young people in "Alexandra's Island," the two teenagers in "The Loves of Alexandra" feel alienated from their society. The reasons for this mental state, however, are not related to world conditions but rather to local economic ones. At one point in the play Alexandra expresses her shock at the poverty she has seen on her day's excursion to the slum district.

> Tenements with no bathrooms — kids like little animals — sick — with sores, lice — they don't know how to brush their teeth — they pee on the floor (Alexandra:14).

Phillips urges his students out of their self-absorption towards social commitment to their city. Alexandra, in turn, entreats Kenneth to join her in doing social work with people at the tenements, people who, unlike their upper-middle class friends and family, merit affection. The young girl echoes Phillips' words of encouragement:

> That knot in your guts is love — you've just got to get it out — you've got to do something with it. And who needs it up there — who wants it? There's nobody worth loving. But here (Alexandra:64).

The main conflict in both the radio drama and the television adaption is the discrepancy between the values of Alexandra and those of her family. In the radio drama these differences stimulate the older generation to make certain compromises: the fact that Alexandra tumbles into the fallout shelter motivates her father to consider filling up the hole; the young girl's criticism of her parents' reliance on alcohol motivates Lorna to give up her keys to the liquor cabinet. In "The Loves of Alexandra" it is Alexandra who is brought around to her parents' point of view. Alexandra and Kenny return home upon realizing that they are incapable of coping with the difficulties of living in a tenement. In the television adaption too, Alexandra is

brought to the realization that her criticism of her mother has been unfair: the play ends with the young girl's letter of apology to her mother.

In both the television adaptions discussed above, the characters tend to have more pronounced qualities than they do in the radio plays. Celia in "Midsummer Melody" is not simply the travelling journalist of the radio play but Dr. Celia Harrington, an attractive dancer and singer. In "The Loves of Alexandra" the protagonist's mother has not simply left the family for another man but she is "a talented sleeper around," living with her fourth lover. Unlike the radio dramas, the television adaptions tend to emphasize a physical attraction between the couples. The Celia of the television play is torn between a strong attraction for Kennedy and her ambition, while the Kenneth of the television adaption is warmer and somewhat more physically demonstrative than his dour radio counterpart. In both the television adaptions too, more emphasis is placed on emotions; Phillip's statement that "hell is the absence of love" (Alexandra:8) has thematic importance in "The Loves of Alexandra."

Perhaps the most important difference between the original versions and their adaptions is that the radio plays discuss problems which are broader and more controversial. While one of the main themes in "Kennedy's Quest" is the instability of a future which is menaced by the atom bomb, in "Midsummer Melody" the past is seen as a source of inspiration. In "Alexandra's Island" the younger generation feels isolated by a variety of problems; they are aware of the threat

which nuclear proliferation poses, of economic disparity on a world level, and of their own lack of culture, religion, and philosophy. In the "Loves of Alexandra," problems are local; though Phillips makes one reference to economic disparity on a global level (p. 41), the focus of the play is on poverty in the city. Schull not only confronts controversial issues in his radio drama but makes his point of view towards these issues known. While the Celia and Phillips of the radio drama express the author's perspective, this point of view is diffused in the television adaption.

Although it may be said that Schull changed his focus in his television plays, it must also be observed that the ideas voiced in "Midsummer Melody" and "The Loves of Alexandra" do not contradict those found in his radio dramas. It is safe to assume that Schull's social perspective remained steadfast; the author's strong objections to capitalism and nuclear armaments were firmly rooted in his world view. Schull was aware, however, that the medium of television lent itself to emotional concerns rather than intellectual issues. We have seen, for example, that in both "Midsummer Melody" and "The Loves of Alexandra" the romantic aspects of male-female relationships are emphasized; a glamourous visual reality takes precedent over social concerns.

While Schull saw radio as a means through which he could confront existing social conditions he was aware that television did not have this potential. Television favoured the presentation of an idealized reality; it was not a medium through which the author could

directly express his point of view. Schull made use of radio to communicate his social perspective to a large audience. In the last analysis, the author's plays not only reflect contemporary reality but may have had their part in influencing social conditions.

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