IN PURSUIT OF WISDOM

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN THE NOVELS OF ROBERTSTON DAVIES

by

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to the required standard

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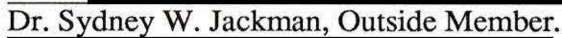

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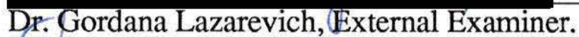

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Robertson Davies' philosophy of education as he presents it in his novels. It focuses specifically on the motifs of the educator and the pupil to be educated, on the nature of Davies' "ideal" education, and on the consequences of such an education. Until now, tremendous attention has been focused on Davies' dominant theme of self-knowledge without recognizing within this theme the notion of the "right" kind of formal education as a key to attaining that self-knowledge. The topic of education has always been an important concern of Davies--an issue on which he has held a consistent view for forty years. In 1942 he wrote that the purpose of education is to make people "interesting"; forty three years later, he again states that the purpose of education is to "make life interesting, and fascinating, and alive...." One might say that the larger purpose of all Davies' novels is to show how the "right" kind of education--his novels being part of that educational process--is designed to illustrate that there is more to life and the individual soul than people think.

The thesis consists of two parts. The first section provides a background of Davies' philosophy of life, of which formal education is a part; it outlines the roots of Davies' philosophy of education; and it gives a summary of his ideas on education as they are presented in his non-fiction. The second part focuses on three integral compenents of education as they are presented in Davies' fiction: the teacher, the student, and the school. Each chapter addresses the effect that poor or good schools, students, and teachers have on gaining insight. The thesis concludes by discussing a pattern of characteristics that Davies believes are essential elements of an ideal education--one which helps the learner gain self-knowledge and insight.

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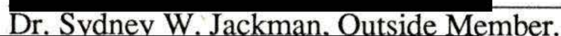

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Diary	The Diary of Samuel Marchbanks
Table	The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks
TT	Tempest Tost
LM	Leaven of Malice
MF	Mixture of Frailties
Voice	A Voice From the Attic
FB	Fifth Business
Man	The Manticore
WW	World of Wonders
OHRD	One Half of Robertson Davies
RA	Rebel Angels
WBB	What's Bred in the Bone
HS	High Spirits
ERD	The Enthusiasms of Robertson Davies
Critic	Robertson Davies: The Well-Tempered Critic
SYP	Shakespeare for Young Players

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In a 1985 radio interview, Robertson Davies stated that the purpose of education "...is to make life interesting and fascinating and alive, and not just to provide you with some rotten technique whereby you can gouge out a living." [1] According to Davies, a person who has been formally educated in the "right way" can think for himself and is equipped, both intellectually and emotionally, to deal with the ordinary and the extraordinary in life. A person who has been formally educated in the "wrong way" knows only enough to "get by" because he was taught only to memorize--to parrot information and imitate ideas. The badly educated person thinks exclusively in terms of forms, facts, and formulae, with no words or ideas of his own; he is barely or rarely capable of creative, spontaneous conversation or emotion.

The concept of an "ideal" formal education is one of the keys to comprehending Davies' general ideology. Until now, tremendous attention has been focused on Davies' dominant theme of "self-knowledge"[2] without recognizing within this theme the notion of the "right" kind of formal education as a key to attaining that self-knowledge. The topic of formal education is narrow and restrictive; nonetheless, it is distinct enough to lend itself to separate analysis, and is demonstrably a significant feature of Davies' concern with living a life with insight and understanding. Such insight simply cannot be achieved without some positive experience of formal education, although a good formal education does not, by itself, guarantee "insight". On the other hand, bad formal education definitely hinders or completely blocks achievement of such insight. If the reader does not understand Davies' philosophy of education, then many of Davies' main points will be

missed. Therefore, the prime objective of this thesis will be to examine the issue of formal education in Robertson Davies' fiction.

Davies presents his philosophy of education throughout his writings. In his non-fiction, Davies gives his reader interesting but overtly didactic pronouncements about education. Each comment is highly specific regarding one aspect of education, and each is pointed, sarcastic, and one-sided. All are valuable observations, but read one after another they become a protracted, albeit amusing, tirade. In his fiction, on the other hand, Davies expresses his ideas about education in a more subtle and sophisticated fashion. His novels are partially designed to examine certain questions. What should schools be like? What constitutes good teaching? What are the qualities of a competent learner? What are the characteristics of an educated man? What is the rationale for education? And what are the principles and organization of an ideal education? In addressing these issues Davies' novels not only provide an extensive examination of the topic of education, they also make it possible for him to work out some of the implications of his ideas. Fictional characters and situations allow him to do more than simply explain how to become educated; they show and teach by example. His nine novels (consisting of the Salterton trilogy, the Deptford trilogy, and the Cornish trilogy) and one volume of ghost stories are replete with private schools, grammar schools, colleges, and universities; in fact, more than half of all his characters are connected to a scholastic environment--either as teachers or students. By manipulating the interplay between these educational elements, Davies exposes the deficiencies of academia which he sees in reality. At the same time he puts forward his own philosophy of teaching and learning by presenting positive educational situations.

Given that this thesis will be confined to a discussion of formal education in Davies' fiction, primary sources will be used almost exclusively. Formal education will be regarded as having three basic components: the teacher, the student, and the school. This three-pronged concept of formal education necessarily excludes certain other educational relationships only because they do not fit the definition of formal education, not because they are intrinsically unimportant. This will require that such "life-educated" or "self-educated" characters as Padre Blazon, Magnus Eisengrim, or Lieslotte Vitzliputzli be left unexamined.

The thesis will have six substantive chapters: the first three introduce Davies as a modern philosopher and outline the base of Davies' educational philosophy as presented in his non-fiction, and the final three are devoted to the integral components of formal education as they are presented in Davies' fiction. The first of these central chapters, Chapter Four, will begin by looking at educational frameworks--institutions, in most cases. This chapter will be the shortest because schools appear in Davies' works as the least influential feature of the educational process and because Davies expresses his educational ideologies primarily through his characters. Chapter Five will offer a succinct discussion about students, who are moderately influential in the process of formal education. They are recipients of the education--in the view of some characters, blank slates; however, in Davies' view, they still have considerable responsibility in the learning process. Davies frequently presents the theme of personal responsibility in his novels (<u>OHRD</u>,p.16); he believes that students are responsible for their own learning--they may not have had profound or superior educational experiences, but what is important is how students have used the experiences they have had. The bulk of the analysis will be concentrated on teachers in Chapter Six. This chapter is vital to the

discussion because the teacher is the pivotal force for the education taking place, for the teacher most often serves as either the stimulator or the inhibitor in the search for self-knowledge.

In each chapter the point of view will be the effect of poor or good institutions, students, and teachers on gaining insight. From these three perspectives the reader will be able to draw some conclusions about Davies' view of great teachers, model students, classroom manner, the nature of schools, and the principles and purposes of higher learning. Also, by looking at these ingredients as they have been presented over the course of eight novels[3], the reader will, it is hoped, be able to gain a clearer view of how Davies' educational themes have remained consistent over the years. No single version of a good or bad formal education will emerge, but rather a pattern of characteristics that Davies believes make up an ideal education--one which helps the learner gain self-knowledge and insight.

CHAPTER 2: Davies As Philosopher of Life

I

Robertson Davies is a philosopher, that is, if one takes literally the Oxford English Dictionary definition of a philosopher as a "lover of wisdom", and as a moralist who studies the "principles of human action" in order to regulate the conduct of his own life.[4] Such a definition is as apt a description of Robertson Davies as is possible, or necessary. A self-confessed moralist--"...I ...[am] ...a moralist; my novels are a moralist's novels" (OHRD, p.16)--Davies deeply believes that "wisdom is the greatest possession" and that "...the good life is lived not widely, but deeply" (OHRD, p.50). Despite Davies' philosophical capacities, his career has been primarily lauded, and justifiably so, for its literary, journalistic, and educational accomplishments; however, this has meant that much of Davies' distinctly philosophical musings have remained unexamined.

Those few examinations which have been undertaken have focused on Davies' philosophical outlook as a whole, but have largely refrained from any detailed exploration of the concomitant parts of that general philosophy. More specifically, tremendous attention has repeatedly been focused on Davies' dominant theme of self-knowledge, without recognizing his belief that such individual forces as religion, art, music, reading, and education in particular are keys to attaining that self-knowledge. In fact, no understanding of Davies' view of life is complete without a clear understanding of his position on the role of formal education in shaping a person's life.

Davies is a modern philosopher with an old world mentality. The only characteristic he has in common with a modern philosopher-guru is the study of man's pursuit for what is best in himself. There the similarities end. Today's guru is truly a "quick change artist"--donning the guise of psychologist, doctor, and writer, all simultaneously, and expanding his original practice to include the offering of advice on coping with stress, succeeding in business, and losing ten pounds in a week. Davies, on the other hand, is like the philosophers of old, donning the cloak of thinker, teacher, and writer whilst continually observing and reflecting on how to nourish the inner self. Davies' authority is not the latest scientific survey but the Latin writings of medieval theologians, astrologers, and alchemists. In many ways, Davies' philosophy is that of an old-fashioned classicist, and yet in many ways it is also very applicable today.

In this age of self-help pamphlets and how-to-books, Davies' <u>One Half of Robertson Davies</u> would not be conspicuous for its lack of a philosophy for living. Published in 1977, <u>One Half of Robertson Davies</u> contains speeches that Davies gave during the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the speeches which reflect Davies' personal philosophy are collected into one section in the book under the title "Giving Advice." Although the audiences for Davies' words of wisdom are various--students, university people, professionals, and lately the general readership--Davies' theme remains the same: how to develop and maintain a sense of the self in a world where specialization and "sloth"--the "Deadliest Sin" in his opinion (<u>OHRD</u>, p.64)--threaten to destroy the individual self. Life in an "age of specialization" holds two dangers, the first of which, Davies cautions, is a consuming professional life. (<u>OHRD</u>, p.34)

> The more thoroughly and committedly you become a professional person, the greater is the danger that you will cease to be a private person....far too many people have become so identified with their public life and their public role that they have lost sight of the private person that they must also be. The public figure is a giant: the private person is a dwarf. (OHRD, p.71)

The second and ultimate hazard of modern specialization lies in the total subjugation of the private person to the professional persona.

> We meet specialists, not people. We meet people who know all the answers except the answer to the most important of all questions: Who am I? (OHRD, p.73)

Losing interest in ourselves and the important things in life represents great danger. People such as these, Davies says, are victims of "spiritual sloth"; they may be clever, sophisticated people, but they are dead "to joy and pain, and thus to feeling"; they are "the wet blankets of life" (OHRD, p.65).

To aid people in their struggle against sloth--also "one of the great battles of life"--Davies offers some "practical advice" (OHRD, p.66): to the young female students of Bishop Strachan School he says, "Forget happiness, and pin your hopes on understanding." And you gain understanding, he continues, through personal reflection,

> ...[by setting] aside one hour of your life everyday for yourself, in which you attempt to understand what you are doing. (OHRD, p.51)

Davies charges university people, in whom he assumes the "mind is more prominent...than is feeling, ...not to lose [their] capacity to feel" (OHRD, p.66). To professionals, he preaches "an intelligent regard for the preservation and nourishment of the Self--not the professional self but the human being who lurks in all of us...." (OHRD,

p.73) For those people in the helping professions, Davies has this recommendation:

> ...the best thing you can do for mankind is to devote your best energies to making the best possible job of yourself; then you will have something to give mankind that will rouse its attention. (OHRD, p.74)

To his fellow graduates at Queens convocation ceremonies in 1962, Davies counsels special regard for the medieval saying: *Time Jesum transeuntem et non revertentem*--roughly translated as meaning: seize "great revelations" when ever you can because they "will not come again" (OHRD, p.68). Davies concludes this speech by exhorting the student body not to disregard the vital connection between inner freedom and education:

> Don't accept your B.A. as if it were one more padlock on the inmost chamber of your heart. Education, if it is real and not a sham, is a releasing, not an imprisoning, thing. If you wish it to be so, the achievement of your degree is a step toward a new freedom. What is the word in your heart as you accept your diploma? Is it No--or is it Yes? (OHRD, p.68)

You must say "yes" to freedom, to knowledge, and thus to happiness, Davies instructs the University of Calgary's 1972 graduating class. For encouragement he quotes another Latin phrase--this time about courage: *Volentem ducit nolentem trahit*.. You must, Davies tells his audiences, have the courage to seek understanding and to improve your soul, for "if you don't", he warns, "you will be dead, dead in every important way, [and it will be] many a weary year before you are buried" (OHRD, p.71).

II

Like any other young apprentice, Davies learned his philosophy from a master teacher, only in Davies' case his ideas on life in general, and education in particular, came from at least three noteworthy mentors. The seeds of his quest for wisdom and inner happiness have part of their origin in the writings of the philosopher-professor George Santayana, a man who in Davies' eyes "knew the taste of wisdom" (ERD, p.43). In an article devoted to Santayana in Saturday Night in 1953, Davies attached much significance to these lines written by Santayana:

> O World, thou choosest not the better part
> It is not wisdom to be only wise
> And on the inward vision close the eyes,
> But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
> (ERD, p.44)

These words and the following ones, Davies says, express Santayana's approach to living: "...the educated heart, the heart chastened by self-knowledge and knowledge of the world, might alone be safely heeded." On being happy, Davies also quotes Santayana as saying "Happiness is the only sanction of life; where happiness fails existence remains a mad and lamentable experiment" (ERD, p.44). Clearly, Santayana is suggesting that a person do exactly what his or her own heart suggests--without any heed to what others think or to what convention dictates; so if what makes one happy is to forgo a home, a family, a traditional nine-to-five career, and material and financial success and have, instead, a life of many friends, relaxation, study, and travel--then one should listen to his heart. The fact that Santayana led this non-conventional life--living according to his own beliefs--is one of the reasons why Davies obviously admires him. The fact that Davies

believes Santayana achieved the wisdom and inner serenity that he was seeking is, perhaps, an even greater reason why Santayana made such a lasting mark on Davies' personal life and on his writing career.[5]

Of course, to follow one's own inclinations requires inner strength and knowledge of one's own self. This self-knowledge that Santayana only hinted at is reinforced in Davies by the ideas of Carl Jung, a man whom Davies believes was not only "one of the most widely learned men in the world," but also "one of the great men of our time" (ERD, p.177). In his 1958 review of Jung's book The Undiscovered Self, Davies goes to great lengths to outline Jung's belief that Western man has failed "...to develop and integrate his whole being to the uttermost" (ERD, p.175). According to Jung, the failure has come about because the individual has been subjugated to the state in the interests of collective security; ironically, however, "...this subjection is in itself a danger to the state, because no state is better than the individuals who compose it, and the resignation of individual responsibility to the state is an abdication of man's most serious duty..." (ERD, p.174). At this point Davies cannot resist a long quotation from Jung's book:

> Ultimately everything depends on the quality of the individual, but the fatally short-sighted habit of our age is to think only in terms of large numbers and mass organizations, though one would think that the world had seen more than enough of what a well-disciplined mob can do in the hands of a single madman...I can therefore see it only as a delusion when the Churches try--as they apparently do--to rope the individual into a social organization and reduce him to a condition of diminished responsibility, instead of raising him out of the torpid, mindless mass, and making clear to him that he is the one important factor and that the salvation of the world consists in the salvation of the individual soul. (ERD, p.175)

Davies undoubtedly feels a special affinity for Jung. In the afore-mentioned review

Davies states that Jung's "...word[s] of wisdom to Western man, [point] to what I ...believe to be the chief failure and disease of our civilization" (ERD, p.177). Not surprisingly, then, the Jungian search for the self becomes a dominant theme in all of Davies' novels, particularly in the Deptford trilogy.

In addition to Jung's concern about self-knowledge, his reliance on eastern philosophies and his interest in the "medieval study of alchemy" also add to Davies' already growing interest in these subjects. The profound regard that Davies holds for Jung can be found in the final lines of his review when he encourages a reading of The Undiscovered Self because "Jung is the reality of that Wise Teacher" (ERD, p.177).

Of all his mentors, Stephen Leacock had perhaps the greatest influence on Davies. Leacock's classical training was one trait that Davies particularly admired. Leacock "knew how to think" and could write with simplicity and "elegance" (OHRD, p.39)--qualities which Davies believes are the product of a properly constituted formal education. Another endearing trait was Leacock's sense of humour; to thousands in the academic world he was known as "The Funny Professor". This held much significance for Davies who said of Leacock:

> He was the bearer of a distinction of a kind which is little understood: he was a humorist, and by that I mean that he was a man who saw life always in terms of a special temperament. (OHRD, p.37)

Davies and Leacock were kindred spirits especially with regard to their philosophies of education. Davies could have been speaking of himself when he said: "Some of Leacock's best writing was about education, and it has sometimes been overlooked

because of his great general popularity" (OHRD, p.40). As well, his comment that Leacock's "ideas about the subject [of education] are a serious mingling of what is old-fashioned with what is still ahead of our time..." (OHRD, p.40) could easily apply to himself.

Undoubtedly, Stephen Leacock was able to confirm many of the ideas on education that had been growing in Davies' mind. One important belief they both shared was that the purpose of education is self-knowledge, not commercial success. Davies repeatedly expresses this sentiment in his writings and at ceremonies; for example, at a memorial for Stephen Leacock at McGill University's 150th Anniversary in 1971, Davies quotes Leacock as saying: "Learning [is] not supposed to be of any material or commercial benefit to anybody; its use [is] in saving the soul and enlarging the mind" (OHRD, p.41). By saving one's soul, Davies explains, Leacock did not mean university graduates would be converted to Christianity. Rather,

> Leacock was talking about becoming a man, and arriving at the latter part of life with a sense of having understood, and partaken of, and contributed to, many of the aspects of life one had encountered on the journey. That was saving one's soul to him, for he seems not have been a formally religious man, and his thought about the deepest aspects of life was stoical and humanistic. He thought that enlarging one's mind was the best way to make sure one did not lose one's way on the journey through life, because the more one knew the better one was armoured against surprise and vicissitude, and the more one knew about a few things the more one was likely to understand about all things. Leacock was convinced in the old classical fashion that education is to make good men.... (OHRD, pp.41-42)

Another common point of thought between these two men occurs on the subject of education and women. Davies believes that Leacock was very progressive in his idea

about the unsuitability of higher modern education for women.

> He thought women were out of place in a university that offered an education shaped by centuries for the development of men, but he also asks the question, which has never yet been satisfactorily answered, why women should not have advanced education rooted in their own needs, and shaped at every point to meet the demands of their own kind of intellect? (OHRD, p.40)

Compare that passage with Davies' 1958 review of Mr. Olim and The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. One of the main points of these two books, Davies writes, is that "boys unquestionably respond to education differently from girls, and that perhaps it is a mistake to educate them together" (OHRD, p.203). That is not to suggest that Davies does not like women, or believe they cannot learn what men can; on the contrary, he once said "I have a very high regard for women. I am very fond of women. I admire them, and think they have extraordinary qualities which are not at all like the predominant male qualities" (OHRD, p.310) Davies ends his book review with a straightforward and simple opinion that will later be borne out in his novels: "Men can learn from teachers; women seem to prefer to learn from life" (OHRD, p.204).

One final idea which both Leacock and Davies share is that of congenial tutorship in education. Leacock, Davies writes, "believed in education by the most personal kind of intellectual contact between the teacher and the taught" (OHRD, p.42). And to prove his assertion Davies quotes Leacock on the learning relationship between the tutor and learner as it is practised at Oxford:

> The key to this mystery is found in the operations of the person called the tutor. It is from him, or rather with him, that the students learn all that they know; one and all are agreed on that. Yet it is a little odd to know just how he does it. 'We go over to his rooms,' said one student,' and he simply smokes and goes

> over our exercises with us.' From this and other evidence I gather that what an Oxford tutor does is get a little group of students together and smoke at them. Men who have been systematically smoked at for four years turn into ripe scholars. If anybody doubts this, let him go to Oxford and he can see the thing actually in operation. A well-smoked man speaks and writes English with a grace that can be acquired in no other way. (OHRD, p.42)

Robertson Davies does not smoke at his students, but he does advocate the sharing of food and conviviality between students and teachers. Speaking of Massey College where he was Master for twenty years, Davies proudly states that "...we made it a centre of hospitality."

> I think hospitality is a part of the very life-blood of a university. If students don't get a chance to meet the faculty and older people on pleasant terms, the university hasn't done part of its job. If they only meet in the classroom, that's not good enough....This is one of the things I learned at Oxford...that to get to meet your professors and celebrated scholars on social terms is very rewarding because they are usually very genial and pleasant people. And it's good to meet them that way and find out what a learned man is really like out of the classroom...he's probably a charming person..... This is terribly important....[6]

And to emphasize his belief in the importance of hospitality, Davies, in his novels, makes the most successful learning experiences occur in those relationships in which the teacher and student are close.

Over the forty years that Davies has been writing, his philosophy on life and education has been evolving and maturing with the help of people he has met along the way. Santayana, Jung, and Leacock are just three in his personal realm who appear to have had lasting effects on his philosophy and his writing. Traces of their philosophies--the rejection of specialization and commercialization in learning, the pursuit of wisdom, understanding, and self-knowledge, and the perpetuation of qualities of a

good formal education (a sense of humour, the ability to think and write with classic simplicity and elegance, and the human bond between teacher and pupil)--are all common themes in Davies' non-fiction, and they are all dramatically expressed in his fiction.

III

Before moving to an analysis of specific educational themes in Davies' writing, it will be helpful first to return to this paper's opening quotation from Davies's 1985 conversation on CBC which not only succinctly summarizes his philosophy of education, but also contains important implications of which the reader must be made aware. One will recall that in that interview Davies said that the purpose of education:

> . . . is to make life interesting and fascinating and alive, and not just to provide you with some rotten technique whereby you can gouge [out] a living. . .

Quite clearly, the initial inference of this statement is that differing perspectives on the purpose of education have splintered society's attitude and approach to learning, which consequently, have split the very nature of education into two main types. The first type is the liberal humanistic education, which stresses learning for its own sake; it aims to increase the *quality* of the learner's life--to ". . . make life interesting and fascinating and alive. . . ." The second type, that which society generally conceives of as *useful* education, stresses skill acquisition for future employment; it aims to increase the marketability of the learner's skills--merely providing, as Davies says, ". . . rotten technique[s] whereby [one] can gouge [out] a living. . .." Both of these educational theories purport to do the same thing, but the nature of their instruction, Davies infers, is radically different. The first splinter teaches the art of living, while the second splinter only teaches existence. And whereas the ability to reason, judge, and communicate effectively are of primary importance in the first, they are severely undervalued in the second. Despite the obvious inequalities between the two kinds of education, much of society generally regards the first as a frill and the second as essential in the modern world;

given the choice between a general humanities/generalist education and useful/vocational training, society feels compelled by a progressively industrial and materialistic world to choose the latter. Robertson Davies would make a different choice; in fact, judging from his remark that education should provide "not just" one thing or another, but a combination of qualities, he would contend that a choice should not even be necessary, if only people understood the true value and nature of an education in the humanities.

An education in the humanities, Davies argues, teaches the learner the most fundamental lesson of all--how to be fully human. In his usual way, Davies might also remind us that the word "humanities" derives from the latin "humanitas," meaning secular learning or literature concerned with the quality of being human: human culture, human affairs, and human nature. It is this focus on the total human condition which makes the study of the humanities a holistic education, an education which instructs in how to survive as well as in how to live, an education which equips the learner with the intellectual and emotional skills to deal with the ordinary as well as the extraordinary aspects of life as a human being. In this belief, Davies finds an ally in the eminent educational philosopher Michael Oakeshott:

> Education is not learning to do this or that more proficiently; it is acquiring in some measure an understanding of a human condition in which the 'fact of life' is continuously illuminated by a 'quality of life'.[7]

Defining the "human condition" is rather problematical, but the definition attempted by Oakeshott is helpful in this context:

> . . . a human being is the inhabitant of a world composed, not of 'things', but of meanings; that is, of occurrences in some manner recognized, identified, understood and responded to in

> terms of this understanding. It is a world of sentiments and beliefs, and it includes also human artefacts [sic] (such as books, pictures, musical compositions, tools and utensils) for these, also are 'expressions' which have meanings and which require to be understood in order to be used or enjoyed. To be without this understanding is to be, not a human being, but a stranger to the human condition. [8]

For Davies and Oakeshott, then, an education that provides a certain kind of wisdom and understanding regarding the human condition, and not merely training in the facts of life, improves the quality of one's life and makes one more human.

At the same time as providing perspectives on life, an education in the humanities also provides the student with useful career skills. That is not to say that the study of general arts such as music, philosophy, art, and literature can themselves lead directly to employment (in related fields) as is generally the case with learning practical, specialized subjects such as commerce, computer processing, medicine, or law. Rather, the attributes and skills necessary to being successful in such humanistic study leave the learner with residual abilities that are eminently useful in the external world. This is not merely the idle wish of ivory tower academics, but is the firm belief of many successful executives in the business community.

Adam Zimmerman, president and chief operating officer of Noranda Inc., and a philosophy graduate of the University of Toronto, is convinced of the ability of the humanities graduate to function in the private sector. Students studying the humanities, he says, learn qualities that are vital to success: "the ability to communicate, self discipline, [and] the development of intellectual skills." Most important, general arts students are encouraged to explore the "world of ideas"; philosophy--"the true mind expander,"

Zimmerman says, keeps one from becoming narrow minded; it is also the university major that he recommends to would-be business executives.

> I think it teaches you how to learn, how to use intellectual resources. You learn about reasoning and thought and also self-expression. [9]

Mr. Zimmerman is his own best example, attributing "much of his success to his generalized, non-vocational education."

A poll of many heads of businesses by the University and College Placement Association found a similar sentiment. Research indicated that

> Those with B.A. degrees ranked third among those sought by employers, after engineers and business students with bachelors' degrees. B.A.'s [sic] ranked above degrees in computer science, agriculture, forestry, and Masters in Business Administration. [10]

Employers want a B.A. graduate rather than a person with specialized education because someone with such an general education is more likely to be able to think critically, be creative, feel at peace with himself, and feel fulfilled with his life --- all of which makes for a more contented and versatile worker. Clearly then, education as Davies, Oakeshott, or Zimmerman might conceive it, is meant to serve a purpose quite removed from the pursuit of gainful employment. And if properly conceived, secondary effects of proper humanistic education leave the learner not only with a greater self-awareness but also an awareness of how to function productively in society.

Thus, we see that Davies' short statement about education in that CBC interview contains more than just a philosophy of education; it also contains the crux of his philosophy of life: a life of utility may be necessary, but a fulfilling life should be one's

ultimate aim. Providing this fulfillment is the supreme goal of Davies' ideal education.

Chapter 3: Davies' Philosophy of Education in his Non-Fiction

Of course, one cannot safely read into a single statement in a radio interview Davies' entire philosophy of personal enlightenment without searching his writings for support. Luckily, this does not pose a problem because Davies presents his philosophy of education throughout his writings. In his non-fiction innumerable didactic statements on learning appear in a variety of newspaper columns, reviews, and essays. The best of these can be found in four books of collected writings: A Well Tempered Critic (book reviews from the 1940s and 1950s), A Voice From the Attic (essays on reading and literature from the 1960s), One Half of Robertson Davies (speeches from the 1960s and 1970s), and The Enthusiasms of Robertson Davies (more reviews and essays from the 1940s to the 1970s). Two other sources of valuable authorial statements on education are The Diary of Samuel Marchbanks (1947) and The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks (1949). These are a series of eclectic essays that Davies wrote under the pseudonym of Samuel Marchbanks. Even though Marchbanks is a fictional character, and therefore, strictly speaking, his little pieces are fiction, it has been generally accepted that Marchbanks was a character through whom Davies could express opinions in such a manner that, at the time, would have been deemed unsuitable if printed under his own name as that of the then editor of the Peterborough Examiner. If one subscribes to this interpretation, the Marchbanks series can be included in the non-fiction category.

Robertson Davies' philosophy of education follows a consistent pattern in both his fiction and his non-fiction. The best introduction to Davies' views on formal education

begins, though, with an outline of this topic in his non-fiction. The rationale for this approach is twofold. First, the very nature of non-fiction makes it obvious that Robertson Davies is the speaker, and that the opinions, thoughts, and beliefs which are presented are his. Second, by first sampling Davies' non-fiction for his reflections on teaching and learning, a set of patterns, themes, and images becomes obvious. This core of educational concepts--which we know are those of Robertson Davies--can then be used to help identify the same patterns and themes in Davies' fiction and, at the same time, to provide assurance that the narrator speaks for his creator.

As noted, in Davies' view, formal education has been divided by the opposing forces of commercialism and humanism into bad and good formal education. This notion has its initial expression in his early endeavours in newspaper and magazine writing. As a young journalist, in the early 1940s, Davies often expressed his belief that modern education as practised in Canada at the time was severely malnourished in the humanities; he reasoned that there were two reasons for this malaise. Writing for the Peterborough Examiner in 1942, he partly attributes the ailment in the Canadian educational system to a historical birth defect--a sort of spiritual anaemia, passed on by the mother nation:

> Canada...had a difficult birth in the nineteenth century, and was forced to begin life in an era of almost unchecked materialism, without the background of a pastoral age to serve as a brake upon the dizzy speed of 'progress'. As a result our country has advanced most satisfactorily in the realm of commerce without any corresponding development in the realm of thought or the arts. Individuals have done their best, but the country as a whole has lagged, and spiritually we are still in the nineteenth century. (View, p. 154)

Later, in 1947, Davies states more bluntly that the poor health of Canadian education was also partially self-induced--educators were complacent about change. The fact of the matter, he said, is that " Canada cares too little about real education" (Diary, p.155).

Over the next forty years, defining the nature of this "real education" becomes a constant pre-occupation in Davies' writings. He highlights his conception of good education through contrast--by examining its spiritual opposite, poor formal education, documenting the consequences of an educational system that over emphasizes "scientific observation", "materialism", "progress", and "commerce" and under- values "thoughts or arts." Davies manages to expose poor education with humour and sarcasm and finds the perfect vehicle in his creation of a caustic diarist named Samuel Marchbanks. In the Diary of Samuel Marchbanks and The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks, Marchbanks becomes Robertson Davies' mouthpiece on education. He utters many of Davies' ideas, including the very basic notion that formal education has been reduced to raw economics; teacher, student, and knowledge are now seen as producer, consumer, and product. An over-emphasis on technology and science has become an unnatural and conservative trend in education that Marchbanks fears will never end.

In some of his diary entries Marchbanks takes a light-hearted approach in his ridicule of the unduly prominent position that science and "objective" knowledge currently hold in the educational engagement. For example, on hearing a Canadian educator say that "no one should consider himself educated unless he has some knowledge of science," Marchbanks wonders if he is educated "by this standard".

> As a schoolboy I failed with monotonous regularity in chemistry....My present knowledge of science is not profound; when a car will not go I know enough to say 'Dirt in the gas-line' in a weighty manner, and I can replace a fuse, if goaded to it. I also know that the pressure of the atmosphere on my body is 14 pounds to the square inch (or is it an ounce to every fourteen pounds of body?) All I know about atoms is that they are teeny-weeny. Does this make me educated? Don't answer. (Table, p.219)

In the majority of his journal entries, however, Marchbanks lashes out with scathing sarcasm at the process of learning and teaching which has been reduced to an economic system. Both teacher and student rush to consume the latest "brand-name" knowledge--a sort of artificial, standardized, mass-produced product that changes constantly to suit the demands of the marketplace. In a rather unappetizing image, Marchbanks speaks of teachers at summer schools--factories--"stoking themselves with knowledge which they will disgorge [to students] next autumn" (Table, p.124). The majority of teachers, he implies, do not even bother to digest the knowledge they have consumed before regurgitating it; and those few teachers who do indulge themselves by "reading and thinking" about what they have consumed are foolishly regarded as "mad eccentrics" (Table p.124). Even students are not spared Marchbanks' criticism: they too, swallow without tasting and therefore without understanding. They greedily gobble up all the lists, equations, and vocabulary--victims "to the delusion that the more words [and facts] they know the more valuable their opinions will be" (Table, p.188). Marchbanks brands this kind of desire for knowledge and the anxiousness to go to school as "unnatural affection" (Table, p.21), and he half jokingly, half seriously, accuses the Minister of Education of putting a "love philtre" in the school drinking fountains (Table, p.22).

"Primitive" and "unnatural" are states of being which seem to obsess Marchbanks when talking about the relationship between student, teacher, and the modern system of education. For instance, in another outrageous feeding image, Marchbanks describes teachers during the summer holidays as "...cannibals during a shortage of missionaries" (TT, p.124). There are implications of this image: first, instead of civilizing teachers the education system dehumanizes them; and second, and most disheartening, the students who, with their God-like innocence and enthusiasm, have the potential to convert the drone-like teachers, instead themselves finish by being converted to "doldrum" and drabdom (Table, p.175)--eaten alive with all their originality trained and instructed out of them. They are consumers consumed by their own desire to consume. The educational world which worships technology and commerce is almost like a religious cult which catches both student and teacher. The teachers are "slaves" to the education system, and the students are the young converts with their "blank faces empty of charm, distinction, beauty or meaning of any kind..." (Table, p.35).

Marchbanks also bemoans the fact that the spirit of inquiry has almost been totally replaced by the unquestioning adherance to cant in education. Together with the economic, cannibalistic, and cult aspects of education, cant leaves an individual intellectually and spiritually dull, desireless, and devoid of joy. The process of this degenerative disease begins early: kindergarten children are miniature "Tories...perpetuating the same old nonsense from generation to generation" (Table, p.28); as university students, they write "...disillusioned verses...about the deceit and bitterness of life" (Table, p.214); and when

full grown, they are the "curses of the world"--"young fogies...who, at thirty are well content with beaten paths and reach-me-down opinions. Their very conservatism is second-hand, and they don't know what they are conserving" (Table, p.118).

Can such intellectual sterility be avoided? On the one hand, Marchbanks jokingly confesses that "Sometimes I think it is better to let people wallow in their ignorance; to Know Better is a sure way to offend." To support his assertion he provides another unflattering anecdote about schoolteachers:

> I well recall when I was about eight years old correcting a schoolteacher who called the Cambrian Hills "the Caymbrian Hills." I was right and she was wrong, but I was not smart enough in those days to know that the errors of Authority should be pointed out and enjoyed on the sly, and not in public. She hated me for the rest of the year that I was in her class....Yes, indeed,...it is a fatal mistake to attempt to further the education of a professional educator (Table, pp.183-4).

But, on a more serious note, Marchbanks also seems to suggest that the current educational environment will not help in the development of human character--at least not the materialistic and technological education of the twentieth century. In fact, personal enlightenment often depends less on formal education and more on the influence of one's individual character.

> ...education does not really alter character, but merely intensifies it, making foolish people more foolish, superstitious people more superstitious, and of course, wise people wiser. But the wise are few and lonely. (Table, p.103)

In addition to being worried about the materialistic and technological slant of Canadian education, Davies is also very concerned with what he calls "Dry Scholarship" in Canadian education and its effect on the nation's arts. Without a humanities background, Davies perceives that higher Canadian education has become overly scholastic and unimaginative. And when Davies detects these same symptoms in Canadian literature, he lays the blame on the source of most Canadian writing: the people in the universities, the professors, the Canadian educators (View, p.145). In the 1941 and 1942 reviews of Letters in Canada: 1940 and Contemporary Verse: A Canadian Quarterly, Davies criticizes the "unpassionate and unimaginative educationists..." (View, p.146) for writing verse that is "intellectual," "remote from life," "obtuse," and "over-refined" (View, p.151-2)--in a word, boring. In the forties, Davies is not optimistic about the future of Canadian artistic endeavours, maintaining that "...imagination does not flourish in an academic atmosphere [where] convention and rules are enemies of great inspiration" (View, p. 145-146).

Indeed, Davies' pessimism becomes even more resolute over the next twenty years. He maintains that higher Canadian education is barren, questionable, and suffering from what he calls "end-gaining." The problem with the Canadian approach to intellectual activity, he says, is that...

> ...we think of learning in terms of the snail-like progress towards the Ph.D., and the selection of a "field" or area of learning, in which the Ph.D. seeks to make a name. Having found his field he cultivates it with jealous care, elbowing and jostling all the other zealous husbandmen who are in it, until he is at last rewarded as "a big man in the James field" or even "*the* man in the Borrow field." (View, p.190)

It is not that the subjects are themselves not valuable, but just that the scholarship has limited appeal to the general public. Davies observes

> Professors are happily able to live for generations by taking in each others' intellectual washing, but the books they write are not literature; they are works of scholarship, and they are growing duller and duller. (View, p.190)

Not only is this academic approach dull, but its emphasis on attaining an end product, either a Ph.D. or some other certification, makes it, in Davies' mind, "one of the curses of our nervously tense, intellectually flabby civilization" (Voice, p.9).

In contrast, the humanities education that Davies advocates has three distinguishing characteristics. First, it should follow the classical tradition of providing a well-rounded education. For Davies this means learning the humanities along with the sciences. In a passing remark about the high standards set in English schools, Davies wonders if Canadian high school students also have to learn about the art and literature of the Pre-Raphaelites. "It is not vital that they should do so," he says, "life can be lived quite adequately without any such knowledge." But if one wants to live more than just an adequate life, this kind of knowledge gives it more profound meaning. The art of the Pre-Raphaelites, Davies says

> ...is part of general knowledge--of that loose mass of history, literature, art, music, architecture, science, and philosophy which everyone calling himself an educated person should possess . . some smattering--and it is the scope of our general knowledge which gives flavour to life for most of us. (View, p.192)

Poetry, painting, music, myths etc., from any era, reveal a great deal about human

transactions in the past and in the present. However, in order for these human experiences to be communicated, and to have meaning for the learner, time and effort must be spent studying the arts. Unfortunately, this approach to learning is uncommon in modern times. The kind of inquiry Davies recommends takes an effort that most people are not willing to expend--they want pat answers now.

> It very often seems that the great stream of humanism which began to flow at the Renaissance has run dry, or has become bitter to the taste; or it could be that humanism demands a continued intellectual effort on the part of its followers which is too taxing for the lovers of dogma. (View, p.194)

Second, education should be fun. Just because Davies favours an educational style which requires the learner to think, feel, and listen to his own mind and heart does not mean that he is advocating that education has to be boringly serious. Quite the contrary. As evidence he recounts with admiration the story about Principal Hamilton Fyfe who, when he found Queens in the "intellectual doldrums," "...gave it a thorough stirring up....":

> ...[making] staff and undergraduates realize that a university is expected to be a place of intellectual activity, and that seriousness does not necessarily involve dullness. (View, p. 198)

In fact, intellectual activity should contain some levity, some humour. It saddens him that in this country, "The scholarly approach, united to the merry heart, is a great rarity among us" (View, 190). While reminiscing in 1977, Davies reflects that when he first became a University professor teachers who were "Hams" were denounced as "charlatans" in the academic world. And yet, he says there has always been room for a modest charlatan in school:

> Better the charlatan you can hear than the sincere scholar who lulls you to sleep with a sound like the moan of doves in immemorial elms. My own education was prolonged and various, and my best professors were all hams. (OHRD, p.11)

In fact, today the trend is for funny professors; it is a survival skill in this media-dominated world for teachers to be entertainers as well as educators. It is a skill that, as the following comment shows, makes Davies happy, and yet uneasy.

> Nowadays, of course, all professors are funny; it has been made clear to them that if they are not amusing, their students will not become involved with what they are teaching, and a professor whose students are not involved is man in deep and irremediable disgrace. Nowadays the only professors permitted to be wholly serious are those so eminent that they have become, in effect, walking monuments to their own intellectual splendour. So professors are funny, and not only their students, but the whole world, knows it. (View, pp. 31-32)

Davies feels that modest levity in scholarship is what is needed, and he has even coined a name for it: "Light-hearted Scholarship". But he is very serious when he asks where in Canada this "almost unknown" branch of learning--Light-hearted Scholarship--can be found.

> We have our learned men, of course....But where are our scholars in the tradition of Rabelais? Where are the men who cultivate learning, not for livelihood and in the hope of a university chair, but for the glory of God and for the entertainment of themselves and, incidentally, for the amusement and instruction of mankind? (View, p.190)

Not surprisingly, the third characteristic of Davies' humanities education is that it must be geared to an intelligent audience, not the lowest common denominator and not necessarily the future hyper-specialized academic. In his own words, "Light-hearted

Scholarship...is of general interest and it appeals to a person neglected in Canada, the Intelligent General Reader." As early as 1953, the Intelligent General Reader takes on primary significance in Davies' world of learning and literature.

> The I.G.R., I maintain, is the foundation stone upon which any great national literature is built. (View, p.19)

In his writing years later, the I.G.R. takes on a new name and another duty. Davies wrote A Voice From the Attic for the Clerisy, people who, Davies says, "like to read" (Voice, p.6) and "who read for pleasure and with some pretension to taste" (Voice, p.7). On these qualifications, Davies calls on the I.G.R., now also known as the Clerisy, to help him "counteract the lumpishness of North American education" (Voice, p.39).

CHAPTER 4: Schools and Institutions

In an attempt to develop a fast-paced plot and interesting characters, many writers neglect the importance of setting. This is certainly not true of Robertson Davies. When Davies writes about the moral and intellectual tribulations of his fictional scholars, he pays special attention to providing authentic, academic surroundings in which they function. Among the various school settings which appear in his books are a Sunday school, a normal school, a "stinky" kindergarten, a boarding school which *releases* its inmates like a prison (TT, p.14), a military college which "cleverly invests its merry-making" with traditional "smartness and social distinction" (TT, p.199), a variety of public and private schools, as well as several colleges and universities. There are even two elaborate examples of one of the oldest forms of an educational institution, the apprenticeship, even though the learning does not take place in a traditional school building. Davies' attention to the details of a scholastic environment partially reflects a storyteller of great skill, but it also reflects an educational philosopher who believes that education includes more than just teachers, students, and the curriculum. Not to be overlooked or undervalued is the setting--the school or physical plant where the action--the learning--takes place. And everything that goes into creating a school's atmosphere--its architecture, administration, educational philosophy, even its geographical location--reflects the spirit of learning taking place inside. For this reason, the school in Davies' novels becomes almost as important as the teacher or student in the educational process.

The most immediate and visible statement about any school is its architecture. On this

subject, as on others, Davies has the tastes of a connoiseur. Naturally offensive to his discriminating eye are forgeries and impostors--in particular, Canadian school buildings which masquerade as nineteenth century European schools. These imitative structures, Davies observes, are the result of the disagreeable practice of many early Canadian school builders of blatantly copying the styles and materials of old world architecture. In his first novel, Tempest Tost, a prime example of this sort of duplication presents itself in the architectural form of Waverley University.

> The University had the misfortune to do most of its building during that long Victorian period when architects strove like Titans to reverse all laws of seemliness and probability and when what had been done in England was repeated, clumsily and a quarter of a century later, in Canada. [The University's]...first builders...disregarded the character of the local stone and permitted themselves an orgy of campaniles, baroque staircases, Norman arches, Moorish peepholes and bits of grisly Scottish *chinoiserie* and *bondiewerie*.... (TT, p. 10-11)

At a glance, Waverley bears a slight resemblance to those classic Victorian schools representing good taste and civilization. One envisions the thoroughly respectable and upper-class type of education typically available during the heyday of Victorian England--an impression which, of course, the university's early physical designs are meant to convey. The buildings themselves--their age and composition--stand as proud monuments to English traditions and styles. But on closer inspection, as Davies astutely implies, these older sections of Waverley are just an ill-proportioned hodge podge of styles derived from a long past culture--a culture that some Canadian hometowns, like Salterton, have retained too long.

As artistically distressing as replications of this sort are, what disturbs Davies even more are the typically Canadian attitudes which they reflect. Saltertonians, with their

English style university (as well as courthouse, military college, prison and cathedral all in the same mode), obviously "enjoy a consciousness of past glories" (TT, p.10). Sadly, however, this consuming pride for their colonial history further suggests that many Canadians are more concerned with what they were than with what they could be. And finally, hidden deep within this concern lies the great Canadian fear: that in comparison to England and the United States, Canada is inferior in artistic matters. Constantly faced with the threat of losing their identity in the shadows of two such giants, Canadians attempt to preserve themselves by politely recreating past European models. Unfortunately, the results are often deceptively shallow; they have the "look" but not the "feel." In the end, this copying often ends in cheap imitation (Diary, p.29).

In addition to those early school buildings which despite their meretriciousness still look artificial and hollow, the other types of school buildings which disgust the aesthete in Davies are those that are actually designed to look sterile and artificial; however, modern architects do not use words like "sterile" and "artificial," but prefer, instead, terms like "economical" and "functional," a choice which certainly does not endear them to the liberal humanist in Davies. In fact, a number of the trendier learning facilities in Davies' novels are subjected to the full extent of his criticism for their grudging use of space and style which, he believes, makes them resemble impersonal factories on the outside and which hints at a narrow malignity on the inside.

Davies has always maintained that while most modern school designs fulfill the economic need for cheap yet well-designed facilities, they do not fulfill the human need for physical or emotional accoutrements that might encourage creativity, independence, or even happiness. In fact, to his way of thinking, a lot of contemporary architecture creates

an atmosphere that not only constrains its occupants but also dehumanizes them. Its muzzling effects are unhesistantly criticized by Marchbanks who, in 1949, grumbles that "...most modern housing would be better called kenneling" (Table, p.116). Two years later in Tempest Tost, Davies makes passing references to buildings built with "grimaces", bad taste, and exaggerated proportions (TT, p.11). But, more important, in the same book he also points out one particular image that he will return to again and again--that of educational establishments (usually universities) which appear less like schools full of emotive, inquiring human minds in pursuit of knowledge, and more like impersonal factories full of workers being trained for the needs of society. An example of such a place is that part of Waverley University whose modern renovations Davies describes as "...stone warehouses unfriendly towards humanism" (TT, pp.10-11). This phrase personifies the school as being steadfastly aloof and impermeable to the emotions of its human occupants. Taking these images together, one gets the impression that many of these high-tech buildings are not just ugly on the outside, but that they also harbor a malevolent, misanthropic spirit on the inside. Thirty years later nothing changes--neither Davies' artistic opinion nor, it would seem, school architecture. From his tower room overlooking "Spook" College, Simon Darcourt, the scholar-priest in Rebel Angels, observes how he hates "...the economical, spiteful mode of university architecture" (RA, p.54).

Not only are exteriors revealing, but the interiors of many schools also provide significant insights into prevalent educational thought. The Salterton trilogy offers several examples of the interior of a study place reflecting, once again, that Canadian reverence for the English past. Returning to Waverley University, specifically to the basement in the library, one discovers that some books on sex and other controversial issues are kept

locked up in a section marked "Permanently Reserved" (LM, p.99). One can hardly be surprised by this when, in the homes of its upper class citizens, " a great many books [also live] in glass and leaden prisons like china in the dining room" (TT, p.45). The imprisonment of books suggests that the keepers are a dull and cautious people who experience little human contact because they themselves are trapped in ceremonious glass houses of the past. Moreveover, the location and limited access to the library books--and thus to ideas--further suggests that architecture is not the only Victorian feature at Waverley. Clearly there are still vestiges of an attempt to recreate an old-fashioned Victorian education--an education in which modesty, respectability, propriety, and decency are paramount, and in which prudish morality also takes precedence over freedom of inquiry. By virtue of its nature, this basement library becomes a "graveyard" (LM, p.73) of knowledge.

In another satirical illustration, this time from a Mixture of Frailties, a Canadian music student, Monica Gall, purposely keeps her London apartment bare because of an idealistic notion that her creativity will be enhanced by indigent conditions reminiscent of the pauperism of such famous artists as Dickens, Trollope, and Mozart. Such romantic fancy provokes Monica's mentor, Sir Benedict, to chastise his protégé for her stupidity.

> You really must shake off these fat-headed nineteenth century notions you have about musicians who starve in garrets, doing immense moral good to the world through the medium of their art....Wealth tends to numb feeling and nibble at talent, but poverty coarsens feeling and chokes talent, and feeling and talent are the important things in your job and mine. (MF, p. 135-137)

Monica's romanticized and distorted concept of learning only affects her physical surroundings, and then just briefly. In contrast, scholasticism of the past shapes the entire

existence of Urquhart McVarish, who is a professor of Renaissance history in Rebel Angels. "Urky" lives a life imitative of the Renaissance scholar, and it is reflected everywhere--in the decor of his home and office, and particularly on his person. He presides in smoking jackets over dinners; he has a particular love for pornography--from the Renaissance era, of course--and he displays erotic items from that epoch to students and faculty to shock them and to delight himself.

However, unlike Monica's calculated omission of aesthetics to create a nostalgic atmosphere of learning, or Urky's elaborate undertakings to reproduce the lifestyle of a Renaissance scholar, most of Davies' modern educational interiors naturally feature elements as parsimonious and practical as their exteriors. Within the school, the students study in cubby holes under the glare of electric lights, write with ball point pens, and queue for the use of the Xerox machines. Everything in the school has a purpose and a price--a price determined by its relevance to a course, or a goal, or a career. Books, for example, are considered expensive by some (MF, p.131), a burden by others (TT, p.34), and not intrinsically worthwhile by even more people. Once a course concludes, these books, if not sold, are to be found in the homes of graduates as part of their meagre libraries--pretentious ornaments of their college days. Even the most commonplace items, such as the containers of refreshment for professorial banquets, are depressingly functional and economical:

> ...ugly modern bottles, with ... disagreeable Government stickers, ... high shoulders, and ... uniformity of shape ... self-righteous airs, as [if] ... they were declaiming: 'We are the support of paved roads, general education and public health; we are the pillars of society.' (HS, p.45)

Inside these modern educational complexes, everything promotes speedy and

competitive consumption of skills and knowledge. In the eyes of some administrators, teachers, parents, students, and especially future employers, universities are perceived as rivers to be fished (RA, p.62). Diplomas in plumbing, nursing, accounting, teaching, hotel management, etc., are dispensed cafeteria style to those "...honeycombs of classrooms, where students are labelled this, that or the other, so that they can get better jobs than their parents" (RA, p.142). Viewed in this light, education becomes an assembly line process, with doors clearly marked "in" and "out". Much to Davies' disgust, the aura of modern convenience and consuming professionalism which surrounds these scholastic edifices reflects not a school but an academic corporation.

Officials and administrators are another powerful indicator of the nature of a particular school. The administration of schools and universities generally rests in the hands of one or more of the following parties: principals, headmasters, boards, parents, governments, the public, and private individuals. These modern proprietors, Davies complains, have a tendency to perceive schools as businesses; they are so often preoccupied with budgets, enrollment figures, staffing requirements, standardized curriculum, job markets, political careers, and even religion that they often lose sight of the school's original purpose: that of providing an education which is in the best interests of the child. Ocassionally, this indifference has little effect on the students, as in the case of Monica Gall, who actually benefits from the less than altruistic motives of the Bridgetower Trust; she gets an opportunity to study under great musicians in England, and they get their "phoenix"--somebody, it could have been anybody, who would fulfill the condition of the Trust until it can be broken by the birth of a grandson of the late Mrs. Bridgetower (MF, p.555).

Most of the time, however, neglect by school officials and their officers produces victims like young Francis Cornish. In What's Bred in the Bone, eight year old Cornish becomes a pawn in a political battle; because his grandfather, Senator McRory, belongs to "the hated Liberal party" (WBB, p.94) a school board with strong Tory leanings takes advantage of a administrative technicality and transfers him from Blairlogie Central School to Carlyle Rural School. At Carlyle, Cornish suffers verbal humiliation from his teacher, Miss McGladdery--also a staunch Tory--as well as ridicule and physical beatings from his classmates. Francis' relocation has nothing to do with him personally, but is used to achieve political vengeance on his grandfather.

> His transfer was an act of covert spite directed at the Senator by the local school board; the secretary of that board, checking the lists, had discovered that Francis Cornish, by moving a hundred yards from his father's house to his grandfather's, had moved into the Carlyle school district....(WBB, p.92)

There are two further instances when an unsatisfactory educational environment is forced upon Francis--this time by one of the greatest influences in a child's life--a parent. His father sends him to Colborne College in Toronto -- a school made of Old Money, Old Boys, compulsory games, the rifle corps, and a "wholly external religion" (WWB, p. 190)-- "because it was the kind of school Sir Francis understood, without any consideration of what kind of school [young] Francis might need" (WBB, p.195). What Francis needed--psychologically, not socially--was a rich, mysterious religion--something to inspire his imagination about the Grail, but he was starved for this at Colborne College:

> [a] ...world of wretched desks, spattered ink, chalk dust, constipating food,...the unceasing, unimaginative perfunctory obscenity of school boy's talk (WBB, p.190) [,] [and above all a] religion that Never Went Too Far. (WBB, p.188)

Once his son has survived college, Sir Francis loses no time in directing Francis to where

he must study next and to what profession he should take up.

> "Spook, then Oxford. Give you lots of time."
>
> "I don't think what you're going to do needs to be hurried....some of the best Intelligence men must be seen by the world to be doing something else--something that looks as if it took all their time. Being a painter would be a very good cover." (WBB, pp. 205-206)

Luckily for Francis the "good cover" for a career in "The Profession" is precisely what he really wants to do with life.

The other notable casualities of the establishment controllers of education are the teachers. This is most often the case in private schools where the board of governors is usually composed of parents and wealthy old boys--each with his own idea of how the school should operate, each fancying himself an enlightened administrator. Consequently, teachers are often shackled with policies that show little understanding of education of quality, and to disagree would put oneself in danger of dismissal. Decisions are often made on the basis of personal likes and dislikes as much as on qualifications. Dunstan Ramsay experiences both the positive and negative sides of private school employment. He originally chooses to teach at a private school because it "can accommodate a few cultured madmen on staff without having to offer explanations" (FB, p.125). Thus, Dunstan, a decided oddity himself, finds a haven at Colborne College. Unfortunately, the virtue of the flexibility offered by private schools can also be turned against the staff. Dunstan experiences this when, despite his qualifications as a "fine teacher" and a "scholarship getter," the Board passes him over for the post of permanent Headmaster at the College. His skills and qualities become irrelevant when he is found not to fit the Board's or the parents' image of a modern schoolmaster. As his boyhood chum and now

ultra-respectable Board of Govenors chairman, Boy Staunton, tells him, you are "'...queer--strange, funny, not like other people'" (FB, p.196). Part of this queerness is just eccentricity:

> 'Good God, don't you think the way you rootle in your ear with your little finger delights the boys? And the way you waggle your eyebrows--great wild things like mustaches, I don't know why you don't trim them--and those terrible Harris tweed suits you wear and never have pressed. And that disgusting trick of blowing your nose and looking into your handkerchief as if you expected to prophesy something from the mess....
>
> The day of comic eccentrics as Heads has gone. Parents nowadays want somebody more like themselves.' (FB, pp. 196-197)

But an even greater part of what makes Dunstan fail to fit their image of a school master is, as Boy tells Dunny, "'this saint business of yours'" (FB, p.196). They do not approve of Ramsay because he is not a stirling example of the establishment man. They would approve more if he would make himself socially respectable by getting married and having a family, and if, more important, he were to make himself more "intellectually respectable"--"go to Harvard, [get] a Ph.D., and try for a job in a university..." (FB, p.168). Ironically, Dunstan has developed a significant international reputation as a scholar without a Ph.D. and without a university position. By eliminating individuals like Dunstan Ramsay, these boards and schools rob students of creative and intellectual leadership, and create instead, generations of conventional, establishment men--"young fogies," who Davies believes, are the "curses of the world" (TT, p.118).

Perhaps the single greatest motivator in the administration of a school is money--the public purse in the form of bequests, grants, and scholarships. As Davies repeatedly shows, these transactions are often devoid of any scholastic purpose. Most of the time,

the exchange between giver and receiver has less to do with actual educational value and more to do with gaining fame or pacifying a public outcry for something in particular. In many instances, integrity is completely absent on both sides. Universities are "unceasingly avaricious" (MF, p.26), Davies tells us in A Mixture of Frailties; they do not care where their money comes from. For example, Spook disowns Parlabane for his sexual indiscretions and yet later does not hesitate to accept the "Bounty" when this self-confessed murderer dies and leaves his estate to the University (WBB, p.295). Universities are also inclined to be waspish, as Waverley is when an important member of its community, a "wealthy widow of a former professor--a member of the family, so to speak--[does not remember] the Alma Mater in her will..." (MF, p.26). Once they have received their money, universities react by praying loud and long (as they do for Francis Cornish) while privately fighting over where the funds will go. The benefactors are equally ignoble. "Benefaction means self-satisfaction, nine times out of ten" (RA, p. 41), says Professor McVarish, who goes on to give perceptive illustrations of benefactors and their motives.

> "What they want is posthumous fame and posthumous gratitude. Every college and faculty on this campus could tell a bloody tale if you asked for it. What about the family that earmarked the income from a million to found a chair of internal medicine, and then craftily snatched it back when they didn't like the politics of the third man appointed to it--years later? What about the old bastard who gave a historical library to the University Library, and frowned everybody down and demanded an honorary degree even when it was shown that the books weren't really his, but the property of a foundation he directed? What about old Mahaffy, who gave a bundle for a Centre for Celtic Studies, on condition that Celtic Studies meant Irish Studies and the Scots and the Welsh and the Bretons could all go and bugger themselves? What about that miserable old hound who founded a lectureship, insisting that it be initiated in his lifetime and that the University foot the bill till he died, and then told the President, years later, with a grin on his face, that he'd changed his mind, and didn't like the lectures anyway?...The guile and cunning that enable benefactors to get their hands on the dough make it almost

> impossible for them to relinquish it, at the hour of death." (RA, p.41-42)

Benefactors never give something for nothing. Some hope to "buy" tax deductions, or influence, or recognition, or even a veneer of academic respectability. The last is Gloster Ridley's motivation.

> After what he had done for Waverley University they must reward him with a substantial fee or give him an honorary doctorate. Waverley, like all Canadian universities, was perpetually short of money,whereas its store of doctorates was inexhaustible....He had had no university education. That was one of the reasons why it would fall so sweetly upon his ear to be spoken of as Doctor Ridley. (LM, pp. 2-3)

In order to encourage and reward donations of money and expertise, universities are even willing to compromise the very symbol of academic achievement--the degree.

Quite often the money received has strings attached, especially when government dollars represent the needs and desires of the public. To get financing for their projects, scholars have to jump through a set of hoops--much like applying for a loan--only to be turned down by, as Professor Darcourt calls them, "overpaid, overpensioned running dogs of bourgeousie philistinism" (RA, p.181). To be sure, money will not be forthcoming if the public does not deem the project worthy--which is not the same as being scholarly. Canadians take a very pragmatic approach to their money, as Parlabane explains to Maria.

> "Our fatherly government is growing restless about the big sums universities consume. It's the people's money, dear Maria, and don't you ever forget it. And the people, those infallible judges of value, must have what they want, and what they think they want (because the politicians tell them so) is people who can fill useful jobs. Not remote chaps like Clem Hollier, who want to dig in the past. When you've achieved your Ph.D., what the hell good will you be to society?" (RA, p.29)

In the education equation, dollars must equal demonstrably useful results. Money is given for approved research only, not for frills. It certainly would not be given for Professor Ozy Froats' research on scatalogy--the public would be up in arms. "'...God, people are so stupid,'" says Ozy, and Darcourt agrees:

> "They don't understand, and they're overtaxed and scared about inflation. The universities are always an easy mark. *Cut the frills away from education. Teach students a trade so they can make a living.* You can't persuade most of the public that education and making a living aren't the same thing. And when the public sees people happily doing what they like best and getting paid for it, they are envious, and want to put a stop to it." (RA, pp.102-3)

Socio-economic demand is closely tied to the operation of a school, the content of the curriculum, as well as the relationship between student and teacher. Schools get money for something that will be useful and for which there is a demand. Education has been changed to a "consumer-retailer arrangment", explains the Warden of Spook. The government, he continues, is extremely fluent in this language of supply and demand: "We shall require seven hundred head of engineers in the next five years, Professor; see to it, will you?" (RA, p.174). Universities are "short on money but long on doctorates" (LM, p.12) so they give honorary doctorates away for dollars--but only as long as there is a demand. They have an inexhaustible supply of doctorates, so universities become Ph.D. factories (View, p.190). Education becomes an industry. Universities receive the raw materials which they then churn out into saleable products, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, but not necessarily scholars or thinkers. Even the process by which one becomes a professional academic--the earning of a Ph.D.--is stained by the utilitarian and stultifying trends in society. There is sometimes little imagination or creativity involved in acquiring the degree. Second-hand research and re-evaluation is "the great

scholarly industry" (RA, p. 43). Solly Bridgetower in Tempest Tost, for example, suffers under the weight of a system that encourages--even demands--narrow specialization. Pursuit of the doctorate becomes yet another exercise in "end-gaining" and results in a definitely mediocre learning experience. At the height of his pessimism, Davies even questions the value of much university education.

> Universities are not a guarantee of education...for the day has passed when a university degree was a guarantee of experience in the humanities; or of literacy beyond its basest meaning of being able, after a fashion, to read and write. (Voice, p. 6)

The lock-step path to the ultimate university degree, the Ph.D., at the expense of the treasure of the soul, also concerns Davies (Critic, p. 190) and comes close to diverting Dunstan and Maria from their lives. Ultimately, Davies believes that, as it is presently constituted, the Ph.D. is vastly overrated. As he illustrates in his half-serious, half-humorous ghost story, "The Ghost Who Vanished By Degrees", a Ph.D. can "...stand between a man and his eternal rest" (HS, p.16).

Even geographical location influences attitudes to formal education. Canadians have an ambivalent feeling about education obtained in England. On the one hand, they are grateful for any culture that may rub off. For example, Mrs. Bridgetower's instructions are that Monica be "...maintained abroad in order..that she may bring back to Canada some of the intangible treasures of European tradition" (MF, p.16). Yet, on the other hand, they only feel satisfied if the returning Rhodes scholars, for example, take safe, quiet positions as civil servants (TT, pp.30-31). The general consensus among Saltertonians is that parents are willing to support proudly the educational pursuits of their children in Canadian institutions only so long as they retain that "nice simplicity...that education abroad seems to destroy" (TT, pp.30-31). However, if a student had studied in

England, he would be subjected to jealous namecalling by provincials such as Mrs. Forrester, who accuses Solly Bridgetower of being a "smart-alec" (TT, p.30) and "conceited" just because he had been to Cambridge (TT, p.21). Behaviour of this kind reflects part of the Canadian hypocritical attitude that applauds fashioning ourselves after English ideals yet sneers at anything learned from them. We want to live in the perpetual "bloom" (TT, p.312) of innocence and simplicity. Hence, the maturing influences of knowledge, experience, independence, perspective, and innovation are seen to be spoilers of that idyllic way of life which is cradled in the Canadian town.

The Canadians' distrust of British education is reciprocated by English opinions of Canadian students and a typically Canadian education. The English often view Canadians as dull, backward, practical, and gloomily devoted to the business of education. Mrs. Hopkin-Griffiths, for example, makes the mistake of thinking Monica was attending the "...London School of Economics, because that's where the Canadians all seem to go, and the dear knows why, because it seems to make them so gloomy and farsighted about nasty things" (MF, p.186). Neither would Canada be Saraceni's choice for an apprenticing art student. He sees it as a place where there is little warmth, originality, or movement-- a "...frozen country, with frozen art...[where one can only] paint winter lakes and wind-blown trees, to which the Devil is understandably indifferent" (WBB, p.398). Sir Benedict is even less generous to Canada and its teaching profession when he tells Monica to "...go back to Pumpkin Centre ...and set up shop as a teacher" (MF, p.348). Not surprisingly, Davies foreshadows these comments with a statement made in a book review in 1953 that he was "...impressed once again by the standards set in English schools, and the sharp difference between them and the standards of our Canadian high schools." (Critic, p.192). Since that time, Davies has sent most of his main characters, such as

Monica, Dunstan, and Francis out of the cold, impersonal schools of Canada and into the warm apprenticeship situations of Europe for their real education.

Davies has a definite idea of the kind of school environment--not unlike his own Massey College--that would make him comfortable. In the matter of school architecture Davies can appear to be too fastidious, but he actually takes the position of a moderate. He wants a balance between tradition and progress, between old and new, between too much and not enough. He does not want sterile, technical school buildings, nor does he want schools that are tombs of history. What he does want is an easy, original mix of the two--one that allows the student to dream and be comfortable in his academic surroundings. Davies' request reflects typical good taste and moderation. Just bring "a whisper of magnificence, a shade of lightheartedness, and a savour of drama into the setting of our daily lives" he urges architects; a "...secret passage" would even be nice (ERD. pp.231-32).

Even mundane features like structural design can make a school cozy and natural, and thus livable. Massey College, Davies suggests presents just such an easy ambience. In High Spirits, Davies recounts the pitiful plight of a ghost who has been driven from his truly authentic eighteenth century English manor house which has fallen under the frenzied attack of modern designers who want to recreate a new, trendy version of the old eighteenth century look--complete with electric heat, flowers in chamber pots, and portraits of unknown ancestors on the wall. The spirit seeks refuge at Massey College in particular, because, as he tells Professor Davies, although it is a "modern foundation...your College has some of what I regard as the comforts of home. Draughts, mostly" (HS, p.172). In fact, Massey College appears to be very much a home; when

Davies shows him to an empty space between two walls the ghost exclaims:

> ...the very thing I've always wanted. Commodious, a charming view of the quad, several strong draughts, and no modern conveniences whatever. Bless you sir, bless you. (HS, p.174)

More often than not what makes a school special are the little touches like furnishings in college rooms. In Spook and Massey College these rooms are not showcase extravaganzas where everything is sleek, modern, and uniform; rather they are an orderly mess which celebrates a scholar's lifestyle. Professors' offices need smoky fireplaces for daydreaming and for encounters with ghosts (should there happen to be any). Everything inside the professorial living quarters suggests the College is more than just a place of employment--this is a home where living and learning takes place. In Spook, for example, Hollier and Darcourt "live in" in Oxford tradition and eat off hot plates. Inside their rooms the smell of dust, leatherette, and old books reflects a sense of work in progress. Here, there are electric lights, but candles would not be out of place, nor would old bottles of wine--"dark, merry, and wicked" (HS, p.45). This sense of place reflects the state of mind of a person. For example, Professor Hollier's rooms are a mirror of their occupant; they

> ...were by ordinary standards, a mess, but they had a coherence, and even a comfort of their own. Once you stopped being offended by the muddle, neglect, and I suppose, one must say dirt, they were oddly beautiful, like Hollier himself. (RA, pp. 7-8)

Even if its architecture is too old or too modern, a school still has redemptive features. For example, Davies does not allow Waverley's mix of gaudy architecture to reveal an affected spirit of learning, that, he says, would be a "gross libel" upon a "noble" and dignified "center of learning" (TT, p.10). Luckily, the students are not offended either by Waverley's mishmash of styles:

> The Sons and daughters of Waverley loved their Alma Mater as the disciples of Socrates loved their master, for a beauty of wisdom which luckily transcends mere physical appearance. (TT, p.11)

Of course, what makes a school valuable goes beyond mere physicality; it is the feeling or spirit conveyed by the totality of the institution. The things that make it special have no economic value. They may be memories or experiences, but whatever they are, they are expressions of personal values and histories, they are essentially spiritual values that make the building resonate with meaning--which make it more human. Special human memories and traditions attract Davies to old schools and old buildings. Marchbanks, for example, would rather have an old house than a new house because although they are a "nuisance", he says, old houses are "obviously intended for man and woman to live in" (Table, p.116). An old house gives the curmudgeon Marchbanks an equally cantankerous furnace to battle with. In fact, old age does not mean school buildings are irrelevant or bad; rather they give a natural and comfortable sense to both the present and the past. Francis Cornish's kindergarten, for example,

> ...was housed in an old-fashioned schoolhouse, to which a large, much newer school had been joined. It stank, in a perfectly reasonable way, of floor oil, chalk powder, and many generations of imperfectly continent Blairlogie children. (WBB, p.83)

Some times these old school buildings are less than totally efficient, but nevertheless they often radiate a charm and mystery that spills over into the academic subjects being taught there and the student's perception of that subject. Recall, for instance, David Staunton's awe of the academic buildings in Oxford: "They spoke of an idea of education strange to me; discomfort there was, but no meanness, no hint of edification on the cheap" (Man, p.213). The buildings of the Middle Temple (in London) are inextricably tied with

furnishing and the law.

> I liked the romance of it, the star personalities of the great advocates, the swishing of gowns and flourishing of impractical, but traditional blue bags full of papers. I was delighted that although most people seemed to use more modern instruments, everybody had access to quill pens, and could doubtless have called for sand to do their blotting, with full confidence that sand would have been forthcoming. I loved wigs, which established a hierarchy that was palpable and turned unremarkable faces into the faces of priests serving a great purpose....The law is elegant. (Man, pp. 226-27)

The bags, gowns, wigs, quill pens, and blotting sand in the midst of "modern instruments" suggest there is some elegance, some tradition, some greater purpose that gives this school special meaning. "Impractical"--therein lies the key for schools, for all buildings. Whatever the inconveniences of the old school buildings, they are part of the charm which makes them valuable, not economically but spiritually.

In order for a modern school to be special it has to provide not just an academic environment, but also something beyond the needs of a consumer--a sense of place--a home. Home and comfort cannot be measured in terms of mere economic value; they are highly personal. Nick-names for schools--like that of "Spook" for the College of St. John and the Holy Ghost--create special feeling. Feelings of affection, safety, and comfort are aroused in Parlabane, who after a long absence from his old coll, remarks: "I am very happy to be snuggled back into the bosom of dear old Spook" (RA, p.6). In that last comment Parlabane hints at another important and common perception of schools--that being, as a mater--a mother who nurtures, with knowledge and salvation, her children--her students. In the following passage, Parlabane explains to Maria, in more detail, the mother/child relationship between the school and the student.

> "So the college is truly an Alma Mater, a Bounteous Mother, and

> from one breast she gives her children the milk of knowledge and from the other the milk of salvation and good doctrine. In other words, water without which no man can live, and the Holy Ghost without which no man can live well."
> (RA, p.31)

Finally, more than architecture, interior design, educational philosophy, administration, or geographic location, what makes a school special are the people in it. In 1971 Davies stated that "Much of the atmosphere that gives splendour to a great university resides in the memory of its great men..."(OHRD, p.43). And again ten years later in Rebel Angels, the Warden of Spook stresses the human element when he gives this definition of a university:

> "It is a city of wisdom, and the heart of the university is its body of learned men; it can be no better than they, and it is at their fire the young come to warm themselves." (RA, p.186)

CHAPTER 5: Students

The trouble with many of today's students, Davies would say, is that they are narrow-minded, egotistical, and dull. They are unaware of themselves or anything else beyond the latest techniques which will help them to survive as specialists or professionals in the job market. They are, to use familiar Davies' terminology, the "wet blankets of life"--the "living dead" (OHRD, p.65). In Canada, these poor students have been repressed both emotionally and intellectually by an out-dated morality, repressive religion, excessive loyalty to parents, and, most of all, by a predominately Benthamite system of education. Davies would emphasize that the good students, in addition to being able to reason and to think critically, are also curious, imaginative, and self-disciplined people. They are interested in obtaining a well-rounded education--an education in which the humanities are used to equip them with more than just survival skills, an education that instills an outlook and attitude to life that will help them live happily as human beings in the modern, technological world. Some of these good students appear to have been born with the strong desire to feel and to learn, but the majority have been shaped by friends and teachers who encourage the pursuit of all knowledge that is meaningful to the individual. They have also been nurtured by those few schools which offer and promote education that is both practical as well as enriching to the development of the individual soul.

In Davies' opinion good students are in the minority, and his concern is with how to make more students like them--students who would be just as content reading a book, as they would be watching TV, students who, when they travelled would visit museums and

would appreciate the art especially because they could not take it home in a department store box. Such individuals as these would be life-long students--continuing their learning and studying long after graduation. Needless to say, students such as these would have little respect for their inferior counterparts, and, as eligible adult voters, would eliminate those influences that perpetuate mediocrity. The resulting population of enlightened learners would mean a better quality of living for everyone.

The global implications of the properly educated individual have concerned many thinkers, including Carl Jung, who once said "no state is better than the individuals who compose it..." and that "the salvation of the world consists in the salvation of the individual soul" (ERD, p.175). In the same vein, the best educators also know that "...universities cannot be more universal than the people who teach, and the people who learn within their walls" (RA, p.47). That is why educators teach their students that the goal of culture, wisdom, and self-knowledge is to make one civilized, and that the larger consequences of civilizing oneself will be to civilize, by example, the people around one.[11]

That is what Davies would say if he had written an expository book specifically devoted to the process of becoming a good student, but he has not. Even if he had, it is unlikely that many students would be sufficiently motivated to read it, unless, of course, it were presented in an entertaining format such as fiction. And that is exactly what Davies, the consummate story-teller, has done. In eight novels Davies explores the lives and characteristics of a variety of students--good, bad, male, female, old, young, British, and Canadian. Any student reading these fictional dramas will recognize familiar situations: writing exams, learning new material, struggling with new values encountered at school

and old values learned at home, interacting with teachers and students, balancing school obligations and work, and deciding the direction of one's life. In addition to presenting an entertaining story, each novel (not unlike morality plays), also contains messages chief of which is Davies' prescription for becoming a successful student, as well as his warning on how to avoid becoming a bad one.

Each student character contributes to Davies' checklist of academic characteristics to cultivate and those to expurgate. Inferior intellectual qualities are sometimes difficult to detect, says Davies, because the drone-like activity of poor students is sometimes mistaken for cleverness and success. Nevertheless, poor students generally betray themselves in four ways.

First, many poor students cannot or will not think on their own. They want to be led through the material; they want to be told exactly what they need to know in order to get through the course and pass the exams. Tessie Forgie demonstrates this attitude with her question to her teacher: "'Mr. Cobbler, do I understand that I am responsible for all the operas of Mozart?'" (LM, p.181) Students like Tessie can only be comfortable when the information comes in simple formats such as worksheets and boardnotes which can easily be memorized and regurgitated. Part of their problem is insecurity regarding their own ability; however, a major portion of their problem is simply mental laziness and ignorance. Poor students have an aversion to activities such as class discussions because they require the effort of thought and understanding. For them, independent study would be out of the question; any instruments remotely connected to learning would be disregarded; it would be inconceivable to them that personal enjoyment could be had from reading a book. Griselda Webster, for example, has no idea that anything more than just facts can

be gained from a book. She snipes at her young sister Freddy--an embyronic bibliophile: "'What do you want with dirty old books out of a dead professors' house? Aren't there enough books here already?'" (TT, p.34). As if there could ever be enough books.

Second, the demand for quick, easily memorized facts goes hand in hand with the poorer student's emphasis on teacher-centered learning rather than on student-centered learning. Naturally, the poorly prepared student prefers to focus more on teacher technique than on his own learning inadequacies; in fact, by creating this type of situation the poor student can easily ignore his personal responsibility towards learning. As an observer in the learning process, the poor student becomes critical, impatient, and bored. He wants to be entertained, and he expects the information without any effort on his part. When this does not happen the teacher gets the blame for the student's learning difficulties. An excellent illustration of this occurs in Leaven Of Malice when an elementary teacher, who has returned to university, audaciously approaches his young professor, Solly Bridgetower, to complain that the professor's style of teaching has impeded his understanding of the course material.

> 'Professor Bridgetower, I'm not getting anything out of your course; I don't mean anything personal, you understand, but frankly I don't think you have any pedagogical method; in our work, you know, pedagogical method is everything, and if you'd give me a little extra time on some of this Milton, why I'd be glad to give you some pointers on pedagogical method; as you explained to me, I could point out to you where you weren't doing it right, do you see?' [sic] (LM, p.160)

Interestingly, Solly's elementary school teachers have not returned to academic life because they sincerely want to learn more about "Our British Heritage"; they just want "a quick run through" in order to upgrade themselves professionally, and, presumably, economically. Clearly, what gives focus to their lives is not individual enhancement, but

career stability.

This demand for vocational education is the third characteristic commonly exhibited by poor students. Unfortunately, most students do not realize the potential dangers that can result from specializing too early in their education. In What's Bred in the Bone, for example, Francis Cornish hesitates to study classics at Oxford, and thus almost jeopardizes his artistic career, because he is worried about "getting on" with it--"it" being a career. As he explains to his father, several of his school chums also feel the pressure to hurry and decide what they are going to do with their life: "...everybody at school thinks he ought to get on with whatever he's going to do as fast as possible" (WBB, p.205). The moment students succumb to society's pressure to specialize is the moment they join the ranks of poor, mediocre students. Most of these students see education simply as a means to an end, usually a career. Everything learned along the way has to be straightforward and useful to that end. They do not want anything extra, and they are certainly unwilling to expend any energy getting anything more than what is required. In Rebel Angels the theology students are excellent examples of such narrowly focused, job-oriented students. First, they hate the seminar style of Professor Darcourt's class which, unlike lecture classes, requires them to contribute to the learning taking place. When Darcourt asks a question, a typically "awful hush...falls on [the] room [while they try] to make themselves invisible" (RA, p.36). Second, they are strongly against Darcourt's suggestion that, in order to "serve" the Lord adequately, they should take some extra time and learn Latin and Greek . Either because of a burning ambition or a simple necessity to eat, they do not believe they have the time to waste on learning languages. One serious aspirant is just in a hurry to get that "clerical collar", while another, because he has a family to support, has "...to get himself ordained as fast as he [can]" (RA, p.36).

This emphasis on job training, based on the mistaken notion that job training is the same as education, creates a schism between the sciences and the humanities in the educational world. Students who are overly preoccupied with getting a job demand courses that will be useful, practical, and relevant to their chosen careers. In their view, courses in the humanities, such as art, music, philosophy, and theatre, are luxuries and frills. These students are the ones who most often complain about having to learn Latin or read Shakespeare's plays. It will not be of any immediate, practical use to them as doctors, or secretaries, or bankers et al. In anticipation of such questions, Davies, in the preface to Shakespeare for Young People, gently points out to his young readers that the real reason for going to school has very little to do with career development.

> Of course, much of what you learn will be of practical use to you when you are grown up, but it is not merely to learn useful things that you come to school. No, the chief reason for going to school is that you may become an interesting person. (SYP, p. ix)

This statement--that the purpose of schooling is to make people "interesting"--foreshadows a similar statement--"that the purpose of education is to make life interesting"--which Davies makes forty years later during that important radio interview on CBC. Unfortunately, very few students, then and now, really understand Davies' message. Consequently, the gulf between students studying to become professionals and students studying to become more human widens. This becomes painfully apparent in Leaven of Malice when Professor Bridgetower comes to read the papers of his first year science students who were supposed to express their opinions on either "the Canterbury Pilgrims and their Modern Counterparts," or "the Allegory of the Faerie Queene in Terms

of Today." Before beginning his marking Solly is aware of a certain division betwen science students and English students.

> Nobody supposed for a moment that Science students had time or inclination to read and ponder Chaucer and Spenser at first hand: indeed, it went against the grain with Science students to bother with English at all. (LM, p.159)

However, the surprisingly bold plagiarism and the complete absence of any discussion on modern allegory in the papers forces Solly to conclude that science students have no opinions about English simply because it has no useful meaning for them.

The dismissal of anything that cannot be explained or seen is the fourth and final characteristic of poor students. History, particularly allegory and myths, is interesting but not provable; therefore it is dismissed. Solly sees this blind empiricism in his science students; he partly blames the students for their limited motivation and perception, but he also blames the modern age which finds nothing useful in Chaucer's romance or allegory. They are out of fashion in an age in which "The Faerie Queene [has] little to say to First year Science" (LM, p.160). Try as teachers like Dunstan Ramsay might to show a connection between history and myth, students listen to the entertainment slightly enthralled and then their practical Canadian natures emerge: they scoff, and reply as young David Staunton does, "what could he [Ramsay] have taught me except History and the plain style" (Man, p.230).

These poor students are the ultimate moderns. The past supposedly has nothing to say to the modern generation. As a teaching assistant at Spook, Maria comes up against this narrow attitude in her class of first year engineers to whom she lectures about the "'history of science and technology.'" "'Not easy work'", she says, "'because they don't

believe science has any history--it's all here and now. So I have to make it really interesting'" (RA, p.52). She does this by re-enacting a test that the Vestal Virgins used to prove their virginity--carrying water on a sieve without spilling it. The fact that the Vestal Virgins first greased their sieves, she tells her students, proves that they were far from being scientific primitives; in fact, it proves that they "'had a [very] practical understanding of colloid chemistry'" (RA, p.52). Having thus made her point, Maria reports that her engineers "'...have almost decided that science was not invented the day they came to the university, and that maybe the ancients knew a thing or two in their fumbling way'" (RA, p.52).

This lack of perception of anything except that which is contemporary and observable is not confined to these poor students. Maria discovers that even Professor McVarish does not know the Ancients' test for wise men: "'They said a wise man could catch the wind in a net'" (RA, p.53) which was a metaphor, she explains, "'for understanding what could be felt but not seen, but of course not many people understood'" (RA, p.54). Ironically, Maria, a gypsy on her mother's side, is reluctant to believe in legends, synchronicity, and "the romance of antiquity" (RA, p.207). "I was a pupil of Hollier's and I wanted to examine [notice the word "examine"] things that belonged to Mamusia's world as a matter to be studied, but not as beliefs to be accepted and believed" (RA, p.276). As a "Canadian woman, setting out on a university career," Maria declares that she wants no "part of the Gypsy world" (RA, p.133). Parlabane recognizes Maria's attempt to deny her heritage and warns her it is useless:

> "I think you are trying to suppress it because it is the opposite of what you are trying to be--the modern woman, the learned woman, the creature wholly of this age and this somewhat thin and sour civilization. You are not trying to conceal it; you are trying to tear it out. But you can't, you know." (RA, p.205)

Parlabane's warning only confirms what Maria already knows. She could only escape what Mamusia and the gypsy traditions mean to her by "the uttermost violence to" herself. (RA, p.132-33) Maria's struggle between objective scholarship and primitive emotions and sensitivities represents the ultimate struggle of every modern student. To give in to one side results in a poor student.

While some students have a clear focus on why they are going to school--to be able to get a job or to do the socially acceptable thing--most students have no idea why they are going to school. They do it for their parents and rarely for themselves. Sometimes they go because of a romanticized view of what it will be like. Such a creature is young Griselda. When Solly asks her about her future educational plans she replies "'Daddy hasn't made up his mind yet. There is talk of a finishing school, but I'd like to go to Europe and be a student'" (TT, p.64). When asked what she would like to study, Griselda's response reveals a naive and out of date conception of education.

> "Oh anything. It would be quite enough just to be a student. They seem to have such good times. Riots, and political action." (TT, p.64)

Davies often makes a particular issue of the characterisics of female students. Echoing Leacock and foreshadowing Dunstan Ramsay in Fifth Business , Davies says that education for the past 100 years is not particularly suited to women (Table, p.44). Mrs. Bridgetower is an example of a modern suffragette who, as "an alert college girl," had attended Waverley initially because she was "determined to show that women could benefit from higher education every bit as much as men..." (TT, p.42). Over the years she "had been greatly alarmed in a highly intelligent and realistic manner, of course, by the Yellow Peril, ...the Prussian Menace, ...and the Red Menace..." (TT, p.42). She studied

world politics not because of a sincere interest to help or to learn, but rather to gain prestige in the community. Consequently she becomes an obsessive fanatic:

> Higher education and a naturally acute mind had enabled her to dread all these things much more comprehensively and learnedly than most ladies of her acquaintance, and had won her a local reputation as a woman of capacious intellect. (LM, p.78)

Instead of making her open-minded, civil, and polite, Mrs. Bridgetower's education made her a petty snob. Education did not teach her to be kind.

> In her latest speech she had scored a double; she had condemned Griselda's legs because they were beautiful, and sneered at poor Pearl Vambrace's because they were not. Mrs. Bridgetower had indeed benefited from higher education. (TT, p.44)

Maria and Monny are examples of modern women trying to get an education in a new, and scientific world and still hold on to the intuitive side within them; both learn more from the men around them (as intimate friends) than from courses and teachers. Maria suspects that her brief liaison and continuing concern for her teacher, Clement Hollier, has little to do with true love; in fact, she suspects that she has been using it chiefly as a way to escape her gypsy background and to enter the respectable world of the modern university (RA, p.133). Monny eventually types, lies, keeps house for--and sleeps with--her teacher, Giles Revelstoke.

Teachers, fellow-students, and family members provide the final and most condemning portrait of these poor students. Relatives are particularly blunt and perceptive in their condemnation of each others' faults. Freddy Webster, the young bibliophile, criticizes her older, flighty sister, Griselda for being "inward looking." "'In the innermost chamber of your spirit, Gristle,'" Freddy tells her, "'you kneel in constant adoration before a mirror'" (TT, p.34). The nickname, "Gristle" is a fitting comment on the

intellectual as well as spiritual dryness in her sister's character. Solly recognizes his mother's study of international politics for what it really is--a "preoccupation"--her own "particular source of neurosis..." (TT, p.42).

Fellow-students are no less generous in their assessments of inferior classmates. Banix Burgs-Bozzaris, a student studying with Francis Cornish at Oxford, sums up in two words his opinion of those "earnest" students among them who are lusting after careers : "'Too middle-class!'" (WBB, p.253). Maria does not hold back in her assessment of her fellow theological students as uninspiring; she wryly thinks that they have been called to the service of God either by an "absent-minded" God or as a "Jewish joke" (RA, p.36).

The teachers' evaluations of their students are by far the most illuminating; they do not hide their real thoughts. Their comments are candid and frank. Giles Revelstoke refers to his new naive student, Monny, as "'Miss Lumpish Innocence'" (MF, p.153)--an unflattering but fair comment. Cobbler clearly makes known his disgust of exam-passers with his reference to Tessie as "repulsive" (LM, p.181) Cobbler also correctly diagnoses what "ails" Solly, the student,who complains that he cannot write anything original because "'everything's been written'", and all the plots have been "'worked to death'" (LM, p.182) : "'You've read too much...,'" Cobbler says, "'All the originality has been educated out of you'" (LM, p.181). Solly, as professor, is equally correct when, after marking the batch of boldly plagiarized English papers, he concludes that his first year science students have little capacity for "artistry" or "individuality"--in fact, they have no capacity what so ever to perceive the unseen (allegory) in their own lives (LM, p.160). Professor Darcourt's "anxious" and "ill-organized" students naively believe that their

Reverend professor would say anything to "get them money" (RA, p.245). On the contrary, his references are more like the "Slaughtering of the Innocents," as Darcourt admits.

> ...I found that I had said of one young fellow, 'he is a good-natured slob, and there is no particular harm in him, but he simply doesn't know what work means.' Of another: 'Treacherous; never turn your back on him.' Of a third: 'Is living on a young woman who thinks he is a genius; perhaps any grant you give him ought to be based on her earning capacity; she is quite a good stenographer, with a B.A. of her own, but she is plain and I suspect that after he has his doctorate he will discover that his affections lie elsewhere. This is a common pattern, and probably doesn't concern you, but it grieves me.' Of a young woman: 'Her mind is as flat as Holland--the salt-marshes, not the tulip fields--stretching toward the horizon in all directions and covered by a leaden sky. But unquestionably she will make a Ph.D.--of a kind.' (RA, pp. 244-45)

"Repulsive," "middle-class," "neurotic," "unimaginative," "uninspiring," "self-centered," "treacherous," "lumpish," and "flat" are harsh words. The question one has to ask is how these students got this way. Davies believes they are shadows of their family and their communities--made this way by three particular forces: repressive morality and religions, loyalty to parents, and, most of all, by an inadequate formal education. As much as these students try to achieve a level of comfort and quality in their lives, these conditions are always dampened by the infringing hysteria, superstition, and paranoia in their culture. (For examples, see LM, pp.95-97, LM, p.39, and Diary, p.31.)

One of the greatest contributors to the helplessness of the youth is the confining morality in small Canadian provincial towns like Salterton, Deptford, and Blairlogie. Monica Gall and Hector Mackilwraith are the best examples of students repressed by an overly strict moral and religious background. For both, their ignorance of sex causes a lot of distress during their educative years. As a boy, Hector "...had but the dimmest notions

about sex, and his mind shrank from the smutty, ignorant talk of the schoolyard" (TT, p.79). Consequently, when a classmate refers to his mother in a shameful way, Hector beats him up. Hector's reaction does him credit; however, his refusual to explain to the Principal the reason for his actions causes Hector and his mother great disgrace. Hector's silence stems from his conclusion that he should rightly know nothing about these "dark mysteries" (TT, p.79) because his parents had never mentioned them. By carrying this blindly logical attitude through life, and not increasing his knowledge about sex, Hector remains a little boy, both intellectually and emotionally. In fact, this prudery helps to keep Hector reading books that are safe--those about his subject of mathematics. As a student, and even as a mathematics teacher, he never reads Shakespeare because he believes that it is "smutty" (TT, p.50).

Monica also suffers psychologically from her background of fundamentalist religion. During her education in England she is confronted with a naked man. Unknown to her are the beauty and naturalness of the body.

> The Thirteeners, and everybody else with whom she had ever been intimately acquainted, thought very poorly of nakedness. Courtships...were always conducted fully dressed. The intimacies of married life were negotiated in the dark, under blankets. Shame about nakedness was immensely valued as a guarantee of high character. (MF, pp. 145-46)

This "shame" in Monny's character later temporarily inhibits her ability to understand symbolism in poetry. After Giles explains that Tosti's Good-Bye is about the "failure of physical love," Monny demonstrates her superficial--if not altogether non-existent--knowledge of sexual relations with her question "'What's impotence?'" (MF, p.153). Even after having had its meaning explained, Monny's interpretation of the song is still shallow and prudish.

> "I don't see the good of it....You take an old song that hundreds of people must have sung and you drag it down so it just means a nasty trouble men get. Is that supposed to make it easier for me to sing it?" (MF, p.154)

Strict morality and boring religions are not the only impediments to experiencing an enriching education, and by extension, a happy, personal development. Throughout his trilogies, Davies implies that parental faults hinder the intellectual and artistic growth of children, not to mention their emotional and spiritual well-being. Sir Benedict correctly outlines the negative influence of parents, family, and friends when he says:

> "Those people never want you to have great ambitions or strong, consuming passions. They want you to be refined--which means predictable, stable, controlled, always choosing the smallest cake on the plate, never breaking wind audibly, being a good loser--in a word, dead." (MF, p.107)

While most children are unhappy if they do not have any parents, Arthur Cornish recognizes his good fortune in being orphaned. "I had no parents to humble me against being myself, to urge me to be like them. So far as a civilized upbringing permits, I was free" (RA, p.143). Most children, however (including the ones in Davies' novels), must suffer the conventional ambitions of their parents. Initially Solly Bridgetower, Pearl Vambrace, Hector Mackilwraith, Monica Gall, and David Staunton are all intellectually and spiritually "dead." They are unhappy, trapped, lifeless, and unaware of themselves and of their world. They continue living for their parents, pleasing them, carrying on in their footsteps, and never going beyond bounds of home, town, or province. Filial devotion keeps them from retaliating. Thus, the real obstacle to intellectual virtuosity and individuality is the child's loyalty to his parents. Of this problem Davies has said:

> 'The Search for the Self', is worked out in terms of characters, usually young, who are trying to escape from early influences and find their own place in the world, but who are reluctant to do so in a way that will bring pain and disappointment to others, and

particularly to people of the previous generation. [12]

Examples of dominating parents and submissive children abound everywhere in Davies' novels. Professor Vambrace represses all individual and artistic abilities in his daughter Pearl, and, like Shakespeare's Lear, treats her as an extension of himself (LM, p.196). For example, during the rehearsal of the Little Theatre production of The Tempest, Vambrace's bullying of Pearl, which he calls coaching, has nothing to do with a sincere interest in improving his daughter's artistic abilities, but rather is simply a way to ensure that when they appear together in a scene, a good performance delivered by her will reflect well on him. Vambrace does not fulfill his role as a father or as a model academic; he does not give Pearl love or encouragement to study and to broaden her experience. Instead, he gives only that which is expected in a small provincial town: Pearl "must have general culture, nice manners, and a store of agreeable conversation" (TT, p.121), thus keeping Pearl's educational experience to the level of a Victorian maid. Acts of defiance are impossible because of Pearl's highly developed sense of guilt : "Pearl, who loved her father, felt that she had ruined him, that she had behaved in a selfish and unworthy fashion, and that she was a sorrow to her parents" (TT, p.215).

The guilt that Pearl feels is a powerful parental weapon that Solly Bridgetower also experiences. Solly's education and freedom are affected by an obsessive parent who attempts to live vicariously through him. The lonely Mrs. Bridgetower feeds off the "vitality" of her "boy" and requires him to be constantly near.

> This had meant the sacrifice of much that would have made his schooldays happier, and when he had gone to Waverley it had made it impossible for him to share fully in the university life. (TT, p.125)

Solly "escape[s] to Cambridge" for one year, which enables him to realize many of his

dreams. However, a cablegram that greatly exaggerates his mother's ill health cuts short his "freedom." Any attempts to return to Cambridge are dampened by feelings of guilt brought on by Mrs. Bridgetower's manipulative tears. Solly is "angry" but helpless. "A sense of duty and fear of a show-down with his mother keeps him in check" (TT, p.126). Consequently, Solly remains in Salterton, where at Waverley university he teaches and attempts (unsatisfactorily for some time) to continue his own intellectual endeavours.

While Pearl and Solly's parents hold them back through guilt and meanness, Monica's education is impeded by the fear and ignorance of her parents. In particular, Monica's education is complicated by two opposing familial forces. At one end of the spectrum is Aunt Ellen who, with her nostalgic dreams of the "musical world," instills in her niece romantic but entirely unrealistic ideas about the lives of singers and about the meaning of music (MF, p.267). And at the other end of the spectrum is the rest of Monica's family. Her sister, Alice, is "noisily anti-intellectual"--"...convinced that music and all that stuff [is] a lot of bull..."(MF, p.74), and her parents are "indifferent" to their daughter's chance to study music abroad (MF, p.46). What they do not understand about her education they condemn. Ma Gall, for example, is especially critical of higher education as it reveals itself in better communication skills which she calls "fancy talk."

> ...[Ma has] a deep conviction that there was something salty, honest and salutary about bad grammar; it checked a tendency in the girls to get stuck-up notions. She could speak as fancy as anybody when she chose, but she didn't choose to indulge her daughter that way. (MF, p.73)

Ma's harshness masks the jealousy she truly feels. She is afraid that Monica will "rise up above them" and forget them. Consequently, she tries to hold Monica back--hold her down--with negative criticism. Upon Monica's departure, Ma cautions her: "Just you be

careful, my girl, not to pick up a lotta snottery when you're over there among all them dudes. You got to keep your feet on the ground, and not get so's we can't understand a word you say'" (MF, p.82). In the end, the dying Mrs. Gall cannot see Monica's love for her because, even in her delirium, she is so distracted by her daughter's new speech patterns; it keeps them apart: "'...why do you talk so funny? You're talking all the time waw-waw-waw so I can't make you out. You ain't Monny! ...Monny don't talk like that. You've sent Monny away!'" (MF, p.280).

Monica is naive and submissive in many ways, but the Bridgetower opportunity stirs up a fight within Monny. On the one hand, she proudly defends her parents against a suitor's charge that the whole family suffers from a lack of ambition and too much religion. And on the other hand, she has to contend with her own hitherto hidden "intolerable, inadmissible thoughts"--that the suitor's charges were correct. Monica despises herself and feels deep shame for feeling critical of her family, but had it not been for the Bridgetower Trust, she would never have left Salterton nor have benefited from an enlightening education and hindsight.

Maria also, as noted, fights against her mother, particularly the Gypsy background that her mother represents. Maria is ashamed of her heritage, and her feeling holds her back for awhile. "I am a Canadian woman, setting out on a university career, and I don't want any part of the Gypsy world" (RA, p.133). "I had to fight this music; its primitivism and sentimentality grated on everything the University meant to me....Oh I knew what was wrong with me, right enough; I wanted to be an intellectual, to escape from everything Mamusia and the generations of Kalderash behind her meant..."(RA, pp.132-33).

Hector and David become poor, close-minded students because of their rebellion against their parents. David's success in the world of law was a chance to escape his father. To achieve that success he had to shut off his feelings and deny love. "Hector's life had not been of the sort which usually brings forth actors--even Little Theatre actors....his life had been notably unfriendly toward the development of that taste for stimulating pretense which actors must possess" (TT, p.72-73). Hector's mother "had little to say, and it is doubtful if her mental processes could be called thought..." (TT, p.75), and his father, Reverend John, was a "gloomy and depressing parson", aptly nicknamed by his parishoners "Misery Mackilwraith" (TT, p.74). Hector refuses to be pushed to follow his father's footsteps into the ministry; in fact, he wants to be the exact opposite of his father:

> He had been able to detach himself from his home atmosphere enough to see that what lay at the root of many of his father's misfortunes was a lack of foresight, of planning, of common sense. In his concerns as an errand boy and beadle, Hector found that common sense could work wonders, and that planning enabled him to get through his work with no fuss. (TT, p.87)

Having rejected a life of the cloth and any spiritual qualities within him, Hector totally embraces the powers of the intellect, and thus becomes a man exclusively of the mind. "Planning and common sense became [Hector's] gods..."--"the secrets of life" which help him plan a life quite different from his father's, becoming "...as great a success as his father had been a failure" (TT, p. 82). At school he did well; his gods were "deified" in the subjects of algebra and geometry: "During the last two years of school he never failed to solve a problem correctly" (TT, p.87). At normal school, Hector thrived in the atmosphere of pedagogy and proves it in his model teaching. Later, when he takes his B.A. from Waverley, Hector forsakes most human contact and pleasures, focusing solely

on acquiring a particular property of knowledge what will make him a master of something in society. Having received his "specialist certificate" in mathematics, Hector bids "...farewell forever to the teaching of history, spelling and geography--all the trivial subjects which had been part of the routine of a primary teacher" (TT, p.92). As a mathematics teacher--a useful member of society--Hector succeeds in a socially acceptable way. But as a student--as a member of the human community--Hector fails; he is isolated, narrow-minded and soulless; his greatest failure lies in not grasping the property that is the right of every person--self-knowledge.

To escape society's mores and the influences of religion and family, one route remains: education. However, in many of these Canadian towns, this outlet is also detrimental to these poor students, providing an education which is insufficient and gloomy. It has long been Davies' opinion that "...Canada cares too little about real education..." (Diary, p.155). Evidence for this belief can be found everywhere in the Salterton trilogy. With old Mr. Shillito still working for the paper in Leaven of Malice, modern issues are bound to come in conflict with essays on bird seed. And if you cannot rely on your daily newspaper, what can one count on for dispensation of broad knowledge? Not one's Pastor, as in Monica's case. The religious tracts which governed her life proclaim "...unstinting service to others, simple piety...and no truck with thought or education beyond what was necessary to read the Good Book" (MF, p.42). Even books are begrudged their shaping power on people's lives. Miss Puss is outraged when money is spent on a nine volume dictionary of music for Monica. She asks in disbelief, "'Can't she learn from any thing less than that?'" (MF, p.131)

In school, the curriculum--the system--is designed for producing "young

fogies"--"solemn" students--making "the young old before their time" (TT, p.64). Less financially secure students are denied "much of the best that a university has to offer...." For example, some students like Hector do not have enough money to complete an education and so must work while studying. Davies sympathizes with Hector's situation and that of others like him, saying that they are "deserving of commendation." It takes courage and determination to study alone, to leave "stirring conversations" because there is a job to do, and to study on Sundays while others students are engaged in pleasant pastimes. The result, Davies says, is that students like Hector will not "get as much from [their] experience as...student[s] more fortunately placed. [They have] not the time to be young, or to invite [their] soul[s]" (TT, p.91).

Teachers and the curriculum do more than make the students old and gloomy; they push them into an emphasis on sciences which makes them even gloomier and more mediocre. Francis Cornish's school, Colborne College, did not provide or was not strong in its emphasis on art, languages, music, or religion or anything that held any magic, mystery or enchantment. Of the school's religion Cornish says it was conservative and middle class; it

> ...seemed to lack heart. There was nothing in it of the mystery, the embracing warmth, the rich gravy of the religion of Mary Ben. It was a religion well suited to Old Money and to the toadies of Old Money. It was a religion that Never Went Too Far. (WBB, p.188)

The school was "cheerfully Philistine about art...;" some masters make fun of Francis, calling him an "Ess-thete" making it "plain from the way it was said, that an 'ESS-thete' was a pretty feeble chap, wasting his time on art when he ought to be building up his character and facing the realities of life..." (WBB, p.193). School was big on

scholarship, on anything that was difficult--the sciences, "brain teasers" (WBB, p.195). It was good for you.

> It was a period when educators believed that the brain could be strengthened, like a muscle, by attacking and conquering anything it might first find difficult. Algebra, geometry, and calculus were the best developers of mental muscle, to master them was really pumping iron; but Classics wasn't bad--indeed suffienciently repellent to the average boy's mind to rank as a first-rate subject of study. (WBB, p.195)

Luckily for Francis, his school environment does not make him a poor student; he was not "...brilliant, in the prize-winning, examination-passing mode that makes for a splendid school career, but he was not stupid" (WBB, p.184). Ironically, a successful school career like that often creates a poor student, a fact acknowledged by Professor the Reverend Darcourt to Professor Hollier.

> "You've lived in a university longer than I have, Clem, and you've seen lots of splendidly promising young people disappear into mediocrity. We put too much value on a certain kind of examination-passing brain and a ready tongue." (RA, pp.100-101)

Education for commonplace people--makes them useful in an ordinary way (Man, p.271). In fact, it can destroy and almost kill one. Even when he is a teacher-student, Solly's research on Heaveysege is detrimental: "'he is my path to fame, my immortality, and the tomb of my youth'" (LM, p.178).

Many students might start out as poor students on the path to mediocrity, but there is always the possibility of redemption. Sometimes they become good students in spite of the environmental influences. They are not perfect from the beginning, and part of their education involves struggling to become a good student and a good human being. But it takes several qualities. Davies has a prescription for good students. How do they get that

way? What are the personal qualities that make them good students, and what factors in their environment predipose them to be good students?

First, it takes character--an inner strength and courage to move from obtuseness to wisdom. As Maria says, character means "Guts. A good strong will to balance all the book-learning. And understanding of how many beans make five" (RA, p.32). It takes a belief in the self to realize that he or she wants something different. Pearl, for example, had "....more than common strength of character..." despite her submissiveness to her parents. Pearl is "conscious that she [has] a destiny apart from these unhappy creatures, and she waits patiently for ['The Great Experience']" that will deliver her from her loneliness (TT, p.122). From the beginning Monica, too, has always been aware that "...everything about [her background] ran contrary to her great dream of life" (MF, p.63). She wants "hiraeth" (MF, p.311); she does not want to "slip under the surface of heavy-hearted dullness..." (MF, p.379). Maria, at an early age, longs for "enlightenment. In private prayer, she begs "...O God, don't let me die stupid" (RA, p.278). "I wanted nothing less than wisdom" (RA, p.38)--the "second paradise of the world" (RA, p.39). Dunny wants a "world of wonder," a realm in which he could gain power and his mother could not follow (FB, p.37). Solly, too, does not like his professional task of digging up Heavysege; his frustration with the task does him credit. Franics knows there is another world--the world of the Grail, the legend that gives meaning to his life.

Second, they all look for wisdom in some sort of cultural field--education, literature, music, writing, painting or history. They do not quest after a traditional life, academic fame or financial success (although they do achieve the latter two conditions in some moderation). They are artists, not tradesmen. And what they each study shapes and gives

meaning to their lives. For Freddy it is "Old Books [and] old wine; how few of us there are, she reflect[s] who really appreciate these things" (TT, p.197). For Solly, it is new material in Canadian literature; for Monica it is music; for Ramsay, historiography and hagiology; for Darcourt, the Aubrey; and for Francis, Pre-Raphelite art. Some even appear to be born wise. Darcourt suspects that Maria is one of the Scholarly Elect--"...one seems not so much to be teaching them as reminding them of something they already know..." (RA, p.46).

Third, their attitude toward learning is very much centered on themselves, and to get what they want they exercise considerable self-discipline. Freddy Webster learns on her own; a bibliophile, she pours over books, her "eyes...turned outward toward the world...." She is an ambitious student of the wine industry:

> "...I'm going to ask him to let me study in France, and learn everything about wine, and then come back here and revolutionize the wine industry in Canada....I'm not just playing. I really have a very professional attitude about the whole thing. I've read books about wine chemistry, and books about vintages, and everything about wine I can get my hands on." (TT, p.5)

Ramsay's study of history, myth, and in particular, sanctity, with the Jesuit Bollandists serves to feed his notion:

> ...that a serious study of any important body of human knowledge, or theory, or belief if undertaken with a critical but not a cruel mind, would in the end yield some secret, some valuable permanent insight into the nature of life and the true end of man. (FB, p.169).

Francis devours books and finds solace at school; Monny tries everything, and allows herself to be the tabula rasa; and Monny and Francis both want to please their teachers. Maria believes that universities are not just "diploma mills" (LM, p.182). She conceives a

university as a "world of research; the selfless pursuit of knowledge and sometimes of truth" (RA, p.142). She also believes, as did Rabelais, that amusing yourself was the best reason to learn. (RA, p.38) In this respect, Freddy might be a Maria in embryo; she, too, is a devotee of Rabelais and finds him "good fun" (TT, p.35).

And fourth, part of their character is the courage to do something about their life. For some this just means doing something on their own; Pearl takes her chance--acts in The Tempest and marries Solly; Solly abandons Heavysege to create something original in the field of Canadian literature; Maria stops trying to repress her Gypsy heritage, and instead, accepts Parlabane's advice "'...to let [her] root feed [her]crown'" (RA, p.205). For other apprenticing humans, this means emigrating to freedom. Dunny goes to Europe, as does David Staunton--twice, once to Oxford, and the other time to Switzerland for psychoanalysis; Francis apprentices in Europe, and Monica apprentices in England. In each case, these students begin their education in their chosen areas--art, music, history, legend--but not alone. A lot of their new understanding will come with the help of teachers who are catalysts in the search for wisdom and self-knowledge.

CHAPTER 6: Teachers

> Education is learning; and learning is apprehension--in the old sense of sympathetic perception. We cannot all perceive the facts of our experience in the same way. (MF, p.375)

I

Of all the elements that contribute to educating a person, Robertson Davies proffers the teacher as the pivotal force, for it is the formal educator who most often serves as either the primary catalyst or the major obstructor of the student's attainment of "self-knowledge." The Oxford English Dictionary defines a teacher as someone who "shows [a thing or a way]...through information or instruction." To this definition Davies would add that an "ideal" educator is someone who helps his students search for ways to educate their minds and their emotions--to come to terms with themselves and their world. Of course, not all teachers measure up to Davies' standards. This becomes obvious in his novels in which Davies presents two general types of teachers--superior and inferior. A teacher's "type" is determined by his philosophy of education, which in turn determines what and how he teaches, and ultimately by his effectiveness in leading the student to some measure of insight.

This simple division of types teachers allows Davies to portray what he believes to be the shortcomings of inferior teachers as well as the proper qualities of superior teachers. In Davies' mind, a good formal educator possesses a formidable knowledge of the subject he teaches and a desire to pass this on to his students. More than that, such a teacher employs methods of instruction and evaluation that are demanding and energetic for both

himself and his students; emphasizing individual inquiry and understanding, this teacher, through demonstration and dialogue, challenges his students to think for themselves and to expand their minds and emotions beyond the "comfort zone" and into the realm where life can be magical. Of course, high scholastic standards and demanding instruction are reasonable expectations from any "good" teacher, but what makes him a "superior" teacher is the possession of two additional qualities. The first of these is being instrumental in his students' achievement of some personal insights beyond the subject matter. In order to serve the students in this capacity, however, this teacher must also be serving himself in a like fashion. This means that while his professional self teaches, his private self simultaneously works towards greater self-knowledge.

The existence of this distinct and fully developing private self constitutes the fourth, and most desirable quality. In fact, the independent private self is the essence of what makes him a superior teacher. This person must be an individual first and a teacher second; confident in his personal identity, he only temporarily assumes the role of teacher and is careful not to make it all he can be or do. As an individual, he focuses on how to become more human--his search leading him to nourish himself with interests outside the school world, making him open and flexible to new ideas and sources of wisdom. Also, during this search he acknowledges and attempts to live with the dual nature of his self: the passionate and the rational sides within him. Knowing his own frailties ensures that this person has a certain amount of humility which, in turn, requires humour or light-heartedness to provide a proper perspective. Such a strong character becomes even more memorable when accompanied by other unconventional characteristics such as physical deformities, strange "auras," or unorthodox behaviours. Whatever these "other"

characteristics might be, they add up to a vitality that makes this person alive and whole--a person happy with himself--truly a great man. And as such, he provides a model of how to become a happy, integrated person--beyond the dimension of the school yard. He makes it clear that one learns not just to acquire a job, but also to pursue something higher than himself, to nourish himself, as well as to amuse and instruct others. This philosophy of learning and being human he brings to teaching. It is this kind of superior individual which makes a superior teacher.

In contrast, a "bad" formal educator has a narrow, amateurish knowledge of the subject he teaches. More than that, he is a mere pedagogue, and as such, makes it his goal to cram as much information into the heads of his students as he can. Following rules, regulations, and convention, this teacher simply tells his students the facts to know in order to achieve a finite end--a job or an examination result. Any insights beyond this objective world of tests and training cannot be obtained from this teacher because he has none to give.

More than anything, lack of self-knowledge makes this person an inferior teacher. Without any perceptions about himself--his strengths and weaknesses, his capacity for goodness and evil, or his ability to feel as well as think--he is an empty person . To make up for this lack of personal identity, this person assumes the identity of a teacher; the mask of the teacher becomes his only persona. Insecure and paranoid that his abilities might be questioned, this person drives himself to make his mask impenetrable by acquiring more public power, prestige, or specialized expertise--all to protect the hollowness within. But with no outside interests or personal strengths to bring to the job, this teacher is dull,

unpopular, and consequently much isolated from both students and colleagues. In effect, he is a bad, dull person, which inevitably makes him a bad, dull teacher.

Of course, not all the teacher figues in Davies' fictional teacherdom are examples of the extremes noted above. While there are polar opposites between the two categories of teachers, there are also gradations of superiority and inferiority within each category. Placement within the two broad categories of educators generally depends on the degree to which Davies admires or despises the personality traits displayed by the character. In addition to reflecting a general "type" of teacher--inferior or superior--each teacher figure also exemplifies a "particular" attribute or attitude that Davies associates with good or bad educational practices. For example, narrow specialists might be represented by one character and all-knowing fools by another; or the glorification of progressive education versus understanding in the humanities might be reflected by two others. Recognition of these particular characteristics is slightly more problematic among the superior teachers, who are all variations on the same theme--the evolution of the "ideal" educator. As one might expect, however, it is much easier to pick out the "hated" traits among the inferior teachers.

II

> There are many ... who learn--who apprehend--only by what they can hear and see, and the range of what they can hear and see is not extensive. (MF, p.375)

In the category of inferior teachers there are two levels of ineptitude. Fakes, Amateurs, Specialists, Professional Pedagogues, and just plain Bad Teachers comprise the first and lowest level; the second, higher level consists mainly of Vain Pedants. It is useful to begin with the less threatening of the two levels. In that way, as the examination progresses the reader will be able to see the increasing sophistication of the educational sins committed by these so-called teachers.

The example of Bevill Higgin, the unforgettably slick elocutionist in Leaven of Malice, provides a foundation for this first group. Through Bevill, Davies gets at all those essentially insecure people who bolster their own egoes by donning the guise of an expert teacher and jumping on the bandwagon of fashionable self-improvement courses. Bevill Higgin epitomises such an educator. One must use the term "educator" rather loosely, of course, for Bevill is as much veneer as the subject that he purports to teach. At first glance, Bevill's "very neat" and "old-fashioned" appearance befits Salterton's provincial expectations of a teacher from the Old Country, but at closer range his physical characteristics reflect a surface gloss that belies a lack of substance. Davies describes Bevill as a "small" man--"small" being repeated to emphasize the implication of a small minded person--with a shiny suit, "shiny blue" eyes, and a "shiny" bald head; of all his features, however, Bevill's "shiny false teeth"warn the reader not to be fooled by what they hear and see--Bevill only looks and acts the part of a teacher.

In fact, Bevill reminds one more of a showman than a teacher, and his brand of oratory art more of an imitation than a genuine accomplishment. With a typical actor's vanity for the spotlight and the sound of his own voice, Bevill toadies to Salterton's upper class by giving impromptu tea-time performances at Mrs. Bridgetower's At Home Days; the women are taken in by what appears to be Old World culture but which, in reality, are just moribund theatrical effects. When Bevill speaks it is in a "rich, actorly manner" (LM, p.230), and when he sings it is with "immense grandeur and feeling, beginning each musical statement loudly, and tailing off at the end as though ecstasy had robbed him of his consciousness" (LM, p.150). Indeed, his performances contain nothing realistic or natural; the songs are so altered that their "composers would have had trouble in recognizing their works as he performed them" (LM, p.150), and his performances are so contrived that even Davies cannot help but hint at their comic result.

> He enriched the English language with vowels of an Italian fruitiness, so that 'hand' became 'hond', and 'God' 'Goad'. It was plain that he had had a lot of training, for nobody ever sang so by the light of Nature. (LM, p.150)

If one can label Bevill a vaudevillian, one can also add the more accurate job title of travelling salesman: what he peddles amounts to cheap trickery. He does not offer elocution lessons to hone oratorical capacities for their own sake, but merely to get ahead--to make an impression. For example, Bevill's pitch to one young mother is that voice lessons for her only son would give him an "accent" that would make him "...*persona grata* among persons of cultivation" (LM, p.85). And therein lies the crux of Bevill's ignoble philosophy of education: for Bevill, the goal of education has nothing to do with learning for the sake of personal curiosity or enjoyment, but it has everything to do with acquiring a competitive edge--in his words, "speech training...[to] put [a child] far

beyond ordinary children" (LM, p.87). Pride and paranoia are the motivators for Bevill's philosophy, and the promotion of such a shallow education requires the expertise of a man like Bevill whose personal vagaries are equally as shallow.

In the true style of a huckster, Bevill's method for setting himself up in a teachership consists of condescension, bribery, maliciousness, deceit, flattery, and even physical seduction. For what he thinks are his first easy marks, Bevill chooses Solly Bridgetower, a junior English professor at Waverley University, and Gloster Ridley, editor of the Bellman newspaper. Taking a patronizing manner with Solly, Bevill proposes that he should give "readings from English poetry to [Solly's] classes...to give them the sonorous roll of the verse and to illuminate what [he implies has]...been presented to them in a dull and lifeless manner" (LM, p.161); he adds further insult by offering Solly a "kick-back" for any pupils he might acquire from these class presentations. And with equal self-conceit, Bevill presents himself to Ridley as an authority on bringing culture to the people. Disgusted by Bevill's affectations of superiority, both the academic and the professional world reject him as a "second-rater...a squirt...[and] a base little creature" (LM, p.162). In retaliation for these snubs, Bevill plays a cruel practical joke on Bridgetower and Ridley by submitting a false personal announcement in the Bellman which is the catalyst of the whole story.

Bevill has better success when he plays upon the gullibility of the lower classes represented by Edith Morphew and her family. To increase his image of importance, and to get what he wants, Bevill lies:

> 'I am acquiring a few pupils now, [he has none] quite a number,

> really....Many of them are young business men and women, who live in lodgings. I hoped that I might beg the use of this room for a couple of nights a week....'(LM, p. 84)

And like a true "smoothie" (LM, p.185), Bevill knows how to persuade his rubes with flattery:

> 'Perhaps we might make a reciprocal arrangement....I would be very happy to make the extra payment in lessons. You yourself, Mrs. Morphew, have a delightful voice, a little training and who can say what might not come of it?' (LM, p.85)

Bevill and his trade degenerate even further when he ingratiates himself with Edith's brother-in-law by teaching him lewd songs like "If You Don't Want the Goods, Don't Maul'em." But Bevill goes too far with his attempted physical seduction of Edith, who is momentarily hypnotized by Bevil's silver tongue. It is his confession to the practical joke that breaks the spell and prompts Edith to yell what has been on most readers' minds: "'...get away from me you nasty old thing'" (LM, p.232).

Bevill would be despicable if he were not so pitiful. This man has no ability to teach sophisticated elocution skills because he is nothing more than an impostor--a man posing as a superior teacher; nor can this man show the way to achieve self-knowledge because he has no idea who he is. Without a strong identity of his own, Bevill wraps himself up in a lie--in an image of a professional and superior teacher, and all the recognition, status, and power that supposedly goes with such a position. But all this is superificial gloss to hide a small, proud, resentful person, a self-pitying person who in retaliation for perceived snubs plays a spiteful practical joke. He is also a person who, in a desperate attempt not to disappear, has methodically kept a record of his career in a press-cuttings book--a book

which he tenderly and pathetically refers to as "my life" (LM, p.227). Ironically, Bevill's crown of glory becomes his crown of thorns; when a reporter from the Bellman asks to do a feature on the elocutionist, Bevill falls prey to his own pride and hands over his beloved book which, of course, contains the proof of his guilt--the original order form for the fake newspaper notice.

Bevill's shallow academic standards and his equally shallow personal values are typical of the other "bad" educators in Davies' novels. At the same time as reproaching Higgin for his superficiality, Davies also reproaches modern society for its lack of proper values, particularly its desire "to get ahead" which makes it gullible enough to be taken in by appearances. In this case, part of Salterton society sees Bevill Higgin and others like him, with their shiny suits and flashy ways, as signs of culture and knowledge.

Ellen Gall and Amy Nielsen in A Mixture of Frailites are two foolish amateur teachers, ready and willing to accept without question what society holds up as "culture". In Ellen's case it is a pastiche culture of the past--a mixture of dreams, old-fashioned love songs, and out-dated opera books. Ellen Gall represents the ultimate amateur teacher in terms of knowing her subject and providing special insights to her students. Ellen's qualifications and experiences as a piano teacher are severely limited; a former hat clerk, Ellen plays the church organ part-time and gives piano lessons to a dwindling number of students--all of whom, except for her niece Monica, prefer modern "conservatory examinations" to Ellen's "sweetly pretty" but archaic "drawing room music..." (MF, p.65). Although Ellen provides her one faithful student with the basics of "how to read and play the piano" (MF, p.71), she misleads and retards her niece's potential

development by creating Monica's conception of the music world as a romantic fantasy; what Ellen lacks as an amateur teacher she makes up for by being a specialist in romance and dreams. Over cups of "sweet milky tea" (MF, p.68), Ellen introduces Monica to a world of music known only to them both through two cherished books: The Victor Book of Opera--a picturesque "bible of the great art" which unlocks only a "spyhole" into that "great, glorious, foreign world" (MF, p.65), and The First Violin--a musical harlequin romance that serves to fire Monica's imagination about her future male teachers in Europe. Ellen's day-dreams are well meant, but without a proper amount of realism they add to Monica's naivete. The greatest danger comes from Ellen's idealized and sentimental insights about artists and their lives. Unfortunately the only insight she can give Monica is how to be a "sweet," "lovely person" (MF, p.70). Consequently, when in Europe, Monica finds herself a sweet girl with naive ideas about starving in garrets in order to become a great artist.

While Aunt Ellen has had no opportunities to acquire experience and larger ideas and pass them along, Amy Neilson, an American playing the modern Parisienne, has. Amy's teaching consists of acting as confidante, and "stuffing her charges with culture like Strasburg geese..." (MF, p. 247). In both respects however, she fails to impress at least one young diletante--Monica Gall. To Amy's feminine skills, Monica feels indifference and impatience.

> "She was wonderful to me, and told me a lot about clothes and make-up and hair-dos and things. But please, Sir Benedict, I don't want to get involved in all that kind of thing. It's not what I'm here for." (MF, p.134)

And with respect to Amy's cultural teachings, Monica is less than enthusiastic. Amy's

experiences do not help her teaching because she has not mind of her own. A victim of fashion and societal trends, Amy has had little practice or reinforcement for independent feeling or individual inquiry. For what is important she follows the reasonable and fashionable opinion of the mob. Not surprisingly, Amy attempts to perpetuate this drone-like mentality by telling her charges what to marvel at rather than allowing the girls to discover meaning and insight on their own. However, despite Amy's attempts to shape her students' taste, and to confine their feelings, it does not work for Monica.

> In spite of Amy's cramming, Voltaire was not a living name to Monica, nor was Balzac, or any of the others who gave the [Pantheon] meaning, and everywhere the bleak, naked horror of enthroned Reason was ghastly palpable. (MF, p.247)

Many students have experienced puffed-up teachers/fakes like Bevill or ineffectual do-gooders like Amy and Aunt Ellen; yet another common type of teacher often inflicted upon students is the monarchial, middle-aged matron who teaches not because of a love for children, learning, or knowledge, but because of the absolute power and respect that the position affords. What's Bred in the Bone offers an example of such a martinet in form of Miss Helen McGladdery--a large, mean-spirited woman whose insecurities lead her on a life-long crusade for authority against small children in grade three. McGladdery conceives of education and teaching as a war--based solely on power and fear. Sometimes in this battle she perceives herself as a simple fighter who has just been "soldiering through" for the past thirty years; but more often than not, she is the "implacable" (WBB, p.93) "captain of a pirate ship" (WBB, p.94), and her students are both her crew and her enemy. An "expert disciplinarian" (WBB, p.93), McGladdery keeps mutiny at bay with verbal humiliation and corporal punishment in the form of a leather strap.

> "Gordon McNab, you're a true chip off the McNab block.

> (Slash!) I've given the strap to your father (Slash!), and both your uncles (Slash!), and I once gave it to your mother (Slash!), and I'm here to tell the world that you are the stupidest, most ignorant, no-account ruffian of the whole caboodle. (Slash!) And that's saying something. (Slash!)" (WBB, p.94)

And like those of any other pirate, McGladdery's motivations and tactics are as unethical as they are tyrannical. A stout Tory, McGladdery allows religion and politics to interfere with her duty to ensure young Cornish's safety because his grandfather, a "leading Grit," belongs to "the hated Liberal party" (WBB, p.94). She covertly enforces her prejudice by setting up a humiliating situation that will ensure that Cornish becomes the target of unpoliced (at least by her) school-yard beatings: "If the boy had so much grit in him, let him show it; she would do nothing until he complained, in which case she would take steps, but she would despise him as a complainer" (WBB, p.94). Thus this guardian of human innocents plunges one of her students into six years of social "Hell" (WBB, p.93).

She also obstructs Francis' full artistic potential with her teaching skills which are woefully inadequate; her knowledge of the curriculum is at at the rudimentary level, and her presentation of material, far from being enlightening is confining, and in the case of art and Francis, actually obstructs knowledge. She teaches "art as she teaches everything" (WBB, p.96) in the same bland way: art is not an ongoing process, but a subject that is confined to thirty minutes every week. Even at the rudimentary level, she knows less about art than eight year old Cornish. Her explanation of shading as "scuffing down one side of the object with the flat of the pencil's point" so that "the shaded side 'went back' and the unshaded part 'stuck out'" is extremely amatuerish in contrast to Cornish's understanding of shading as a depiction of a "third dimension" achieved by light, "great patience," and a sophisticated method of "tiny parallel lines"; these lines he calls

"cross-hatching," but McGladdery, in contrast, refers to them in vulgar fashion as " tick-tack-toe" (WBB, p.96). Francis' expertise constitutes a certain amount of power to McGladdery, so instead of encouraging him, she jails him for his creativity: "'If you take the time to do all that tick-tack-toe on your apple you won't be finished by four, and you'll have to stay in till it's done....'" Once Francis and the other "culprits" are "released", McGladdery restricts her evaluatory remarks to a reluctant "all right"--designed to stifle Cornish's originality, or anything "fancy" in his work that might expose her lack of ability and thus threaten her omnipotent position. (WBB, p.102)

Teachers like Miss McGladdery are obviously bad teachers; McGladdery belongs in an army, not in a classroom. But there are also other teachers, like Mr. Kelso and Norm Yarrow in Leaven of Malice, who are equally poor teachers, yet their style and approach to education is much more subtle than McGladdery's and, as a consequence, often go undetected as "bad" teaching. What Davies finds particularly worrisome is that teachers like Kelso and Yarrow--test-makers and narrow specialists--are, in fact, condoned and perpetuated by society and the academic community.

Mr. Kelso teaches music appreciation (read: indoctrination) at Waverley. One naturally assumes that such a teacher would have a wide range of feeling that would allow him to appreciate many different kinds of music, and that such a teacher would encourage a wide range of individual interpretation from his students. However, Mr. Kelso with his "frosty-unwilling smile," is almost as domineering as Miss McGladdery in his approach to education and teaching. He treats his students as if they have no mind of their own; he tells the students what to like and what to study in order to pass the exam. Ironically,

Kelso demands that his students not express their appreciation for music--fearing that they will "sentimentalize" or "rhapsodize foolishly." To ensure that this does not happen, Kelso attempts to mold the students to his way of thinking. He teaches his students to appreciate only those musical pieces that he likes--all other music joins his collection of "Horrible Examples"--any music sung or played "in a manner of interpretation that he despise[s]" (LM, p. 93).

Mr. Kelso also obstructs his students' education. He does not encourage personal inquiry or individual development; rather, he teaches that knowledge comes from just one source--the teacher--and thus he nurtures a classroom of exam-passers. Some, like Tessie Forgie, accept this blindly; others, like Pearl, a former student, recognize Kelso's shallowness and work to circumvent it. As "handmaiden" and "bottle-washer" (LM, p.92) to Kelso's phonograph and ego, Pearl knows how to fake appreciation for Kelso, all the while knowing that real appreciation and knowledge come not from just one source but from both the good and the bad examples.

Norm Yarrow, a university psychologist in Leaven of Malice, represents just one thing: Davies' dislike for mere specialists--in any field. Davies contends that the problem with specialists is that their knowledge is narrow and therefore necessarily shallow. They often attempt to explain the world according to a system or pet theory, and all too often their knowledge is textbook-centered rather than people- and knowledge-centered. Yarrow is just such a teacher. He tries to make all his cases regarding parents and children fit one theory--the Oedipus complex. He bases this approach on some introductory psychology courses, some general texts, and some rather unhelpful research with rats. Thus armed,

Norm thinks he is an "expert on human behaviour" (LM, p. 199); he believes in his competence and that it gives him all the answers and the license to give his advice--most cliches--unasked, whenever he hears or sees discord. Such a habit makes Yarrow less a professional psychologist and more of a cross between a do-gooder and a busy-body.

Yarrow has no insight to give; in fact, this "self-confident simpleton"[13] has very little true, profoundly-felt knowledge of people except for what a text says. This is precisely what Vambrace tells Yarrow when the latter attempts to characterize the Vambrace domestic problems in terms of the Oedipus complex. In a memorable comic conflict between Vambrace and Yarrow, Vambrace in the course of a discussion "wolfishly" exposes Yarrow's lack of understanding about the Oedipus complex and then crushes him, depicting him as:

> '...many other Sphinx of our modern world, an undereducated, brassy young pup, who thinks that gall can take the place of the authority of wisdom, and that a professional lingo can disguise his lack of thought. You aspire to be a Sphinx, without first putting yourself to the labour of acquiring a secret.'[sic] (LM, p.198)

Sadly, even after the interview, Yarrow still believes he is an expert on human behaviour and that he's right--that Vambrace's hostility is a defense against the truth. Ironically, Yarrow, the specialist, knows nothing about psychology, and despite this exchange has learned nothing about himself or others.

Rounding off this group of inferior teachers is Hector Mackilwraith, a high school mathematics teacher in Tempest Tost. Davies' portrait of Mackilwraith involves an extensive representation of a stereotypical "bad educator." In him are all the traits just

witnessed in the previous educators. He is a fake in the that he has no inner awareness of who or what he really is; he is also an amateur, a tyrant, a specialist, and a pedant. Above all, Hector's greatest handicap is that he is the ultimate modern--a rationalist and a utilitarian; he's a one-side man--a man of the mind only. Common sense and planning are Hector's gods. Early in his life, they become his "secrets of life" (TT, p. 89) which will help him plan a life quite different from his father's. He finds his gods in mathemathics and decides to become a "specialist" of mathematics in high school.

Having heard the call to teach, Hector becomes a disciple of pedagogy. At Normal School, Hector excels in teacher training, earning the title "born teacher" (TT, p. 89). Later in life Hector reproaches private schools for their lack of pedagogy. After teacher training, Hectors moves on to attain a Bachelor of Arts degree; during this time he sacrifices friends and conversation to the detriment of his personal development. Hector pursues his dream, and when he is appointed as Head of the Mathematics Department at a local Salterton school, he believes his "cup [is] full" (TT, p.92). His greatest ecstasy comes when he is offered a position as examiner in the provincial system in the Department of Education--a place, he thinks is akin to "Paradise" (TT, p.39).

Teaching is like a science to him. Like McGladdery, Hector is "captain on his quarterdeck" (TT,p.89); he loves the rules and authority in classroom management--particularly detentions. He looks to spring as one of his peak detention periods; even his colleagues refer to "Old Hector" as "one of the great detainers and keepers-in of our time..."(TT, p.19). Not one for explanations, Hector prefers to show students through ridicule and humiliation. Teaching is his life, and he likes nothing better

than to spend a "pleasant evening marking math tests" (TT, p.48), pointing out with his red pencil where a student has fallen into "mathematical sin" (TT, p.48).

In terms of a personal philosophy of education, as far as Hector has a real thought or opinion on the matter, he is an advocate of "Useful Knowledge." As such, he believes the main purpose of education is to equip the learner with the skills to get a job. Yet, his knowledge, like that of Norm Yarrow, is narrow and amateurish. What he knows about mathematics he has got from only books on the subject and how to teach it; he knows nothing else, and he reads nothing else, except the Reader's Digest to unwind. All other literature, such as the writings of Shakespeare, he regards as smutty.

Hector's personal life is as regimented as his professional life. His system for living is carried out in a notebook; he sets up Pro/Contra debates on paper which he then employs to help him make life decisions. He prides himself on his orderliness in thinking (TT, pp. 38-39); he is even methodical and predictable when he eats. But in his personal life, he has led a very "meagre life" (TT, p.188). Emotionally he is a shallow and repressed individual.

Davies' portrait of Mackilwraith shows a man whose vocational self has consumed his personal self. What remains is, as part of his name suggests, a wraith--a ghost of a person. He is a shell of a living, feeling human being; on the outside what we see is a predictable, boring "stodge"--a human computer. It is a condition that began early in life: at an early age Hector is seen as "long-headed" (TT, p.86) by his fellow villagers; now he is regarded as a "mathematical wizard" (TT, p.19) by Mrs. Forrester, as a "creaking

pedant" (TT, p.19) by Solly Bridgetower, the junior English professor, as "Old Binomial" (TT, p.72) by his fellow colleagues, and as a "classroom tyrant" (TT, p.254) by his students.

Hector Mackilwraith falls short of Shakespeare's Gonzalo. In the original Tempest, Gonzalo is a wise old councillor who, because he is an agent of grace and loyalty, is deemed dangerous and nearly killed. However, in playing the role in Salterton's second-rate production, Hector turns out to be a middle-aged, repressed puritan, who, because he is sick of his regimented lifestyle, tries to gain experience and recognition in the world of art. During his enlightenment, Hector learns that there is no grace in him; instead, he is an overweight man preoccupied with thinking and categorizing (TT, p. 87). Nor is he very wise, for he is the one who seeks counsel on affairs of the heart from little girls and gangsters. In fact, Hector is not dangerous to anyone except himself. The realization of what he is, as compared to the Gonzalo he wants to be, leads to a pathetic and unsuccessful attempt at suicide.

Hector, then, is a "bad educator;" he has no ability to lead his students to insight because, as Solly rightly points out, he has

> "...a crass soul. He thinks that when his belly is full and his job safe, he's got the world by the tail. He has never found out anything about himself, so how can he ever know anything about other people." (TT, p.279)

Hector epitomizes modern man--his goal is survival of the mind, the intellect, the body--while the heart and the emotions are ignored.

If this first group of teachers are the fools, then the next group are most certainly the knaves. The three best examples of teachers in this group are Walter Vambrace in the Salterton trilogy, and Urquhart McVarish and John Parlabane in Rebel Angels. All three are gifted intellectuals with the means and ability to pass on their knowledge, but they fall short of this because of their greatest downfall--pride. Instead of directing their knowledge towards their respective universities, mankind, or even greater wisdom, they instead devote their knowledge towards the glory of themselves.

A brief character description suggests there is not much to Professor Vambrace--physically or professionally. He is described as a "bony" "saturnine-hatchet man" (TT, p.15) with "demonic eyebrows" (LM, p.28) and scholarly legs resembling "toothpicks" (TT, p.253). As a scholar of the classics one might expect some transference of the Greeks' simple elegance to Vambrace's personality, but instead his manner is economical to the point of being terse (TT, p.21). As a teacher, he is conservative, unoriginal, and perhaps lazy; for example, he never alters his lectures from one year to the next "lest [he be] accused of popularization" (LM, p.95). Within the academic community, Professor Vambrace is a pedant and an academic snob--an "unpopular" man (LM, p.96). He delights in showing off his "erudition" (TT, p.102,109) at community theatre practices; he sneers at public school teachers like Mackilwraith; he is a true ivory tower snob who openly declares that university people have a superior intellect to the "elementary intelligences" of non-professional people such as Gloster Ridley, the newspaper editor (TT, p.246). Moreover, Vambrace's insolent pride is not confined to non-academic people; he is publicly vindictive to fellow professors, and extremely jealous when his colleagues get academic favours. The most

notable example which continues to fuel the academic jealousy in Vambrace occurred several years before the action of Leaven of Malice actually takes place. On that particular occasion, Vambrace was unsuccessful in being awarded the position of Dean of Arts--the post going, instead, to the late Professor Bridgetower. From that moment forward Vambrace believes that there has been a "plot" to do him "out of his rightful dignity as Dean..." (LM, p.95). Vambrace nurses this egotistical paranoia even into the present where it shows itself in his bad manners toward Solly Bridgetower, the son of the late Dean, and by Vambrace's accusations that the false notice announcing the engagement between his daughter and Solly is just part of the continuing "plot" to bring him into "disrepute and mockery" (LM, p.95).

As in the case of some of the teachers already discussed, Vambrace's true profession is not education; he is an actor with an acute "histrionic temperament" (LM, p.96) reminiscent of the "old school tragedian" (LM, p.28), and his best role is that of the egoist. All the world's a stage to him; a deluded notion that he has aristocratic blood provides him with "two character roles"--one time he will disguise himself as the "Well-Born Celt," and another time he will give an impersonation of the "Wild and Romantic Celt" (LM, p.96). Even at his highest moments they are "hammy" performances, and at his lowest moment when he is disguised as a detective, Vambrace is reduced to what he fears the most: a "sneaky, night-walking jackeen" (LM, p.96) --a "dog" (LM, 119), in his own words.

The best illustration of Vambrace's inadequacy as a teacher is provided by the juxtaposition of his true character and Shakespeare's character which he plays in

Salterton's Little Theatre version of The Tempest. As the play tells us, Prospero is a knowledgeable nobleman whose love of learning and of magic instills in him the qualities of honesty, forgiveness, and compassion as well as the ability to believe in the simultaneous existence of responsibility and romance. Professor Vambrace, on the other hand, is completely devoid of any capacity for romance or forgiveness, and if he has any sense of responsibility, it is directed solely towards himself. He is a cloistered pedant who has no desire to pass on any knowledge or good will to his family, to his colleagues, or to his acquaintances. So strong is his conceit that he will lie, sneak, and use condescending persuasion in order to acquire his role as Prospero. In effect, Professor Vambrace is Davies' version of the archtypical provincial professor who, in his attempt to distinguish himself in the community, becomes a despicable man driven by paranoia and jealousy.

If one simply magnifies Vambrace, with his selfishness, his egoism, and his over-bearing pride, one has Urquhart McVarish, a university professor of Renaissance studies. "Urky", as he is known to his colleagues, also has pretensions to aristocracy and acting; he loves to play the part of a high-born Scot and a modern day Renaissance man. He presides in a smoking jacket over dinner parties; his particular love is pornography, and he enjoys displaying erotic items to students and faculty to shock them and to delight himself; in addition, his sexual proclivities extend to homosexuality.

Professionally, Urky lacks modesty and morality. He calls himself a "great scholar," and he cares little for his students except their ability to further his own ends; Ph.D. candidates work to further his research, not their own. Most of his colleagues want to kill

Urky, but barring that or the prospect of firing a tenured professor, they do what is often done: kick him upstairs with a devoted secretary and a few students. Ironically, Urky's colleagues get their death-wish; Parlabane, the last figure of the trio noted above, dispatches the Renaissance scholar during one of McVarish's orgies.

Of all the teachers Davies has created, Parlabane is the most ambiguous. Although Urky is more malevolent than Parlabane, Parlabane has been described as a human devil. If one were to take all these vagaries together, Bevil's spiteful jokes, McGladdery's cruelties, Vambrace's "dirty" work, and Urky's sexual proclivities, one would have the very devil in the form of John Parlabane. But as with the real devil, hubris is Parlabane's nemesis.

From this large collection of inferior teachers a number of revealing patterns emerge, the most simple of which concerns names. Each of the characters represent an aspect of education that Davies despises, and in order to criticize it, he exaggerates it in their names or variations of them. For example, in Bevill Higgin's name Davies leads us to expect a distorted reflection of a teacher, much as one would see in a mirror that is beveled; Aunt Ellen's vision of the music world as genteel and romantic is shown by her last name, Gall, to be irritating to her students, chafing and, in a sense, bitterly disillusioning for her niece, Monica. Miss McGladdery personifies the very opposite of cheerful scholarship suggested by her name; Norm Yarrow represents the "norm" among narrow specialists like himself; the "wraith" in Mackilwraith's name stands for the ghost of the man which is left after consumption by his profession; Parlabane's name depicts a man whose gross knowledge makes him the "bane" of all those around him; and McVarish's nick-name,

"Urky" requires little explanation--suggesting an awful man [and] an awful teacher (FB, p.125).

Another familiar pattern is that of food--fulfilling that old adage, that "you are what you eat." None of these teachers are connoisseurs; they eat food that is too bland, too traditional, and they eat too much of it. Sickly sweet tea reflects Aunt Ellen's totally unrealistic vision of music; gin diluted by grapejuice and then slopped all over the floor reflects the newly Ph.D.'d Yarrow's poor attempt to affect social graces, to fit into new academic life; large hunks of apple pie mirror Mackilwraith's paunchy (TT, p.92) and overindulged ordinary scholarship; crumbs of tea, crackers, and dry-left-overs spit across the table in fury reflect Vambrace's dry uncharitable manner; decanters of sherry reflect McVarish's delusions of grandeur; and the copious amounts of food and drink consumed by Parlabane reflect his equally undisciplined approach to academic life.

So far this examination has provoked a reflection of a group of teachers who are not only dull, ineffectual professionals, but also, in most cases, awful people who are shown to be unsuitable for teaching. They are bad teachers because they are basically uninformed in their fields of knowledge; they have undistinguished careers except in their own minds. They all teach science or, for them, quasi-science subjects--mathematics, psychology, music and the classics are even boiled down to a science--predictable, categorized, and without mystery. These people engage in end-gaining and show a lack of genuine philosophy. They do not desire knowledge; they desire power (for example, the megalomaniac, McGladdery), and this reflects itself in their teaching methods which range from neglect and deceit to tyranny.

No special insights can be learned from these nice, dull people because they have none themselves. In some cases, what they have offered has had detrimental effects on their students. For example, Monica starves herself according to Aunt Ellen's romantic notions of "simple" "sweet" artists. And then there is Frances Cornish, who develops a keen sense of misanthropy from kindergarten teachers and Miss McGladdery.

Another characteristic shared by all is a total lack of self-knowledge, which is the real reason as to why they are bad teachers. They are all isolated figures--isolated from students, from family, and from themselves. Inside they are all tied by feelings of inadequacy, poor self-confidence, and paranoia. The only measure of satisfaction or importance they feel comes from the educational world; their only life is the classroom. What little interaction there is between students and colleagues is totally focused on the self. They either ignore the students, abuse them, or flatter them to their own interest. They are frightened or troubled by students or, indeed, see them as enemies.

In order to cover up this empty, dead person (essentially a superficial person underneath) and simultaneously boost their own egos they all wear the "actor's mask"--the persona of a teacher. Holding the office of teaching is important to these teachers because it can lead to even greater authority and status: the headship of a Department, a Dean's chair perhaps. Hector wears this mask continually--he is "a teacher who is forever teaching" (Man, p.251). Beyond the teaching role, each one of them also indulges in some form of drama that allows him to play somebody else in order to boost his self-esteem. So one has conceited Bevil giving vaudevillian tea performances and keeping

a memorial scrapbook of all his press-cuttings; then there is Aunt Ellen who lives her unlived life through romantic dreams of the music world; Hector, too, takes a stab at acting, to catch the attentions of young Griselda; and McGladdery is not exempt from play-acting--her perception of herself as a soldier or a captain shows a woman who wants the power and recognition usually given to men. There is Kelso's omnipotence; Vambrace's vanity also leads him to connive to get the lead role in a local theatre production; and Vambrace has a soul mate in McVarish--both of these men having pretensions to aristocratic backgrounds which they act out in reality. McVarish and Parlabane also have their own little homosexual dramas.

But as much as these inferior teachers try to build themselves up, they still fail. Ultimately, they all suffer from the same downfall--pride--a blindness to anything other than themselves. They lack humanity and morality. A career becomes the pinnacle of their life's ambition, replacing spiritual goals with physical rewards. They create God in their own image and heaven is an earthly one--like Hector's "paradise" in the education department. For example, Bevill's career book is dedicated to the glory of himself, Ellen's Victor Book of Opera is her "bible," Amy visits churches that are dedicated to reason and which display rood screens designed to shut out feeling, Hector's gods are common sense and planning, Yarrow manipulates people's lives like a god, Vambrace is the epitome of an uncharitable, unforgiving nieghbour, McVarish disturbs the natural order of things with his sexual tendencies, and Parlabane mocks spiritual feelings with his monk's costume which covers a body described as Satanic.

These static characters are static people. Davies does not really suggest that there is

much hope for these people or a chance for growth--personal or professional. Even the prognosis for Hector is poor. Hector may have learned one or two things about himself, but it would not be like him to do something irrational or different to find out more about himself. Hector would need something in his "larger life" to make him look beyond himself and the world of the classroom.

At best, Bevill's shallow academic standards and equally shallow personal values represent all the other "bad" teachers in Davies' novels. At worst, Bevill's paranoia and his insecurity represent Canada's national sense of inferiority. Like Bevill, the country constantly attempts to be something she is not--a mediator between the U.S. and the U.K. It is acceptable to want to put your "best foot forward" (MF, p.195), Ripon tells Monica, who in Mixture of Frailties has also just been caught aggrandizing her family heritage. In fact, surrounded by "self-satisfied" Englishmen, even he--an American--finds it is almost a necessity "to pull yourself up even with them...."; it is either "... act a part or disappear" (MF, p.195). The problem, Ripon continues, occurs when you start believing the part you are playing--that is just "bad art" (MF, p.195). Monica learns this humiliating lesson, but it destroys Bevill.

II

The Magus in Robertson Davies' Novels.

> If the shepherds needed a prodigy to stir them, the Wise Men needed no more than a hint, a new star amid the host of heaven....The legend calls them Kings, and Kings they were indeed in the realm of apprehension, of perception, for they were able to read a great message in a small portent. We dismiss great legends at our peril, for they are the riddling voices by means of which great truths buried deep in the spirit of man offer themselves to the world. Gaspar, Melchoir and Balthazar stand as models of those--few, but powerful at any time--who have prepared themselves by learning and dedication to know great mysteries when the time is ripe for them to be apprehended by man... (MF, p.375-376)

When Davies' novels are viewed from within a Jungian perspective, one discovers that a specific archetype continually asserts itself and that is "...the Magus, or the Wizard or the Guru, or anything that signifies a powerful formative influence toward the development of the total personality" (Man, p.229)--more commonly known as the teacher or the educator. Davies' examples of teachers who are Magi contintually repeat themselves but never in quite the same way (Man., p.229); they are constantly changing and evolving. Of the ten most prominent educators in Davies' canon, the first four come from the Salterton trilogy and are represented by Humphrey Cobbler; the next three educators are from the Deptford trilogy and are best illustrated by Dunstan Ramsay; and from Davies' most recent Cornish trilogy, come two more educators, the most interesting being Simon Darcourt. What makes these three key educators and their colleagues superior teachers is their possession, in varying forms, of the following four elements. First, they have, unlike the amateurish and superficial knowledge of their inferior counterparts, a superior knowledge of the subject they are teaching. Second, these figures

have the desire as well as the ability to transmit this knowledge to their students. Active learning, involves teacher and student and emphasizes the learner. This transmission implies that their methods of imparting information require energy--thinking on the part of the student as well as the teacher. These teachers challenge their students to think beyond the mere world of facts--the what--and require them to ask questions about the how, the why, and the possibility. These methods also suggest that judgment of the students' work will be based on their demonstration of material beyond a mere rote exercise and that this judgment will be fair, based on universally accepted standards. These two elements are not unreasonable to expect as the responsibilities of any superior teacher; however, it is the next two elements which make Davies' educators so special. Third, then, these educators do more than just show the students how to obtain a grounding in the subject matter; they show or advise how this knowledge relates to the students' own lives--to the whole person, not just the student--to their personal myth. Often these educators give their students valuable personal insights, or show them the path to self-discovery. And finally, the fourth element which marks these men is a combination of particular traits that attests to their humannesss. They could have, as mentioned earlier, physical oddities or disfigurements, an aura of mystery may surround them, and they often have nick-names, a propensity for humor, and the demonstrated ability to create. Uniqueness makes them stand out and remain memorable. All together, these traits add up to a vitality that marks these men as alive--offering education for life.

In the first trilogy there exists no better example of such a superior teacher than Humphrey Cobbler--part-time music teacher, cathedral organist, and choirmaster. Cobbler possesses all four of the super-teacher qualities: serious knowledge of music,

active instructional methods, insights on better living, and a remarkable assortment of unique personal characteristics. However, Cobbler's superior talent goes almost unnoticed because of the discrimination against those very unique traits that make him special--his odd appearance, his unconventional mannerisms, and, most particularly, his lack of conformity. By the provincial standards of Salterton, Cobbler just does not fit the mold of a respectable teacher.

Saltertonians want a teacher created in their own image: someone practical, predictable, neat, tidy, respectable, serious, normal, and safe. By his own admission, Cobbler does not fit their vision:

> 'My life...is a headlong flight from respectability. If I tarted up in a clean collar, I could spend hours and hours every week jawing to the Rotary Clubs about what a fine thing music is and how I am just as good as they are. I'm not as good as they are, praise be to God! As a good citizen, I am not fit to black their boots.' [sic[(LM, p.133)

And as appearances are the standard of all judgment, it is not surprising, then, that many Saltertonians give a slick fellow like Bevill an inordinate amount of respect and attention because Bevill, with his allusions to the old Country and his neat, shiny shoes and suits, conforms to their idea of the way a teacher should look and act, whereas Cobbler does not. "'He's not right in his head,'" says Nellie Forrester, chairman of Salterton's Little Theatre Company; "'...he's an untidy dresser,'" "'...he laughs out loud at nothing,'" "'he never gets his hair cut,'" and "'he's a Drinker'" (TT, p.133). Even more than his disturbing "poverty and untidiness" (LM, p.60), it is the suspicion of hidden capabilities within Cobber which frighten the township. They see it in

> ...the smiling concentration of his lean, swarthy face, and the nervous rolling of his large, black, bird-like eyes. He looked like a gypsy. His appearance was of the sort which causes housewives to lock up their spoons and their daughters. (LM, p.60)

But what really unnerves people is Cobbler's humor, his happy energy, and his refusal to conform to the Canadian style of being serious and gloomy. A perfect example of this occurs one Halloween evening when Cobbler and a few of his students are caught "skylarking"--drinking and singing--in the cathedral. Cobbler shields his students by taking "full responsibility," and yet, even in his "discomfiture" he manages to stand before the Dean "with an air of invincible cheerfulness" (LM, p.52). When the Dean reprimands him for not looking at his "situation in a proper way" (LM, p.63), Cobbler admits to a certain lightheartedness:

> 'I know. That's what one of my teachers used to say. "Er ist nicht ernst," he would mumble, because I wouldn't get all sweaty about Brahms.' [sic] (LM, p.63)

And then Cobbler questions the degree of seriousness in the Cathedral.

> 'Perhaps the Cathedral is too serious,....It is the House of God, isn't it? How do we know that God likes His house to be damned dull? Nobody seems to think that God might like a good time, now and then.' (LM, p.63)

But these remarks should not be taken as a suggestion that Cobbler totally lacks a sense of proportion as to what is proper and important, for as one sees in the continuing exchange between Cobbler and the Dean, Cobbler judges what is important not by what others think, but rather by what he thinks is important.

> 'You must be serious. You have a wife and children to support. That is serious I suppose?'
> 'Not really.'

'What is serious then?'
'Music, I suppose, in a hilarious sort of way'....(LM, p.63)

Because of the emphasis placed on apparently superficial traits, Cobbler's wisdom goes almost unobserved. Nellie Forrester quickly dismisses the idea of Cobbler as music director for the local production of Tempest Tost. Others, sensing his talent, try to keep it down by jealously denying its existence; the Dean, for example, notes that "...the better Cobbler's music was, the more the organists's personality seemed to grate upon a number of influential Cathedral parishoners" (LM, p.59). Still, for others like the Bridgetower Trust people, "it never even crosses their mind" (MF, p.51) that Cobbler could be as equally as qualified as the eminent Sir Benedict Domdaniel, whom they engage at a costly price to evaluate Monica's musical ability. For the majority of Saltertonians, then, Cobbler just does not fit the image of a teacher. Ironically, however, their model, Bevill Higgin, turns out to be nothing more than a glossy, superficial reflection of a teacher with no substance whereas his opposite, Cobbler, with his character and dishevelled appearance, hint at something profound within him. Wisdom from such an unexpected source goes almost undetected except by an outsider, Valentine Rich, who observes that many of Cobbler's outer oddities are the "superficial marks of genius" (TT, p.133).

Whatever Cobbler's failings and improprieties with students and drink, his dedication to and expertise in music can not be questioned. Even the Dean agrees: "'...Cobbler has his faults, but he is an excellent musician'" (LM, p.58). In fact, as Cobbler tells the Dean that Halloween evening, "music" is the one "serious" thing in his life. Even as a child, Cobbler recalls that music lessons were joyful tasks: "'When I was I was sent to choir

school....I never worked at my school lessons, but I worked like a black at my music..."' (TT, p.185). This recollection not only indicates that Cobbler makes an interesting distinction between "formal education" (of which he admits he has "little") and musical education, (TT, p.185) but, more important, it indicates the beginning of his devotion to music--a devotion which in time becomes, more than wife, child, or church, the moving principle in his life:

> "...my whole life is moved by the principle that the one thing which is more important than peace is music." (TT, p. 138)

Cobbler does not mean to be disrespectful or sacrilegious; on the contrary, he believes his devotion to, and indeed, worship of art in the form of music will bring him closer to God. Sometimes he is confident as when he compares himself to Salterton citizens in words cited, in part, above: "'As a good citizen I am not fit to black their boots [but] As a child of god, I sometimes think I have a considerable bulge on them...'" (LM, pp. 133-34). And at other times he is less optimistic:

> '...I'm probably wrong....Wouldn't it be an awful sell for a lot of us--all the artists, and jokers, and strivers-after-better-things--if God turned out to be the Primer Mover of capitalist respectability?' (LM, p.134)

With Cobbler's dedication to music confirmed, his experience and expertise is self-evident. He has a wide knowledge not just of music, but also of literature, medicine, and drama. For example, his suggestion to use Shadwell's version of The Tempest and music attributed to Purcell for the local production of Shakespeare's play is far superior to the other suggestions but nonetheless goes unheeded. In addition, the overlooking of Cobbler's expertise is even more a snub when we learn that he is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (TT, p.171), that both he and his wife have worked professionally

with Sir Benedict Domdaniel, and that he was a one-time lecturer in music appreciation at the University of Waverley.

Unlike the teachers examined so far, Cobbler is one who interacts with his students, who is honest with them, and who teaches by demonstration. After all, it is Cobbler's urge to demonstrate the roundely technique that gets him and his students into the Cathedral, and into trouble. Even Cobbler points to this principle of doing and showing the students by example as the one thing that differentiates him from other teachers: "'I am not one your fraudulent choirmasters who *tells* people how to sing; I *show* 'em'" (LM, 173). This juxtaposition between the two kinds of instruction leads to what Cobbler refers to as his "fiasco" at formal teaching:

> 'That repulsive Tessie Forgie came up to me one day and said, "Mr. Cobbler do I understand that I am responsible for all the operas of Mozart?" I said "Miss Forgie, if you were responsible even for one of Mozart's overtures I should clasp you to my bosom, but you aren't; if you mean do you need to have a knowledge of Mozart's work to appreciate music, the answer is yes." That finished me as a teacher. I expected my students to know something, instead of being examination passers. That's why I only see a few of the university brats privately now....' (LM, p.181-82)

This severing of the institutional ties has little or no effect on Cobbler's significance in the trilogy. In fact, his presence in all of the Salterton novels testifies to his importance. And he is directly antithetical to all the bad educators in the Salterton novels--Bevill, Ellen, Amy, Hector, and Vambrace. In each of these books, Cobbler becomes the catalyst for the achievement of special insights by another person. It is interesting that the "students" who profit from Cobbler's wisdom are not really students at all; two are teachers, Hector Mackilwraith, middle-age mathematics teacher, and Solomon Bridgetower, neophyte

university professor; and the other is the young singer Monica Gall.

In a singular conversation with Hector, as noted, a stereotypic bad educator, Cobbler explains the fundamental difference between the two men--their philosophies of education and life are directly opposed. As evidenced in the following exchange, Hector's philosophy focuses on utility, specialization, human basics, ignorance, and control, whereas Cobbler's philosophy (and that of Davies too) focuses on variety, diversification, mystery, enlightenment, and spontaneity.

> "Oho, now I know what you are. You are an advocate of Useful Knowledge."
>
> "Certainly."
>
> "You say that a man's first job is to earn a living, and that the first task of education is to equip him for that job?"
>
> "Of course."
>
> "Well allow me to introduce myself to you as an advocate of Ornamental Knowledge. You like the mind to be a neat machine, equipped to work efficiently, if narrowly, and with no extra bits or useless parts. I like the mind to be a dustbin of curiosities, tinsel, quaint bits of carving, and a reasonable amount of healthy dirt. Shake the machine and it goes out of order; shake the dustbin and it adjusts itself beautifully to its new position." (TT, p.182)

Cobbler continues by telling Hector that he has an amateur knowledge of mathematics, and ends by pointing out that Hector's strength lies in his ignorance. But echoing the scene with Vambrace and Yarrow, Cobbler, the "angel" of clarity, vainly beats his "...ineffectual wings... against the... obtuse self-righteousness" of Hector. (TT, p.181)

Later, in Leaven of Malice, Cobbler provides the greatest help to Solly, the unhappy

junior professor of English, who hates teaching and his academic research project on Heavysege. Cobbler's advice is simple: take control of your life and put a little creativity into it. Referring to Solly as being "'half-content to be a football of fate'" (LM, p.176), Cobbler pushes Solly, none too sympathetically , to see that he has a choice:

> 'You want us to be sorry for you because you're tied to Heavysege and teaching people who don't want to learn. But you're not tied you know. Nobody has to teach if they don't want to.' (LM, p.181)

Discovering that he was not meant to teach is one of the best things that Solly could learn. As to Heavysege, Cobbler suggests writing something original; Solly balks and is daunted. Recognizing this lack of imagination as a symptom of Solly's institutionalized education, Cobbler tells him: "'All the originality has been educated out of you'" (LM, p.182). He ends with some harsh but perceptive remarks to Solly that foreshadow Liesl's remarks to Dunny: "'... understand your trap and make terms with it, tooth by tooth'" (LM, 183). Following this advice, Solly tells his advisor that he has decided to drop Heavysege because "'I want to be a creator of Amcan, not one of its embalmers'" (LM, p.257).

Cobbler's advice extends beyond academic matters and into domestic concerns and everyday living, for which Solly is again grateful. He tells Solly and Pearl Vambrace to trust in themselves regarding marriage and to have fun--forget doing the right thing.

> 'Your first book won't be a success. Don't make marriage conditional on the success of a book, of your mother dying, or anything unlikely of that sort. Put first things first. Get married, and plunge into all the uproar of baby-raising, and loading yourself up with insurance and furniture and all the frowsy appurtenances of domestic life as soon as you can. You'll survive. Millions do. And deep down under all the trash-heap of

> duty and respectability and routine you may, if you're among the lucky ones, find a jewel of happiness. I know all about it, and I assure you on my sacred honour that it's worth a try. Come on! You know how all this will end up. You'll act on instinct anyhow; everybody does in the really important decisions of life. Why not get some fun out of it, and forget all the twaddle you'll have to talk in order to make it seem reasonable, and prudent, and dull.' (LM, pp. 257-58)

And last, in Mixture of Frailties, Cobbler, the odd choirmaster stands in *locoparentis* for the stagestruck Monica on her first public performance in Salterton. He tells her to "glory in" the attention instead of, like so many Canadians, fussing over it. Now is the time, he tells her, to put Salterton in proper perspective. Do what her teachers and she herself, as artists, know best . And thus, Cobbler honors Monica as an artist.

The next three teachers have to be looked at as a unit, a triad simultaneously teaching Monica in England. Sir Benedict Domadaniel , Murtag Molloy, and Giles Revelstoke are involved with their student in a way that the reader has not encountered before. All have the four qualities of good teachers--knowledge, method, vitality, and insight--which they transmit in varying forms and degrees of emphasis to Monica. This brief examination of the trio reveals a few patterns: Sir Benedict's emphasis is on the philosophy of living and of art, Molloy focuses on the techniques and the methods of singing, and Giles enlightens Monica not only in the world of music but also in the world of love.

Sir Benedict Domdaniel, a great conductor, supervises Monica's musical education in England, and his presence and direction is always felt. From Domdaniel, Monica learns a philosophy about music and life, particularly her own. On their first meeting Domdaniel probes into Monica's "philosophy of music" (MF, p.106)--why does she want to sing?

First, he dispells Monica's romantic notions and misconceptions that music and singing are supposed to "refine" (MF, p.105) people. Music is not supposed to be a "substitute for life", he tells her, but rather a "distilment of life"--music is supposed "to capture the beauty and delight that people [find] in life" (MF, p.107). The problem with Monica is that she is "too full of a desire to please" (MF, p.107). Art, he tells her, is for "passionate people," not for "refined" people whom he calls "the "living dead" :

> "Those people never want you to have great ambitions or strong, consuming passions. They want you to be refined--which means predictable, stable, controlled, always choosing the smallest cake on the plate, never breaking wind audibly, being a good loser--in a word dead. I admit that the world wouldn't function properly without its legions of nice, refined, passionless living dead, but there is not room for them in the arts." (MF, p.107).

Domdaniel refuses to allow Monica to study with him until he determines what her "politics" of living are; he must first establish which party she belongs to.

> "There are, the world over, only two important political parties--the people who are for life, and the people who are against it. Most people are born one or the other, though there are a few here and there who change their coats. You know about Eros and Thanatos? No, I didn't really suppose you did. Well, I'm an Eros man myself, and most people who are any good for anything, in the arts or wherever, belong to the Eros party. But there are Thanatossers everywhere--the Permanent Opposition. The very worst Thanatossers are the whose who pretend to be Eros men; you can sometimes spot them because they blather about the purpose of art being to lift people up out of the mire, and refine them and make them use lace hankies--to castrate them, in fact. You've obviously been in contact with a lot of these crypto-Thanatossers--probably educated by them, insofar as you have been educated at all. But there's a chance that you may be on the Eros side; there's something about you now and then which suggests it." (MF, p. 108).

Domdaniel makes his evaluation of Monica to the Bridgetower Trust, saying that "there is more to singing than the possession of a pleasant tone and a big range. The voice must be

interesting...," and therein lies Monica's "greatest handicap": "she has virtually no general cultivation, and though she seems to have some imagination, she has had nothing with which to nourish it" (MF, p.130). So Domdaniel sets Monica up with language lessons and sends her to Amy Neilsen for coaching in history and literature. And to "unbutton" her "vocally and spiritually," he sends her to "the very best vocal coach in London--old Murtagh" (MF, p.109).

Murtagh Molloy is a "real artist" (MF, p.109) but, as Monica discovers, he is quite different from Aunt Ellen's version of a "great artist": a "lovely person" who is "always simple and fine and [loves] everything that [is] sweet in life" (MF, p.71). Molloy has just two principles in his music instruction. The first concerns the status of their relationship--"we've got to get along" (MF, p.110). If you're "simpatico," he explains,

> "You can get down to business without a lot of palaver; hard words don't hurt, and praise don't puff you up--makes you humble." (MF, p.111)

The second is his basic belief in "the muhd" (MF, p.112) which he promises to teach her. "'All boils down'" (MF, p.113) to one thing, you have to have "the proper muhd'" (MF, p.112). In a comparison of his version of a Tosti song and Monica's version, Molloy points out the difference: "'You were dipping your bucket into a shallow well and I was dipping mine into a deep one'" (MF, p.112) which, he says, is "not experience," but what you do with it. More than just technique, it is feeling : "'Your song was all careful little effects. Well, good enough. But mine had one powerful effect. It had the proper muhd'" (MF, p.112). He stresses that

> "The muhd's everything. Get it, and you'll get the rest. If you don't get it, all the *fiorituri* and exercises in agility and *legato* in

> the world'll be powerless to make a good singer of you. The muhd's at the root of all." (MF, pp.112-13)

Molloy's belief and his enthusiasm makes Monica want to work hard for him. He becomes more than a teacher; he becomes a model of what she wants to be. Knowing that she is in the "hands of a great teacher," she vows to "master the secrets of the muhd" and become "a bardic singer like Murtagh Molloy" (MF, p.113).

Murtagh has a certain style of teaching; part of it is simpatico, part of it is the muhd, and a great part of these are taught through demonstration and tiring exercises for both the pupil and the teacher. He gets involved. He begins imparting his "method to [Monica] in a sort of pedagogic fury, [nagging] her ceaselessly about the importance of breath and posture in the control of nervousness...[until Monica] would wake in the night, startled to hear his voice shouting 'Head forward and up...lead with your head'"(MF, p.156). But this desire to show, to impart the information, to teach the student, and have him love the process and perform the music as well as he can can go too far, as it does with Molloy. There is always the danger that the bond between teacher and pupil goes beyond the master/pupil relationship to a more personal level. It can happen with student or with teacher; he/she mistakes the pride and the discipleship for feelings of love, and becomes obsessed with the other. Molloy, as with past students, wants to run away with his current star. He declares his love for Monica. "'I could do miracles for you. I could make you famous. I wouldn't drag you down and ruin you--But I'm just an old fella to you--an old fool. Aw God, that's the hell of it'" (MF, p.259). Clearly his idea of love is to reshape his pupil (reminiscent of Diana's attempt to remold Dunstan Ramsay in Fifth Business); ultimately, through the success of their created proteges, these older teachers

will vicariously gain some power and some recognition.

Molloy is not the only teacher who is possessive of his pupil. Teachers are often possessive of their pupils where other teachers are concerned. They can argue as if pupils are their possession and as if they are the parents. When Domdaniel wants to send Monica to Giles Revelstoke, "'one of our best composers,'" (MF, p.143) "'to learn something about music generally,'" to "'broaden [her] musical experience'" (MF, p.142), Molloy is jealous and feels threatened: "'You want to snatch a promising pupil away from me and give her to God knows what charlatan...'" (MF, p.143). To which Domdaniel responds with equal possessiveness: "'she's not your pupil; she's my pupil....'"(MF, p.143)

There is quite a lot of respectful jealousy between the teachers as well. Molloy calls Revelstoke "worthless" and "impossible" and, perhaps with a tinge of the old envying the young, sarcastically refers to him as "quite the little genius" (MF, p.143). The feelings of envy are mutual, but Giles has the disrespect of the young; he refers to the "ineffable Molloy" (MF, p.156) as "an admirable coach, with a splendid, policeman-like attitude toward the art of song" (MF, p.148). Giles is much more disrespectful and jealous when referring to Domdaniel: "'Brummagem Benny,...without a hint of malice,...likes to do himself very well. And properly so. He must keep up a position commensurate with his great and well-deserved reputation'" (MF, p.146). "'Sir Benedict dearly loves to play the role of the exquisitely dressed, debonair, frivolous man of the world. But he's no fool.'" (MF, p.155).

Giles is quite a different teacher than Molloy, especially in regard to himself and his style of teaching. He is arrogant, impatient, and cruel, and he only took this job for money. On their first meeting, Giles appears before Monica nude, ridicules her by calling her "the Canadian Nightingale," and makes her feel insignificant by announcing that he "forgot" she was coming (MF, p.146). He then patronizes her by referring to her "special line in Victorian drawing-room ballads..." and requests that she sing Tosti's Good-Bye! When Monica declines, Giles commands her: "'But I wish it'" (MF, p.149). As teacher and pupil they are not "simpatico" as Monica observes, to which Giles replies, "'I've no time for charm. Many people think me extremely unpleasant, and I cultivate that, because it keeps fools at a distance'" (MF, p.155). Protecting oneself from falling in with the fools and the masses can be done politely but Revelstoke does it with selfish arrogance; he just cannot be bothered with others unless it suits him.

Although Giles is selfish, arrogant, impatient, intolerant, and sometimes unfeeling, he still manages to educate Monica about three areas of art. First, sounding much like Domdaniel lecturing on music, Giles points out in a passage cited, in part, above, that poetry is a distilation of life, not, as Monica thinks, just some romantic ritual:

> "I have related quite a good poem to a desperate human experience which, in my opinion is the source from which it springs. If you think of a poem as a pretty trifle that silly men make up while smelling flowers, my interpretation is no good to you. But if you think of a poem as a flash of insight, a fragment of truth, a break in the cloud of human nonsense and pretence, my interpretation is valid. When you sing, you call from the depth of your own experience to the depth of experience in your hearer. And depth of experience has its physical counterpart, believe me; we aren't disembodied spirits, you know, nor are we beautiful, clear souls cumbered with ugly indecent bodies. This song isn't about 'a nasty trouble that men get'--to use your own depressingly middle-class words; it is about the death of love,

and the fore-knowledge of death; it is an intimation of mortality." (MF, p.154)

Speaking much more harshly than Domdaniel or Cobbler, Giles tells Monica that in order to understand this music, she must be different from others; to be part of the living she must do some self-exploration:

> "But there must be some of us who understand better than others, and who give the best of ourselves to that understanding. If you are to be one of them, you must be ready to make a painful exploration of yourself. When I came in here just now, you were playing a rather silly piece in a very silly way. You sang your folksongs like a cheap Marie Antoinette pretending to be a shepherdess. Domdaniel wants you to be better than that, and so he has sent you to me." (MF, p.154)

She must work her way through the "literature of song" (MF, p.156). Giles demands Monica learn Italian, which she adds to her studies. Monica is at first confused, not having experienced much humour in the classroom, but she soon becomes accustomed to Giles' irony. What really impresses her is "the variety and apparent depth of his knowledge" (MF, p.157). Monica thanks Giles for sharing this "wonderfully educational" (MF, p.157) knowledge with her, to which Giles responds with, perhaps, the most important concept that he teaches her. Giles warns Monica there is a difference between education and "enlightenment;" the emphasis is not so much on the knowledge--the subject--but on how to learn--to feel and to understand the material.

> "...I wish you wouldn't use words like 'education', which have grown sour from being so much in the wrong people's mouths. What we are doing isn't really educational. It's enlightening, I suppose, and its purpose is to nurture the spirit. If formal education has any bearing on the arts at all, its purpose is to make critics, not artists. Its usual effect is to cage the spirit in other people's ideas--the ideas of poets and philosohers, which were once splendid insights into the nature of life, but which people who have no insights of their own have hardened into dogmas. It is the spirit we must work with, and not the mind as

> such. For 'the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God'."
>
> Thus, rather quickly, all things considered, Revelstoke persuaded Monica to give up her determination to learn like a parrot, and to imitate her masters without really understanding what they did, and brought her to a point where she could feel a little, and understand, respect and cherish her own feeling. (MF, pp. 157-58)

> ...as a lover Giles was fully as demanding as he was when he was teaching her to sing what he had written. Indeed, the two kinds of experience were uncomfortably similar. He could be tender, but he could not be patient. He was experimental and ingenious, demanding for himself aspects of pleasure which she could not comprehend, and therefore could provide only by happy accident. If luck was not with her he might scold; worse, he might laugh at her. (MF, p.230)

Giles lacks humility; pride gets in the way, and that is why he fails as a great teacher. He is conceited. Although an eros person, he is a proud one. Envious pride is his downfall. Obsessive paranoia, criticism from critics, and unwanted help from Sir Benedict Domdaniel lead to Giles' suicide. Giles' first and only masterpiece, The Golden Asse, symbolizes his life: "'Extraordinary how people sometimes create so much better than they live. The metamorphosis of physical man into spiritual man: a great theme but though he could do it in art he couldn't do it in life'" (MF, p.360).

What makes Sir Benedict so special? When Monica makes her debut in London singing in the Matthew Passion, an interesting and fitting choice, conducted by Sir Bendict Domdaniel, she realizes what makes Sir Benedict a great man in music; it is not just his conducting talents, but his ability to inspire musicians to be more than they thought they could be: "It was in his capacity to demand more of his musicians than might have been

thought prudent, or even possible--to insist that people excel themselves, and to help them to do it--that his greatness appeared. He had been a great man to Monica, for he could open new windows for her, letting splendid light into her life....Without being in the least a showy or self-absorbed conductor he was an imperious, irresistible and masterful one" (MF, pp.236-37). He is a great man and teacher, and his only fault is the occasion on which he "meddled" (MF, p.361) by bringing Monica and Giles together--an action which has tragic repercussions.

Fifth Business, the first book in the Deptford trilogy, begins with Dunstan Ramsay declaring that he is more than just an ordinary teacher. Offended by an article written on the occasion of his retirement, which he thinks portrays him as "a typical old schoolmaster doddering into retirement with tears in his eyes and drop hanging from his nose" (FB, p.13), Dunstan becomes not only indignant at the implication that he was a typical schoolmaster--"...a senile, former worthy who has stumbled through forty-five years of teaching armed only with a shallow, Boys Book of Battles concept of history..."FB, p.14)--but also galled by the "dismissive" suggestion that that was all he was, that he "...had never had a life outside the classroom, had never risen to the full stature of a man, had never rejoiced or sorrowed or known love or hate..."(FB, p.14). In fact, in Dunstan's own self perception, he is "...an historian, a hagiographer, a bachelor of unstained character, a winner of the Victoria Cross, [and] the author of several admired books..." (FB, p.215). In an attempt to eradicate this villainy, this misconception, Dunstan attempts to set the record straight by writing a memoir--this book, Fifth Business--about his "larger life" and his "professional life" (FB, p.118)--which will prove that far from being an ordinary teacher, he is rather an extraordinary educator.

Completely antithetical to Hector Mackilwraith's goals, Dunstan's desire to know--to gain an appreciation of "knowledge and culture" (FB, p.54)--began early in life when, as a young "know-all", he read the Chambers' 1888 encyclopedia in order to "become a polymath" (FB, p.54). This habit made him a "nuisance" at school, rather like a boy who has eaten too many green apples causing everyone else to get a stomach ache; in retrospect, Dunstan recalls

> At school I was a nuisance...; I wanted to argue about everything, expand everything, and generally turn every class into a Socratic powwow instead of getting on with the curriculum. Probably I made [the teacher] nervous, as a pupil full of green, fermenting information is so well able to do. I have dealt with innumerable variations of my young self in classrooms since then, and I have mentally apologized for my tiresomeness. (FB, p.55)

As Dunstan's knowledge ripens, his desire for more knowledge increases. After the war in 1919, he seeks a "formal education" and enrolls as a Honours student in History at the University of Toronto where he achieves a B.A. and a M.A. In his own words, he "gobbled up all the incidentals that were required to give a 'rounded' education" : French, German, Zoology, and even Religious Knowledge. (FB, p.110)

While working out what do with the rest of his life, Ramsay at age twenty-six becomes a schoolmaster--never intending to remain in the position for forty years. He insists that teaching was "not a dead end" (FB, p.177) to his academic career. Recognizing at an early age when he coached Paul Dempster in sleight of hand that he was a "teacher at heart" (FB, p.39), it is not surprising that he "took to teaching like a duck to water..."(FB, p.177). One should recall at this point that Hector Mackilwraith goes to

Normal School to learn, ironically, how to become a "born teacher" whereas Dunstan, who intuitively teaches Paul, is really the "born teacher". Dunstan chooses Colborne, a private boys' school, for several reasons. First, he does not want to "waste" time getting an unrequired teaching certificate; second, he likes the fact he would be teaching just boys because he "never wanted to teach girls [and], in fact, [does not] think they are best served by the kind of education devised by men for men" (FB, p.177). (Here Davies echoes Olim and Leacock). But he is quick to dismiss any hint of homosexuality, insisting he "never much liked boys" either because he knows the "man inside" (FB, p.177).

> To me a boy is a green apple who I expect to expose to the sun of history until he becomes a red apple, a man. I know too much about boys to sentimentalize over them. I have been a boy myself, and I know what a boy is, which is to say, either a fool or an imprisoned man striving to get out. (FB, p.118)

The third reason that Ramsay is fond of a private school environment and its virtues is that he realizes, as the years pass, that a private school allows for the kind of teachers he thinks are best. His colleagues, he says, are equally divided "among good men who were good teachers, awful men who were awful teachers, and the grotesques and misfits who drift into teaching and are so often most educative influences a boy meets in school" (FB, p.125). Dunstan believes that "if a boy can't have a good teacher, give him a psychological cripple or an exotic failure to cope with; don't just give him a bad, dull teacher" (FB, p.125). Dunstan sums up the virtues of a private school in noting that the private school "can accommodate a few cultured madmen on staff without having to offer explanations" (FB, p.125). Within this statement there is the suggestion or hint that Ramsay himself is viewed by others, and perhaps by himself, as one of these "cultured

madmen," as his memoir later reveals.

> I may have been the despair of educational psychologists, but I knew boys and I knew my stuff, and it quickly began to show up in examination results. (FB, p.126)

In contrast to the pedagogue Mackilwraith, whose stress is on the method of teaching, Dunstan attributes his success in the classroom to an absence of pedagogy, and, instead, an emphasis on content and on achieving comprehensive understanding of the content.

> I have been a good teacher because I have never thought much about teaching; I just worked through the curriculum and insisted on high standards. I never played favorites, never tried to be popular, never set my heart on the success of any clever boys, and took good care that I knew my stuff. I was not easily approachable, but if approached I was civil and serious to the boy who approached me. I have coached scores of boys privately for scholarships, and I have never taken a fee for it. Of course, I have enjoyed all of this, and I suppose my enjoyment had its influence on the boys. (FB, p.177)

Interestingly, like Olim for Davies long ago, Ramsay, who does not demand loyalty , but helps those who ask, promotes scholarship among his students, who later become Department heads in universities and who all return with glowing accolades for Ramsay at his retirement dinner. Ramsay, indeed, is highly respected and gets loyalty without trying.

Despite his qualifications as a "fine teacher" and a "scholarship getter," Ramsay is passed over for the post of permanent Headmaster; his skills and qualities, like those of Cobbler, are undervalued (because he does not fit the Board's or the parents' image of schoolmaster); as his boyhood chum, and now ultra-respectable Board of Govenors

member, Boy Staunton, tells him, you are "'...queer--strange, funny, not like other people'" (FB, p. 196). Part of this queerness is just eccentricity:

> 'Good God, don't you think the way you rootle in your ear with your little finger delights the boys? And the way you waggle your eyebrows--great wild things like mustaches, I don't know why you don't trim them--and those terrible Harris tweed suits you wear and never have pressed. And that disgusting trick of blowing your nose and looking into your handkerchief as if you expected to prophesy something from the mess.....The day of comic eccentrics as Heads has gone. Parents nowadays want somebody more like themselves.' (FB, pp. 196-197)

What makes Dunstan not fit their image of a school master is the real reason as to why he is overlooked: Boy tells Dunny it is "'this saint business of yours'". Even Dunstan had at one time doubts:

> ...I would think: Dunstan Ramsay, what on earth are you doing here, and where do think this is leading? You are now thirty-four, without wife or child, and no better plan than your own whim; you teach boys who, very properly, regard you as a signpost on the road they are to follow, and like a signpost they pass you by without a thought; your one human responsibility is a madwoman about whom you cherish a maggoty-headed delusion; and here you are, puzzling over records of lives as strange as fairy tales, written by people with no sense of history, and yet you cannot rid yourself of the notion that you are well occupied. Why don't you go to Harvard and get yourself a Ph.D., and try for a job in a university, and be intellectually respectable? Wake up, man! You are dreaming your life away! (FB, p.168)

However, misgivings are dispelled by belief that in his search for wisdom some truths about man and life will be revealed in a serious study of something:

> ....I clung to my notion, ill defined though it was, that a serious study of any important body of human knowledge, or theory, or belief, if undertaken with a critical but not a cruel mind, would in the end yield some secret, some valuable permanent insight into the nature of life and the true end of man.

> ...to resist would be dangerous [because]....I was as you have already guessed, a collaborator with Destiny....The only thing for me to do was to keep on keeping on, to have faith in my whim, and remember that for me, as for the saints, illumination when it came would probably come from some unexpected source. (FB, p.169)

Bullheaded like Cobbler, Ramsay does not care what others think and marches to his own tune, so to Boy's objections he replies: "You don't expect me to pay attention to the opinion of numbskulls like you and your Board and the parents of a few hundred cretinous boys, do you?" (FB, p.197)

Ramsay's superior teaching qualities effect many students, but not all equally. For young David Staunton in The Manticore, two other men have something of the Magus about them--his confirmation teacher, Father Knopwood, and his Oxford law don, Pargetter. In David's memory, Knopwood stands out for two reasons. First, he commanded respect and a certain amount of fear because his "standards were high, [and] he expected the best from boys..." (Man, p.140). But what made a lasting impression on David were Knopwood's "original" ideas on art (Man, p.140).

Knopwood's "pet subject" was art: "He loved art and knew a lot about it..."(Man, p.142). Contrary to traditional thought, Knopwood does not believe that "art [is] a thing in itself..." (Man, p.142), whose value is determined by its canvas, style, subject, or creator, but that "Every picture...was 'of' something or 'about' something" (Man, p.142) and it is this "something" that gives it meaning and value. "His idea [is] that not everybody needed art to be educated" (Man, p.143). Knopwood explains this concept to the then young snob, David, in a discussion of two pictures, one of a Boy Scout and the

other of Christ, and then proposes a series of questions:

> "Must a concept be sophisticated to be a good one?"
> "Well--surely?"
> "Must the workmanship always be superior? If something is to be said, must it always be said with eloquence and taste?"
> "That's what they teach us in the Art club. I mean, if it's not well done it's no good, is it?" (Man, p.141)

At the conclusion of this discussion, Knopwood agrees that the Boy Scout picture is "an awful picture,but...[that]...the meaning redeemed it. Thousands of boys would understand it [he said], who would never notice a Raphael reproduction if ...put in its place" (Man, p.142). Although Knopwood never convinces David of this, by David's own admission, he saves him "from becoming an art snob" (Man, p.143).

Pargetter of Balliol is the other formative influence in David's education. David remembers him as having three outstanding characteristics:

> He was a great law don, a blind man who nevertheless managed to be a famous chess player, and such a teacher as I had never known. He was relentless and exacting...(Man, pp.213-14).

To be "Relentless and exacting" was just what David wanted in order to become a master lawyer. Similarly, Pargetter needs David's desire to learn. So begins a "simpatico" relationship.

> He seized on me, as he did on all his students, with an eagle's talons, but I think he knew by the end of my first year that I was his in a way that the others, however admiring, were not. (Man, p.214)

For David, this strong master-apprentice relationship was a form of discipleship, and he suspects that Pargetter had mutual feelings: "[He] must have taken to me, though he was

not a man to hint at any such thing" (Man, p.215).

Like the other superior teachers examined so far, Pargetter has a larger life with peculiar characteristics--his is his blindness. Here is an example of a blind man teaching the blind (in terms of knowledge), and yet what makes Pargetter extraordinary is that despite his blindness, he sees and perceives as those with physical sight do not. His disability has no detrimental effect on how he teaches, but in fact it enhances it; instead of judging everything only on what he sees, he judges on what he hears and feels. He awes his students with his extraordinary powers of "memory and spatial sense" when playing chess: "When he had beaten me he would go back over the game and tell me precisely the point at which I had gone wrong", and when writing (Pargetter had never learned Braille) "He wrote in longhand....[and] never seemed to forget anything he had written" (Man, p.216).

More than his cool, relentless character with second sight, it is Pargetter's knowledge of the law, his disciplined study of the subject, and his closely reasoned approach to it which makes David worshipful.

> [Pargetter] had a prodigious knowledge of law books he had never seen....He kept up with books and journals by having them read to him, and I felt myself favoured when he began to ask me to read; he would make invaluable comment as he listened, and it was always a master-lesson in how to absorb, weigh, select and reject (Man, p.216-17).

Pargetter's model of knowing how "...to know, to see, to sift, and not to be moved" is compelling and powerful. Determined to be just "like Pargetter," David gives himself up wholly to Pargetter to be "melted down, purged of dross, and remoulded in a new and

better form" by the person he continues to regard as his "father in art" (Man, p.217), a comment which, in a way, might also apply to Knopwood.

Another characteristic that Pargetter shares with his superior colleagues is his abhorrence of the professional man's ignorance of everything except his job. He introduces this concept to David by quoting Blackstone: "'If practice be the whole that he is taught, practice must also be the whole that he will ever know'" (Man, p.238). Not surprisingly, Pargetter is also a humanist, and his own knowledge beyond the formal study of law is evidenced in his many quotes from historians, poets, and novelists. His belief is strong, and to emphasize its significance he quizzes with a certain amount of severity and physical contact to make sure his student understands the significance, as is evidenced in the following:

> "'The law, besides being a profession, is one of the humanities,'" he said to me one day,' and I knew from the way he spoke he was quoting. 'Who said that?' I didn't know. 'Then never forget that it was one your countrymen, your present Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent,' he said, punching me sharply in the side, as he often did when he wanted to make a point. 'It's been said before, but it's never been said better. Be proud it was a Canadian who said it.' And he went on to belabour me, as he had often done before, with Sir Walter Scott's low opinion of lawyers who knew nothing of history or literature; from these studies, said he, I would learn what people were and how they might be expected to behave.'" (Man, pp. 225-26).

To ensure that David does not become an "ignorant pettifogger" lacking "professional literacy and elegance" (Man, p. 225), Pargetter requires his pupil to read literature, history, classics, and poetry in order to broaden his knowledge, to enlighten him.

Pargetter also warns David of a narrowness of a different kind--*esse in intellectu*

solo-- a certain self-centeredness, a lack of awareness of one's own self:

> "You think the world is your idea...and if you don't understand that and check it now it will make your whole life a gigantic hallucination." (Man, p.268)

Unfortunately, in this one area, David ignores Pargetter's warning to get some self-knowledge, as David realizes much later: "Which in spite of my success, is pretty much what happened, and my extended experiments as a booze-artist were chiefly directed to checking any incursions of unwelcome truth into my illusion" (Man, pp. 268-69).

Not until later does David realize that Pargetter "was not all Wizard." The "chink in his armour" was dying without a will. As Dr. Von Haller explains to David, this oversight was part of what made him human; Pargetter was much more than just a lawyer, an absolute, she says:

> ...he must have been something more than that, and a portion of that something else had a natural, pathetic fear of darkness. He had built his Persona so carefully and so handsomely that you took it for the whole man. And it must be said that you might not have learned so much from him if you had seen him more fully; young people love such absolutes. (Man, p.252)

Ramsay's influence reaches, even further than Cobbler's, beyond the Deptford trilogy and into the second book of the latest Davies trilogy, What's Bred in the Bone. There Ramsay becomes acquainted with one of the students at Colborne college, young Francis Cornish. Unbeknown to them both, they are kindred spirits: Ramsay has a "bee in his bonnet" about the mysteries of hagiography, and Cornish has a "bee in his bonnet" (WBB, p.195) about the mysteries in art, particularly paintings. Their first meeting is precipitated by a picture drawn on the back of a raincoat of a "a severe Scottish face with

beetling brows and an extraordinary amount of hair growing from its nose..." (WBB, p.189) which Ramsay recognizes as himself. When Ramsay confronts the young artist he gives him some advice on modes of art, particularly caricature and what it reflects in the artist:

> "Caricature is a rare and fine gift, Cornish, but you ought to consider it carefully before it gets you completely in its grip. It's the exaggeration of what is most characteristic, isn't it? But if you see nothing as characteristic except what is ugly, you'll become a man who values nothing but ugliness, because it's his trade. And that will make you a sniggering, jeering, little creature, which is what most caricaturists have been--even the best. There are some quite good art books in the library. Look at them, and learn something larger than caricature. Don't forget it, but don't make it the whole of what you can do." (WBB, p.157)

More than providing just some insights into the nature of an artist, Ramsay puts Cornish on the path to a more sophisticated art--something that, like the younger Ramsay's hagiography, becomes "the food upon which [Cornish will feed] his spirit..." (WBB, p.194). Among the books Ramsay recommends is one dealing with the Pre-Raphelite Brotherhood, and "in the illustrations" Cornish finds what will feed his spirit as an artist:

> ...something of the Grail in the light that shone from the eyes of the mind, and the rich, swooning beauty of the women. It was a light that fed the hunger he felt because of the starved, wholly external religion of the school, and a lush depiction of Nature that balanced the world of wretched desks, spattered ink, chalk dust, constipating food, and the unceasing unimaginative, perfunctory obscenity of schoolboys talk. It was an enlargement that made even compulsory games and the Rifle Corps open to a light that came from somewhere outside the school. (WBB, p. 159).

This makes school bearable, though to become a Pre-Raphaelite in a Canadian twentieth century school is hard, and one has to have a "double consciousness" (WBB, p.195).

Thus begins Cornish's life as an "esthete."

Certainly, Francis had other teachers, like Othon Friesz whom he studies under at his art school, La Grande Chaumiere, where he learns to paint in oils. Freisz's method is to "...provide a place to work, an ambience, a name, and infrequent, good advice; it was enough" (WBB, p.256).

Although Francis comes to know Tancred Saraceni as his teacher, he first sees him as a "silky expert" of art restoration; in fact, he is known as the greatest restorer of pictures in the world. On their first meeting in Oxford, Saraceni tantalizes Francis' interest with his description of restoration as a process in which the craftsman relies not just on "chemistry and skill" but also "the Muse." Saraceni hints that something of the spirit of the original master can sometimes influence or infuse the restorer. They also speak of modern art and its problems, which Sarceni believes comes down to the modernists painting raw emotion without any basis, such as religion or myth--as a consequence their art appears chaotic. This is that something has bothered Francis; Saraceni tells him to create, not to copy or fake modern art if it is not for him; again, sounding like Cobbler talking to Solly, Blazon to Ramsay, Liesl to Ramsay, and Giles to Monica, Saraceni advises Francis to

> "...find your inner vision.....Find your legend. Find your personal myth. What sort of thing do you do?" (WBB, 273)

Their first discussion ends with Saraceni displaying a moderation and discipline not seen in inferior counterparts, and a good measure of humility stemming from some self-knowledge. When Francis offers him another cognac, Saraceni declines because he

acknowledges that only geniuses indulge, not the apprentices, as he regards himself in relation to the masters.

> "Certainly not, Mr. Cornish. Some of the masters drank a great deal, but we assistants and apprentices, even three centuries afterward, must keep our hands steady. I won't have another cognac, and unless you are certain that you are a master, you won't have one either. We must be the austere ones, we second-class men." (WBB, p.228)

Although said with an "ironic grin", the effect upon Francis is "like an order" (WBB, p.228).

However, as Francis later witnesses, the discipline and moderation that Saraceni alludes to is not evident in the "splendid clutter" in his apartment in Rome.

> For thirty years Tancred Saraceni had never been able to deny himself a bargain, or a good piece of painting or tapesty or embroidery, or sculpture, whenever one turned up that he could afford, and in his life such things turned up all the time. It was not a pack-rat's nest....It was a collection various in kind, but coherent in representing the taste of one avid, brilliant, greatly gifted connoisseur. It was Saraceni swollen to immense proportions. It was a man's mind, the size of a house. (WBB, pp. 308-309)

This description foreshadows a similar description of the elder Francis Cornish's rooms. More than anything, it is a reflection of Saraceni--a special man--a collector with an obsession, an interest, and a life other than teaching.

III

> A third figure....who presents...another sort of apprehension, and that the rarest....is the aged Simeon, who knew Our Lord intuitively....Not the forcible instruction of a band of angels, nor the hard-won knowledge of the scholars, but the readiness of one who was open to the promptings of the Holy Ghost was the grace which made Simeon peculiarly blessed. (MF, p.378)

Darcourt is perhaps the ideal Davies' educator. He has extensive knowledge of his subject, he teaches through dialogue which requires great energy and honesty; he cares for his students but does not put up with fools; he has two foibles--one is uncontrolled humour and the other, like that of many other great teachers, is falling in love with his star pupil, in this case Maria. He comes to teaching because it allows him to do what he must--find and work on becoming the whole Simon, the ultimate hero. His philosophy is Jung's--without a complete self he is unable to help mankind. Like Jung he is a "super professor and a super parson": like Leacock, he has a tendency to be overcome by humour, and he is humble. As a scholar and a teacher, he is not without his passions for his interests, for instance, manuscripts; he is marked by a certain scholarly greed or possessiveness, and also falls prey to becoming obsessed with the student and scholarly elect. He is the writer of the New Aubrey, sitting in judgment of himself and others in his prose, and is like Robertson Davies who at that moment is writing Rebel Angels. Darcourt is the Rebel Angel, bring learning to man and woman.

In answer to the question "What makes an ideal educator in Davies eyes?" four qualities assert themselves. The first, as noted, is an extensive knowledge of not only the subject --a knowledge that goes beyond mere facts and into understanding the hows,

the whys and the maybes--the possibilities of what cannot readily be seen and proven. Darcourt and the others are independent scholars. For example, Cobber, Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, worked with the great conductor Sir Benedict Domdaniel, and was probably a student of the great vocal coach, Murtagh Molloy. Ramsay commands international attention as an historian, hagiographer and author; the blind Pargetter amazes his students with his knowledge of the law and his skill playing chess; Darcourt brings extraordinary breadth to his teaching; and Saraceni is a renowned art restorer. They are all, in their way, productive artists.

Second, their styles of teaching all are active, involving both the teacher and the student. Recall Cobbler's cry, "I *show* 'em," Molloy's demonstration of "the muhd," Ramsay's dramatic stories revealing the mythic overtones of history, Pargetter's relentless evaluation of law articles and his jabbing questions for his student; Saraceni's own tests, now completed by his apprentice, and Darcourt's energetic discussions.

Despite these qualifications, these teachers do not, at first, appear to be conventional teachers like the inferior teachers who wear the full mask of teacher. The superior teachers wear the mask of teacher but underneath they are fully developed Eros men. There is ill-kept Cobbler with his roving black eyes, a hint of mystery about him, running from respectability; then there is the "queer" Ramsay, also known as St. Dunstan and Fifth Business, with his wooden leg and bushy eyebrows, chasing after his "fool saint," who cannot help being one of his own "cultured madmen." Pargetter, the blind man, sees what is important; there are Saraceni with his "evil eye," Hollier, "the eccentric", and Darcourt, the Rebel Angel, the super professor and the super priest with an unfortunate propensity

for ill-timed humour.

These serious research scholars are closest to religious persons--to faith and humility. Despite their high qualifications, all men have a humility about them (unlike their inferior, prideful counterparts). Cobbler, one will recall, says that although he is not as respectable as other Saltertonian citizens, he is closer to God than most of them; then there is the great Sir Benedict Domdaniel humbled by the music he conducts, Saraceni, suitably humbled as a "second-class assistant" to the "original masters," Ramsay's humility as he accepts and forgives himself for being human, and Darcourt who, is as he puts it, is humble before the Lord but not necessarily before his fellow man. They create from inspiration; they are unafraid of intuition and imagination and are closer to God for their honest devotion to their tasks.

These vital, alive men also all teach a humanities subject, something to do with life. With Cobbler, Domdaniel, Giles, and Saraceni, it is the distillation of life as seen in music, poetry, and/or art; Solly teaches English, Ramsay teaches a classical approach to history with myths, Pargetter reminds David that the law is one of the humanities, and Darcourt teaches religious studies. A lot of what they teach is derived from their philosophy of education, which is really a philosophy of living--the main tenet of which is attaining happiness and wisdom through self-knowledge. The fact that they have achieved a balance within themselves or are working towards it allows them to offer insights to their students who are often not their students, but fellow colleagues who have lost their way. Cobbler believes in Ornamental Knowledge, a mix of healthy dirt and tinsel--the practical and the mystical; Domdaniel sees two kinds of people, the Eros people and the

Thanatossers; Ramsay's own life as Fifth Business and a live version of St. Dunstan reflect and emphasize his main belief in the mythical elements underlying all life; Pargetter stresses history, literature and the classics as part of every lawyer's training so that he does not become narrow and ignorant; Saraceni, echoing Ramsay, says much the same thing to Francis (telling him to find his personal myth that will allow him to paint); and Darcourt leaves ministering to the poor so that he can work on improving his whole self, which will allow him to help mankind.

This search for the self is most obvious in Cobber, Solly, Ramsay, and Darcourt. One way to do this is to create--in these cases, to write. One recalls Ibsen's statement: "To live is to battle with trolls; to write is to sit in judgment of one's self" (Man, p.228). This is exactly what these men do. Cobbler tells Solly to create his own version of Amcan, and even gives the poor, confused Solly a possible story line. As pointed out, Solly changes from a teacher hating teaching and a dissatisfied scholar to a person confident in his ability to create something original; he shows hope--perhaps here one finds a hint of young Robertson Davies. Then there is Ramsay writing Fifth Business, his memoir, to justify why he is more than just an ordinary school teacher; next Parlabane writes a book that is not only a testament to his intellectual pride but also a story of Davies' Everyman trying to find his whole self; and finally there is Darcourt, writing the New Aubrey--which is Rebel Angels--sitting in judgment of himself and others. Here one suspects another parallel to Davies.

Using these same categories--superior and inferior teachers, Davies' complex attitudes about education can be reflected in another division--a somewhat Swiftian

dichotomy between the Ancients and the Moderns. This divison is not absolute, nor are the labels; however, they are useful in giving a general picture of the dominating characteristics of the two types of teachers as Davies presents them. The debate revolves around questions such as the degree of morality in each group.

Davies' group of superior teachers in many ways is reminiscent of the thoughts and actions of the Ancients. Like them, they see that the function of education is for living--to make "life interesting". The object of knowledge is how to live well, and how to educate. They view education as holistic--its purpose being to enlighten not only the mind, but the soul as well. With this in mind, they emphasize the ability of their students to think and understand, as well as the ability to feel and wonder. And, like the great teachers Socrates, Plato, and Jesus, they teach and learn through dialogue. Their fields of inquiry are very like those of the Renaissance man--literature, music, art, history, and religion. Even the personalities of these educators reflect the manner of the humanities that they teach: they are humanists, flexible, inspiring, witty, and often intriguing in an odd and superstitious way. Interestingly, Davies' superior teachers find their niche in the rich old world of Europe.

If the superior teachers in Davies' novels can be roughly equivalent to or categorized as twentieth century Ancients, then Davies' inferior teachers can just as easily be seen as rough twentieth century versions of the Moderns. Davies' moderns live up to the Swiftian originals in several respects. Like their eighteenth century counterparts, these educators are guided by what is utilitarian; for them, education exists to provide the individual with a practical means to get a career and make a living. The object of

knowledge is advancement and progress in the sense of practicalities as well as luxury, success, status, awards, and fame. Their gods are reason, science, progress, and running everything according to a system; they aim to improve, to get ahead, to know, and to explain. It is their incredible pride in man and in themselves that leads them to believe that they can know all and control all. This egoism makes them susceptible to atheism. To this end, these modern educators, with a heavy pedagogical bias, either teach the pure sciences such as mathematics, or reduce the social sciences and the iberal arts to equally formulaic and mechanical interpretations. The individual personalities of these moderns are as learned and precise as the intellectual context in which they move. These precise men attempt to trule their lives--and those of others--according to a mechanical system, a severe, narrow discipline, and their professionalism and masks make them very rigid and closed people. Actually, they are shallow; very little remains of the original human being, now consumed by the professional self; all that remains is a shell of a man/woman whose existence is solely determined by the system. Appropriately, these moderns make their home in the New World--North America--and more specifically, in the fictitious towns and cities of eastern Canada.

Davies is not asking what is the greater culture, European or North American, nor is he asking which is better, old or new, ancient science or modern science. But what he is advocating is a balance; taking the old world ways, with their values, and emphasis on knowledge for sake of knowledge, humour, wisdom, happiness, and understanding of the humanities and adapting them to the New World.

This position is reminiscent of another Swiftian dialogue--that of the dialogue

between the Spider and the Bee. The Spider and its web represent the moderns and their intricate system building. The Bee represents the Ancients (and modern ancients); it collects nectar from many flowers to make honey. Its sustenance comes from a variety of sources. And it is just the same with True Knowledge--it comes not from just one source or another, but from a breadth of view.

The majority of Davies' modern educators appear in his Salterton trilogy of the 1950s and 1960s. The reason why there are so many bad educators in his books from this period is that at the time Davies began writing his novels, he was not yet a university professor, nor had he yet received a degree from a Canadian university. He was a newspaper editor, writer, and playwright--a contributor to the nation's evolving literature, who knew something was wrong with twentieth century education. This is displayed in his portraits of educational figures, some might even say one-sided stereotypic portaits of bad educators; while there are one or two strong characters of the superior variety, their parts are not quite big enough to give more than a brief look at a good educator. One starts out with polar opposites in the Salterton trilogy, and by the time one gets to the Deptford Trilogy of the 1970s there is still perhaps an extreme of a good educator. But by the time one gets to the Cornish trilogy, one has a picture of a moderate teacher.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

"Reading a Robertson Davies novel is oddly like going back to school, albeit a very special school with a very clever teacher." [14] As teacher and wise old sage, Davies is either teaching the reader something he should have learned along time ago, or he is reminding the reader of something that he has forgotten all too soon. Davies' main message is that the purpose of the ideal education is simply to make one more human--more alive. It is a message that has been a constant in the forty years that Davies has been writing and teaching.

In 1959 at McMaster's convocation ceremonies, Robertson Davies told the graduates (in a speech printed in Waterloo Review, no.2 (Winter 1960) pp.15-21) that their first and best goal should be to acquire culture and wisdom (p.15). To achieve these "commodities," (p.15) Davies advocates "self-knowledge" (p.18); self-knowledge, Davies says, comes from a daily "self-examination" during which one not only renews himself but also reflects upon ways in which to "improve and cultivate" himself (p.21). Davies is not advocating selfishness but rather humanity, for the larger consequences of civilizing oneself will be to civilize, by example, the people around one. Before they embark on this life-long quest Davies warns them not to overlook or forget the "pleasures of feeling and emotion" in their pursuit of the "delights of the mind" and those things of the objective world such as houses, careers, and children. Failure to achieve and to maintain a healthy mix of both thinking and emotion creates "sad" and "dangerous" people--"unhappy....defeated people...[full of] loneliness and emptiness of mind and heart" (p.19). To avoid this fate of becoming a living "corpse" then, the goal must be to

work at becoming a "complete...whole...ripened person..." (p.20). Ironically, Davies concludes by telling the graduating students that up to now, their formal education has been only an "apprenticeship"; "the most important lessons are still to be learned"--"ones in which [they] are both pupil and teacher," for they are just beginning their "real education" (p.21).

This speech contains Davies' personal philosophy about life and education, a philosophy that he formulated in the 1940s and which has ripened over the last forty years. It is a philosophy demonstrated and worked out in his novels--a philosophy that deepens and ripens as does its creator. The pursuit of culture, wisdom (especially wisdom, a word that continually reappears in all eight novels), self-knowledge, and intellectual knowledge is the subject of his novels. In these books one meets people experiencing "real education," people who have failed to do any self-examination, and people who have failed to acquire a balance between the joys of the mind and those of the soul. Some of the students in the novels are still in formal educational settings; they have not yet heard of Davies and the main topics of his inquiry--they look to education for insight and help. But the majority of Davies' students are not children or even university students but adults, the educators themselves, who are both pupil and teacher experiencing their "real education." Looking at them one sees some people who have failed to come to terms with precepts to which Davies adheres, making them bad educators.

As his fictional educators evolve, so do Davies and his philosophy. He admits that "all novels are slightly autobiographical"[15] and his are no exception. During the 1950s Robertson Davies was a middle-aged journalist and playwright with a background in drama, music, and literature--interests which are reflected in his first set of books, the

Salterton novels. It is worth noting that Davies, who had difficulties with mathematics in school, makes his supreme example of a poor educator a teacher of that subject, Hector Mackilwraith. And Davies, who always played the fool in several productions, makes all of his superior teachers appear slightly like the jester, the ultimate example being the eccentric organist, Humphrey Cobbler. Although the entire series provides a number of portraits of unsuccessful teachers, Tempest Tost (1951) is devoted to illustrating how and where wisdom is to be obtained by looking at how and where it is not to be found. For example, as Cobbler tells Mackilwraith, wisdom and knowledge are not just found in the objective world of useful knowledge but in ornamental knowledge; ignorance of this and not having a possession of both kinds of knowledge leads one, like Mackilwraith, to lead a very "meagre life" (TT, p.188). Leaven of Malice offers enrichment of this picture and really just provides an assortment of teachers who are not in the pursuit of real education. Again it is the apparent fool, Cobbler, who provides wisdom by example and through his setting up of priorities: Art (music), Peace, (showing or doing) something, creating something original), and most important, understanding one's situation through self-reflection. Interestingly, the person Cobbler helps the most is Solly. The similarities between Solly and and a younger Davies are striking, both having been educated in English universities, and involved in drama; both are less than enthusiastic about teaching, and both find themselves caught in a movement to create AmCan. The fact that Davies survives, continues to teach, and writes original Canadian literature suggests that there is hope for Solly, who, as we leave him, is preparing to write his own book on Amcan.

A Mixture of Frailties is the first book which follows a student, Monica, who achieves success, derives some real education through lessons in music, and learns how to become more fully human. This dichotomy between the objective world and the

subjective world Davies finds extremely important. As noted in A Mixture of Frailties, Sir Benedict divides people into two categories based on their politics for life. Those on the side of Eros are people for life, who have "great ambitions" and "strong passions," and the Thanatossers are those who are against life, who are spiritually dead. These people are "refined," "cultured," "predictable," "stable," "controlled," nice, and "passionless." More than anything these Thanatossers have no self-knowledge; they may be learned, great men at their careers and jobs, but they have no idea who they are underneath their persona, the mask they show to the outside world.

Finding out who they are is a journey that all three main characters take in the Deptford trilogy of the 1970s. They find out not just in objective truth but in psychological truth as well. Here is the Jungian view, the need to see both the dark and light side of self. Again one notes similarites between Davies and his main character, Dunstan Ramsay. By this time, Davies had been teaching without a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto for ten years. Similarly, Ramsay (who, like Cobbler, spans an entire trilogy), is a schoolmaster without a Ph.D. who also writes.

In Fifth Business, Dunstan asks where wisdom is to be found, and he decides it will not be found in the objective world or the professional world of teaching, but in his larger world, the one people neglect and tend to ignore. He believes that a lot of truth underlies myth, that myth and history are similar, and that destiny and fate are part of life. Is there "intellectual respectability" in the Ph.D.? Davies believes there is not; insight into the "nature of life and the true end of man" can be found in the study of myths, saints, and religion. Dunstan tries to make make up for the "unlived life." He cannot deny the ying/yang, the spiritual/material dichotomy. Padre Blazon, a kind of old Cobbler, tells

Dunstan, "I am a wise old bird who is still trying to link the wisdom of the spirit with the wisdom of the body until they are one." Echoing Cobbler's advice to Solly, he tells Ramsay to "forgive yourself for being human. That is the beginning of wisdom" (FB, p.178). Ramsay also gets insight from Liesl, who advises him to "shake hands with your devil" in his self-exploration. This is precisely what she also tells David Staunton in The Manticore (1972); she informs him that, as a successful, calculating lawyer, he can either continue to be a spiritual runt, joining runtdom, or he can be a modern hero by going on an inward journey.

After twenty years of teaching Robertson Davies has retired from university teaching, but not surprisingly the first two books of his latest trilogy of the 1980s still reflect his philosophy which concerns itself with where and how to find wisdom and culture. He searched for it in small Canadian towns and in Europe, he searched for in in private schools of Ontario, and now in these books he searches for wisdom and culture in the University of Toronto's halls of higher learning . On the one hand, the Warden in Rebel Angels (1981) says that the University is the city of wisdom containing all the learned men (not all of whom are true scholars or good educators) and at whose fires the young people warm themselves. But, as another educator warns us, in the words of Paracelsus, wisdom is to be found not just in high colleges but also in gypsies, old women, and peasants. So in Rebel Angels, wisdom comes from an old gypsy woman. In What's Bred in the Bone, wisdom comes from an old Italian painting master, not from the institutionalized world of education.

It is clear that these great educators are more than just teachers; they are great musicians, conductors, historians, hagiographers, theologians, and painters--all great

men, all great artists.

Davies elaborates on this theme of higher education in an article from 1987 in which he says that while it is true that formal education, gained at universities, provides personal ghosts to think about--like Shakespeare and Samuel Johnson--as opposed to the too rational world; however, he warns against putting all one's stock in university education. A university offers one door to wisdom, and there are other doors. One can only judge by asking "what has your learning made of your life"--a dead, joyless, mean person like McGladdery, McVarish, or Mackilwraith, or a full, oddly interesting person like Cobbler, Ramsay, or Darcourt? [16]

Even today Davies continues to lecture--eloquently--but on the same theme. In a recent article from Saturday Night, Davies advises the Intelligent General Reader--the Canadian people:

> ...to glorify and enjoy, to take heed of the numinous as it asserts itself, whenever invited to do so, in the national life because it has illuminated and set free the personal life.17

If after reading a Davies story or article, the reader feels that he has just sat at the feet of a wise man, and has been imbued with the confidence to pursue his own interests--to make himself happier--then Davies is indeed an ideal teacher.

Class dismissed.

[8] Oakeshott, p.19.

[9] Christine Tausig, "Early Specialization is 'foolish'--Adam Zimmerman," University Affairs (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, January 1986), p.7.

[10] "The B.A. is Back," The University: What It Means to You (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1986), unpaged col. 2.

[11] Robertson Davies, "God Forbid I Should Utter Such Foolishness," Waterloo Review, no.2 (Winter 1960), p.21.

[12] J.E. Morpurgo, "Robertson Davies," Contemporary Novelists, ed. James Vinson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), p.329.

[13] David Dooley, Contemporary Satire (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd., 1971), pp. 68-69.

[14] William French, "More Impish Zest," The Globe and Mail, Sat. Edn. (10 Sept. 1988), Sec. C, p.5.

[15] Eva Seidner, "A Master's Sharp Eye," Macleans, vol. 100, no. 42 (19 Oct. 1987), p.12.

[16] Seidner, p.12.

[17] Robertson Davies, "Keeping Faith," Saturday Night, (January 1987), p192.

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