Ce tableau indique que les oppositions produites par le texte ne sont pas de simples emprunts au champ lexical. Bien au contraire, c'est le texte lui-même qui actualise un champ sémantique particulier. Ce qui veut dire que l'analyse retrouve les effets de littérarité perçus par le lecteur. Dans la simplicité même de son style, Roch Carrier nous offre, une fois de plus, de la littérature avant toute chose. Que l'on en juge par l'impact de "La Moto," où l'auteur arrive à associer les gribouillages de l'enfant et la mort tragique de l'adolescent:

Cet enfant trop précoce avait tout simplement dessiné les pirouettes que ferait sa moto en emportant son corps loin de la Terre. (84)

Alexandre L. Amprimoz *est professeur de littérature canadienne à St. John's College, Université du Manitoba.*

FEMINISM, FAITH AND THE FAMILY

The Elizabeth stories, Isabel Huggan. Oberon Press, 1984. 184 pp. $14.95 paper. ISBN 0-88750-520-1; ***The father,*** F.G. Paci. Oberon Press, 1984. 193 pp. $27.95, $14.95 cloth & paper. ISBN 0-88750-510-4, 0-88750-511-2; ***Holy Week,*** Paul Scott Wilson. Wood Lake Books, 1984. 152 pp. $9.95 paper. ISBN 0-919599-15-X.

What must be acknowledged at once about these three new Canadian novels is the fact that they are by no means addressed exclusively to an adolescent reader. Indeed, they deal at times with matters as demanding and abstruse as the conflict between thought and feeling, mind and body, and even the realms of philosophy and theology.

The most immediately accessible of the three to an adolescent reader is undoubtedly Isabel Huggan's *The Elizabeth stories,* a collection of interrelated stories which trace the frustrations and trials of a young girl growing up in a small Ontario town, Garten (a town bearing a strong resemblance to Huggan's own birthplace, Elmira). If this framework sounds vaguely reminiscent of Alice Munro, it's no coincidence; Huggan, in seeking to create a "Garten," has been strongly influenced by Munro's creation of "Jubilee" and "Hanratty." The first story in the collection, for instance, "Celia behind me," deals with Elizabeth's desire on one hand, to bow to peer pressure by tormenting a sickly diabetic schoolmate, Celia, and, on the other hand, to respond to her with generosity and sympathy, much in the manner of Munro's "Day of the butterfly" in *The dance of the happy shades.* Similarly, Elizabeth's relationship with the school "brain," Dieter, parallels that of Del and Jerry Storey in *Lives*

of girls and women: "We became allies in enemy territory". Even individual phrases betray a texture and rhythm associated with Munro; Elizabeth mulls over her mother's description of her aunts' automobile accident, their heads smashed like melons, "repeating the words to herself as I did other things so that I got a nice rhythm: 'Their heads smashed like melons, like melons, like melons.'"

This is not to suggest, however, that Huggan's novel is entirely derivative. Her sensitive depiction of the uneasy meeting of town and Mennonite children in "Queen Esther" is arguably the strongest section of the book. Huggan's own voice also emerges in her handling of a central feminist theme: the mother-daughter relationship. In "Secrets," Huggan interposes within the narrative several flashbacks, all beginning, "My mother is teaching me how to dance." The dance, we soon learn, is a metaphor for the relationship; as Elizabeth discovers her mother's "secret" life, the dance becomes correspondingly intricate. Here, Huggan's own step is sure.

A less successful attempt to deal with a central experience in Canadian literature — the clash between individual and community — is found in Paul Scott Wilson's *Holy Week,* a story of a young minister who confronts the lonely reaches of the Canadian North, a group of defensive parishioners, and his own spiritual doubt. Part of Wilson's problem lies in his too rigid application of Biblical parallels and images. The basic structure of the novel, starting with a section entitled "Eden" and following through the days of the week from Saturday (the Eve of Holy Week) to Easter, is fitting enough, suggesting as it does Jason's "fall" into doubt and confusion and his eventual recovery of equanimity and belief. What appears more forced is the author's tendency to point out the parallels between the day of Passion Week and the particular trial which Jason is undergoing. True, Callaghan works with similar parallels in *Such is my beloved,* where in Father Dowling is "sacrificed" to Church decorum on Good Friday. Yet, for the most part, Callaghan allows his readers to explore these parallels; only at one or two awkward points does he make the correspondence explicit.

Another doubt raised by *Holy Week* concerns its tone. Jason is, in many respects, an isolated, cerebral character, who keeps in touch with the changes undergone in his pregnant wife's womb by reading books rather than by physically touching her. We are told at one point that "Emma was the first woman he loved that he found intellectually compatible," but we rarely witness the couple in physical or emotional proximity. Finally, one of Jason's parishioners accuses him of intellectual arrogance: "Maybe you should test your own life to see where the chaos really is." Jason feels suitably chastened by this, but immediately wonders "how Jesus might have felt when his closest friends deserted him." One would imagine this reflection to be shot through with venomous irony, yet at the end of the novel, Jason *does* become a type of Christ figure, descending into the hellish underworld of a collapsed mine

shaft to comfort a dying miner. If anything, the tragedy serves to reaffirm Jason's sense of importance.

F.G. Paci's novel, *The father*, succeeds where Huggan's and Wilson's novels fall short. It is a tale with several levels, each one complementing the others. On the cultural level, we witness an Italo-Canadian family's attempts to come to terms with a bewildering new world. The "Father," sentimental Oreste, wishes to preserve forever the tiny community bakery which recalls his youth in the Abruzzi, while his wife wishes to import all of the latest North American technology for the manufacture of bread. On the personal level, the oldest son, Stephen (whose correspondence to Joyce's Stephen is, I think, obvious), contains within himself the conflicting principles of reason and emotion which divided his parents. He opts for philosophy and pure reason, while his younger, reckless brother takes a similarly destructive emotional path. Interwoven throughout the tale are the key religious symbols of bread and wine; Oreste, the "Father," is associated with both. Bread, for him, is community, and wine — the substance which ironically leads to his early death — is his refuge when modern technology dictates that he shall no longer shape his precious loaves of bread with his hands. Stephen, at one point, reflects of his philosophical abstractions, "Thinking is working without any hands." One of his own hands is, significantly, deformed.

Thus, Paci's novel forms an implicit commentary on novels such as Huggan's and Wilson's. One *can* shape an original tale out of an expressly Canadian experience and secondly, one *can* employ religious symbols and parallels in a subtle, satisfying manner. Only after we finish Paci's *The father* do we begin to sense the deeper truth, about who or what "The father" really is.

Lorraine York *is writing a doctoral thesis on photography and Canadian fiction at McMaster University. She has written articles on Munro, Livesay, Findley, Atwood and Ross.*

MULTI-PURPOSE READING

Canada home: Juliana Horatia Ewing's Fredericton letters, 1867-1869, edited by Margaret Howard Blom & Thomas Blom. University of British Columbia Press, 1983. 455 pp. $24.95 cloth. ISBN 0-7748-0174-3.

It is generally agreed that one of the chief characteristics of a *good* book is its multidimensional appeal; one can expect to enjoy it on several levels — practical or aesthetic, stylistic or thematic (on some or all of these). *Canada home,* being a very good book, is no exception to that rule.

One can, for example, read this collection of letters by the wife of a military