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Darkness and Delight: A Portrait of
the Life and Work of John Glassco

by

Patricia M. Whitney, M.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of English

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

June 1988

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Chairman, Department of English

Thesis Supervisor

External Examiner

Carleton University

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides a portrait of the life and work of John Glassco, poet, memoirist, pornographer and translator, from his childhood to the publication of the Memoirs of Montparnasse in 1970.

John Glassco's life, and the energy that fuelled his creative work, had as their determining force his attempts to reconcile the psychological effects of the attacks on his child-self by his father with the realization of his artistic gifts as an adult, a reconciliation made even more difficult by his persistent illnesses.

Chapters One to Five outline the essential biographical material, chronicle the apprenticeship of the writer, and describe the evolution of the Memoirs. Chapter Six discusses Glassco's pornography and Chapter Seven his translations, with particular attention to Glassco's work on de Saint-Denys Garneau. Chapter Eight concludes the biography while concentrating on Glassco's two principal collections of verse, The Deficit Made Flesh and A Point of Sky.

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I am grateful to Miss Margot Buck of Vancouver, in my opinion this country's leading expert on the dynamics of childhood sexual and physical abuse and

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This work is for Leslie and Allison.

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Introduction

The subject of biography creates a certain ambivalence in the mind of the reader. Most of us enjoy reading such works, and indeed popular taste in the 1980s indicates, if book sales are a reliable measure, that the biography has overtaken the novel as the genre of choice. The literary biography, that is to say the examination of the life and work of a writer of note, is a form that has gained not only popularity but also academic respectability in Canada as well as in the United Kingdom and the United States. Certainly, this has been a change not always welcomed by serious scholars grounded in what is still called New Criticism. Helen Gardner, in In Defence of the Imagination, makes clear that she is not at all happy with literary biography. She quotes Virginia Woolf's essay "The Art of Biography," raising the question "Is biography an art?" and finding the answer in Woolf that the biographer is "a craftsman not an artist"; ergo, that which she creates must be craft rather than art (167). Gardner supports her argument further, again by quoting Woolf, that Lytton Strachey "wished to write poetry or plays but was doubtful of his creative power" and therefore resorted to his particular version of biography that "called for gifts analogous to the poet's or the novelist's, yet did not ask that

inventive power in which he found himself lacking" (167-168). Thus Woolf denies the title of artist to Strachey, whose clever pen pierced the pompous and worshipful style of biography. Of his own role Strachey wrote, in Eminent Victorians, that he saw it as one charged with laying bare "the facts of some cases, as I understand them, dispassionately, impartially, and without ulterior intentions. To quote the words of a Master--'Je n'impose rien; je ne propose rien; j'expose'" (10). Certainly, the Strachian concept of biography was historical, if highly coloured. He hastened, however, to advise his readers that "Human beings are too important to be treated as mere symptoms of the past. They have a value which is independent of any temporal processes--which is eternal, and must be felt for its own sake" (10).

Whatever Woolf's judgement on Strachey's work, and Gardner's careful interpretation of that judgement, it is of no small interest that Woolf considered the form of biography worthy of attention and did in time turn to the composing of the life of her friend Roger Fry, a process that would result in, as Leon Edel writes in Writing Lives: Principia Biographica: "a posthumous friendship more intimate than she had had with him in life" (205). Edel writes of how the novelist chafed at the restrictions on the biographer who must, somehow,

reconcile the "kitchen work" of biography--Edel's pragmatic term for the grinding research that must underpin the life--with the essential need to be "at once nimble and creative, large in imagination, while at the same time plodding in detail" (205). Woolf found the challenge a stubborn one, as her diaries reveal; to again quote Edel:

May 5, 1938--What about the letters? How can one cut loose from facts, when there they are, contradicting my theories.
 July 7, 1938--Oh the appalling grind of getting back to Roger! . . . How can I concentrate upon minute facts in letters? It's all too minute and tied down--documented. (206)¹

Woolf's frustrations grew until on 8 January 1939 she confided in her diary that she had "brought my brain to the state of an old washerwoman's flannel over Roger" (208). She did, nevertheless, persevere, and Roger Fry, A Biography appeared in July 1940 (Bell 2: 216). The literary artist had written a biography; was then that biography, at least potentially, a work of art? Edel would have it so, although his enthusiasm for this particular work is tempered while yet admiring. It is

¹In this quotation, Edel's dating and wording suggest that his source may have been Leonard Woolf's A Writer's Diary (1953). Anne Olivier Bell's definitive work, The Diary of Virginia Woolf, should be consulted for the most current record on Woolf (see Vol. V).

his assertion that there is "no reason why we should not ask that a biography be told with all the art we demand of the novelist, rather than in a dreary, dull recital in which pages bulge with facts . . ." (213). It is, nevertheless, the scholar's task to ensure that her reader can verify her observations and trace the course of the logic of her conclusions. It must be, therefore, that "dull facts" will, indeed must, intrude upon the narrative and not merely be, somehow truths known but unsubstantiated by the writer. It must be admitted, as well, that no matter how rigorously the scholar attempts to discipline her writing, "biography is truth seen (as Zola put it for fiction) through a given temperament. Biography is most itself then when it is a life offered us through a personal vision" (Edel 213).

The literary biography, it can be argued, has aspirations to art; is grounded in fact; must maintain a pleasing narrative pace while deferring to the demands of scholarly verification; must strive, in Strachey's words, to lay "bare the facts . . . dispassionately, impartially, and without ulterior intentions" (10); must admit to, even cultivate, the awareness in the reader that this work is one of truth, but "truth seen through a given temperament." A literary biography presented as a doctoral dissertation

must, in addition, take special pains to ensure that the events of the subject's life are supported by verifiable research (as grateful as one is for Carl Connor's Archibald Lampman: Canadian Poet of Nature, still our only biography of English Canada's most important nineteenth-century poet, one is frustrated at every turn by the lack of scholarly apparatus), and are related to the subject's principal literary works. One must be interesting, yet not sensational; thorough yet avoid undue digression; and above all treat both one's subject with compassion and his work with critical insight.

This no small task, and one which, no matter how carefully executed, is repugnant to many. As I have mentioned, the subject of biography creates a certain ambivalence. Who of us would want our diaries, letters and other private papers peered over endlessly by the diligent scholar? Who of us would not prefer that aspects of our lives would remain secret? It is well known that T.S. Eliot forbade an official biography; while his widow has withheld her cooperation, her efforts have not prevented the publication of biographies of her husband. W.H. Auden deplored biography, and Henry James, Edel tells us, "often enjoined his correspondents to 'burn this, please, burn, burn'" (116). Yet scholars persist, indeed must

persist, in attempting to write literary biography; even Helen Gardner will admit that "As a critic I have always recognized the importance of biographical information, since I hold that a poem or a novel is a historical object produced by a human being at a certain time in certain circumstances" (175). At a minimum, then, the literary biography assists the reader in placing the poem or the novel in a particular historical context, a context that is personal, social and literary. Edel maintains that, because a "writer writes out of his whole physical as well as mental being [,] I am not sure the work and life can be dissociated" (21). Thus the case can be made that, as useful as other critical approaches may be, the biographical, as long as it be practised with thoroughness and respect for the human spirit of one's subject, may lead us to a fuller and deeper understanding of literature. Balzac said that "The artist does not know the secrets of his own mind He does not belong to himself . . ." (Edel 149). The biographer can, as one type of critic, assist the reader in knowing and understanding at least some of those secrets, thereby helping to illuminate not only the mysterious process of artistic creation, but also the oeuvre itself.

In the title of this dissertation I refer to a "portrait" rather than to a "biography," or to be more exact, a "literary biography" of John Glassco. There are two reasons for the designation of this document as a portrait. First, and I shall enlarge upon these points further in this Introduction, Glassco has been dead only some few years and his widow survives him; moreover, and the points are not unrelated, important private papers remain unavailable to researchers. Secondly, and again for reasons I shall discuss more fully, I have chosen to discuss not the whole of Glassco's life and work, but rather to outline briefly the significant events of his family background, childhood and education before passing on to a full elucidation of what may be called the apprenticeship years, the years between his recovery from tuberculosis in 1935 to the publication of his first book in 1958. Subsequently, I concentrate on the remarkable dozen years 1958 to 1970 when Glassco either wrote or published virtually all of his significant work, beginning with The Deficit Made Flesh (1958) and climaxing with the critical and popular success of the Memoirs of Montparnasse (1970).

The term "biography" suggests an historical document (Quentin Bell so deems, with exemplary modesty, his extraordinary life of Virginia Woolf); the

term "literary biography" suggests an historical and critical document on a daunting scale; works such as Edel's life of Henry James or Ellmann's James Joyce immediately cast their shadow. Given the constraints of the dissertation form--a scholarly document of moderate length incorporating a sustained thesis or argument--and the factors already alluded to, "portrait" presents itself as perhaps the most useful and accurate designation for this work. That is not to say that I shall not employ the term "biography" in this Introduction; I wish only to specify the term "portrait" as a biography of more limited scope.

Central to this portrait is my view that John Glassco's life and the energy that fuelled his creative work had as their determining force his attempts to reconcile the psychological effects of the assault on his child-self by his father with the realization of his artistic gifts. These assaults by the sadistic parent constituted the matter of traumatic neurosis, a neurosis that arrested the child's sexual development and "fixed" his adult sexual orientation. Glassco's papers reveal a writer's heroic struggle to overcome the enduring damage inflicted on the immature mind and body of John Glassco, while documenting an artist's determination to pursue his destiny as writer in the face of recurrent episodes of what Freud called

melancholia and what we know today as clinical depression.

Freud, in the authorized A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, has written that the "traumatic neuroses demonstrate very clearly that a fixation to the moment of the traumatic occurrence lies at their root" (243). In Glassco's case the "traumatic occurrence" was the protracted series of vicious beatings and molestations suffered at the hands of the man whose responsibility to his child was to behave as protector and as model of manliness. The result of Archibald Glassco's inversion was that the child John Glassco became arrested in a psycho-sexual state that determined his adult sexual behaviour and revealed itself in his pornography, an important part of his oeuvre dedicated to his passion for masochism. While the pornography most overtly portrays the masochism derived from the writer's childhood sexual abuse, I shall discuss how this burden affected not only Glassco's life, but directly or indirectly, much of his published work. Trauma may produce neurosis; it does not produce poetry. Glassco's gifts were those he was born with. I do not suggest that his painful memories were the "cause" of anything other than the suffering he has described in his journals. I do assert that, given his talent, the fact of his childhood abuse and his

attempts to live a full life in spite of the neurotic after-effects of this tragedy, added a particular urgency to his desire to reconcile his psychological pain with his literary gifts. The result of that urgency was the energy that compelled John Glassco to begin to write and publish as a boy of sixteen, and that spurred him on in his later years to maintain his life as an active man-of-letters.

As my brief reference to Freud will attest, within the overall historical approach of this dissertation (biographical criticism being a form of historical criticism), I have found it most helpful to employ the theory of "literary psychology" as that term and that theory are used by Leon Edel. In the Foreword to his Stuff of Sleep and Dreams: Experiments in Literary Psychology, Edel has described his "general thesis" as the assertion that "literary study (that is, biography and criticism) can no longer afford to close its eyes and look away from psychological truths in literary works: they are a part of the truths sought in literary works: they are a part of the truths sought in literary criticism and in biography" (ix-x). Edel goes on to explain what he has called:

the application of this new and modern body of information about human nature, personality, character, and motivation 'literary psychology' to distinguish it from the other psychologies that are concerned with treating the neuroses and pathological conditions of

mental health. In other words, literary psychology is criticism and biography divorced from psychotherapy. We do not 'put literature on the couch,' as some claim. We can't in reality, and if we could, we shouldn't.
(x)

While Edel seems to favour the application of the theories of Freud and Adler to the problems of literary psychology (Glassco himself recognized the importance of Freud, particularly his Beyond the Pleasure Principle, to an understanding of his own motives and actions), there are instances where the theories of Jung are instructional in the analysis of Glassco's writing. An argument can be made that the Memoirs of Montparnasse, the work for which Glassco is best known, represent in Jungian terms a "mandala," a mandala that encompasses as well as represents the creative life of John Glassco.

The book's dates of composition remain controversial; its apparent disregard for the exactitudes of literary history excites critical comment. While Glassco's other writing remains relatively neglected, the Memoirs continue to stimulate papers and articles, some to date finding fault with him for personal rather than literary reasons. While moral castigation of a writer is of no critical interest whatsoever, one can understand the sometime confusion and annoyance Glassco's disregard for correct detail has roused in

many critics. Indeed there is a certain legitimacy in questioning whether Glassco's rather free play with fact in the Memoirs, and his outright deception of the reading public in asserting that the Memoirs were composed in the 1930s rather than, in the main, in the 1960s, was acceptable. The question is, has his little hoax caused significant mischief? I say no. We have Glassco's own description of his intention and process. On 19 March 1969, he wrote to Kay Boyle:

You see, I look on the real value of "memoirs" as being not so much a record of "what happened" as a re-creation of the spirit of a period in time. The first approach is so often simply tedious, faded literary name-dropping, disconnected anecdotes, etc., like 50% of Bob's book [Bob McAlmon's Being Geniuses Together]; your own record, on the other hand, has the ring of genuine experience and feeling, and above all a good story-line: everyone here says so! The second approach is that of Rousseau, Casanova and George Moore. None of them felt tied to historical truth; they were all liars and produced works of art by invention. Who cares about their lives now? Who knows, for instance, whether Casanova's "Henriette" even existed? Yet she lives. I don't compare myself to them, naturally, but my book is in their style. And Casanova is the greatest writer of Memoirs the world has ever seen: this is the 19th century, and the portrait of a man as well. He's better than Pepys, even.

Public Archives of Canada, Vol. 12²

²Hereafter references to the Public Archives of Canada will be replaced by the standard abbreviation, PAC.

In short, while agreeing that Glassco's behaviour in falsifying the dating of the manuscript was curious, I shall demonstrate that such behaviour was neither atypical nor malevolent. Moreover, one might well keep in mind William Empson's words in Using Biography: "A student of literature ought to be trying all the time to empathize with the author (and of course the assumptions and conventions by which the author felt himself bound)" (viii). The Memoirs are more an artifact illustrating Glassco's life-experience, view of art, and attitudes to humankind, than an accounting of quotidian existence; as Stephen Scobie states in his discussion of the veracity of Glassco's autobiographical work in "The Mirror on the Brothel Wall: John Glassco, Memoirs of Montparnasse": "only the most unsophisticated readers would seriously take the Memoirs as a factually accurate record" (46).

Indeed, one might well be mindful of Robertson Davies' World of Wonders, where a telling question is posed: "But what's an autobiography? Surely it's a romance of which oneself is the hero. Otherwise why write the thing?" (257). In fact, the Memoirs are suggestive of what Holman has described as "romance":

In another and more sophisticated sense, romance refers to works which are relatively free of the more restrictive aspects of realistic verisimilitude and which are expressive

of profound or transcendent or idealistic truths. (387)

For the reader, what remains is the text itself, and the interest piqued in one as to why Glassco did such a deed. In my discussion of the Memoirs, a discussion which is integrated with my principal exposition of the biography, I present in some detail the evolution of the Memoirs as integral to an understanding of both the writer's life and his "autobiography."

Like the movement of Glassco's life, the structure of the Memoirs is circular. The book opens in Montreal in late winter, early spring about to emerge. Two young men travel by train to the port of Saint John for departure to Europe. Briefly in England, they soon depart for France where they are to remain for about two years, within that time travelling to and from the Riviera, and making a utopian escape to Luxembourg for repose in idyllic surroundings of pleasure and comfort, a sort of corporal sanctity achieved. The older, Graeme, returns to Canada; the younger, Buffy, makes a trip to Majorca in pursuit of the fatal woman, Mrs. Quayle; he returns to Paris and admission to the American hospital, his body nearly destroyed by tuberculosis. Ignominiously, he is fetched home to Montreal by his mother and an attendant medical staff and admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1932. And

so the first circle is closed. The escape has been foiled. Years in hospital, the frightful nearness of death, and the young man, wounded, retreats to rural Quebec under the care of Graeme, his lover and father-figure, slightly his senior, unprepossessing, of no remarkable talent, but nevertheless the figure of stability essential to the young John Glassco.

For twenty-five years a recluse, Glassco moves out of stasis into art in 1958: The Deficit Made Flesh is published, the work of a lifetime of apprenticeship. At his writing table Glassco exerted self-discipline; otherwise, much of his life was a hazy dream of alcohol and sexual liberty in those lost years between his recovery from tuberculosis in 1934-35 and his re-entry into the world with his meeting of Elma von Colmar in 1956 and the death of Graeme Taylor in 1957.

During those twenty-five years, c. 1934-1958, Glassco rarely completed anything. Even published poems were seen as unsatisfactory, unfinished, poor attempts, were seen as tangible evidence of the writer's defects. Unable to determine his focus as an artist, on the one hand rigorously pursuing form in translation and various verse forms, on the other writing pornographic stories of fear which expressed his own troubled sexuality, Glassco seemed to fluctuate wildly between confidence and despair, between pride in

his literary efforts and certainty of his worthlessness as a writer.

In the afternoon of life, Glassco sat down at the age of fifty-three years to draw his mandala. The circle he drew was the Memoirs of Montparnasse. The image, the picture he created, is frequently inaccurate, always truthful: "a romance of which one is oneself the hero," a reconciliation with himself. The book completed, he met his second wife, Marion McCormick, loved her, and embraced a life of greater calm and tranquillity than he had been able to know heretofore.

Over half of this dissertation is concerned with Glassco's autobiographical writings, particularly with the Memoirs of Montparnasse, and the effort to place that book, so superficially insouciant yet so profoundly Glassco's "story" or autobiography, into the context of his life. Chiefly written in the 1960s, but having their roots in the 1920s and 1930s, resurrected through the process of Glassco's search for a "subject" in the 1940s and 1950s, they continue to excite comment and speculation from poets and scholars alike. Irving Layton, for example, in his Waiting for the Messiah: A Memoir (1985) writes of meeting Glassco and playing

a part in getting him to finish and publish his masterpiece Memoirs of Montparnasse
 It was during one of my visits with

him that I got him to take the mildewed notebooks [the manuscript of Memoirs] out from the drawer where they'd been kept for over three decades, and read large sections to me. My exclamations of surprise and delight visibly moved him. He told me he hadn't looked at those pages for so long he'd almost forgotten he had ever written them. I like to think it was my frank enthusiasm that encouraged him to complete the work by the addition of several more chapters. (248)

Layton's recounting of events joins the other versions of the story of the rediscovery of the Memoirs. Glassco claimed variously that he wrote the work in the 1960s (one has only to consult his correspondence with trusted friends throughout the mid-1960s); that he had rescued the manuscript after his mother's death in 1963; that the manuscript had turned up when he and his wife Elma von Colmar were moving house in 1966. Scholarly evidence suggests that in addition to the much-emended first chapter, published originally in Paris in 1929, some portions of a possible second chapter were composed in 1934 during Glassco's recovery from tuberculosis. The remainder of the book was written in Canada and France 1963-64. These points are discussed at length in Chapters One to Five of this dissertation.

Memoirs closed the circle. In this book he returned to the morning of his life and there created a persona which he perceived to be nearer that ideal mask he had desired to wear as a young man. The Memoirs

represented a reconciliation with the past, and their critical and popular success seemed to ease Glassco into the final decade of his life, a time when he wrote little of real originality save the poem for Marion, "The Heavenly Boy."

While Glassco strived for aesthetic distance, particularly in the poetry, the act of writing was for him an act of self-definition. In turn, that resultant self-definition derived from the writing gave him sufficient confidence to proceed. A reading of the McGill Journal, kept between 1934 and 1960, reveals a man beset by psychic pain, full of self-doubt, but nevertheless committed to art. It was as if in writing he found not only identity but self-justification: "I am in such discouragement about my work that I feel impelled to write about it--perhaps to reason myself back into the belief that I shall really, someday, do something good" (fol. 25). No-one should need, much less be compelled, to seek self-justification; our existence is its own justification. Glassco's was, however, a sensibility so fragmented by a traumatic childhood that the problem of self-justification plagued him throughout life. Munro Beattie observed, some twenty years ago, that certain of Glassco's poems might be regarded "as splinters from a damaged sensibility" (311). The "damaged sensibility" that Beattie

discerned in and from the poetry was the very determiner of Glassco's life, his ego being made the target of merciless self reproach (Freud 370). While Glassco was ultimately a successful and respected writer, he was never convinced of his own self-worth as man or artist. He died in a state of profound and painful clinical depression.

I maintain, therefore, that the dramatic events of Glassco's life, as well as the evident attempts to make art of that life and the demonstrated attempt to define and to justify his existence not only suggest a biographical approach to his work, but demand it. Even the most mannered of his writing--the erotica--is grounded firmly in autobiography. Glassco wrote flagellatory pornography because he was himself an artist who was deeply attracted to sexual masochism; in his erotic works he thus was able to integrate his own sexual predilections with the attractions of form, the stasis of erotic writing where the very rigidity of form is itself an integral force in the emotional effect on the reader. In my defence of this position, that a historical-critical approach, specifically that of literary biography as a sub-species of historical criticism, is not only justified but essential, I offer the elegant words of Proust's biographer, George D. Painter, who wrote in Marcel Proust: A Biography that:

"My belief that Proust's novel cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of his life, is necessitated by the facts, and is not due to mere ignorance of the accepted clichés" (xi).

Glassco's influences, apart from the psycho-sexual, were, perhaps because of the fragility of his health, those of family, of intimates such as Graeme Taylor in the formative years, and of literature, rather than those exerted by the pressures of history and society; he thus stands outside the mainstream of Canadian literature in the twentieth century. During his years as an undergraduate at McGill in the 1920s, when A.J.M. Smith was activating Leon Edel and F.R. Scott towards modernism, Glassco was a shadowy figure still true to Keats, Wordsworth and the Georgian poets. The earthy strain in modernism, typified in Canada by such as Irving Layton, Louis Dudek or John Sutherland, was foreign to him (although Sutherland was to publish some of Glassco's early erotic prose). Neither did the gentlemanly socialism of F.R. Scott or the cultivated communism of Patrick Anderson have any impact on Glassco. During the 1930s when English Canada's best writers were driven by the economic and social catastrophes of the depression and the rise of fascism, during the 1940s when poetic ferment roiled about First Statement and Preview in Montreal, Glassco

was in social retreat, living in a grand house on a gracious country estate outside Knowlton in the Eastern Townships.

In Chapter Six I discuss the erotic works of Glassco. Nowhere is the fascination with form more clearly marked than in these writings. At his best, Glassco could manage the pastiche with a skill unmatched in our literature, as the seamless Under the Hill (1959) testifies; derive from archaic sources, such as he did from the erotic novel La Gouvernante (Paris 1913), classics of modern erotica such as The English Governess (1960) and Harriet Marwood: Governess (1967). In Venus in Furs (1977), the writer combined the genre of translation with that of erotica. He explored composition of pornography in French and subsequent translation, and the forming and reforming of a work known variously as En arriere, Philip Eugene, The Monster, and only finally as the stories in The Fatal Woman (1974).

In addition to these erotic works, prose pieces that have an interest and integrity that qualify them as "literature," albeit literature of a particularly rigid form and static quality of sexual obsession, Glassco published the erotic poem Squire Hardman (1966), as well as the illustrated collage, The Temple of Pederasty (1970), attributed to "Hideki Okada" and

said to be derived from "Ken Sato's hilariously inept translation, Quaint Stories of the Samurais, published by Robert McAlmon, Paris 1928" (Sutherland 53).

Glassco's Fetish Girl (1972) allowed him to explore not only lesbian and male homosexual eroticism, but also his favourite theme of masochism, enhanced by an enthusiastic portrayal of rubber fetishism. The erotic works are discussed within the context of Glassco's thesis on erotic writing, "The Art of Pornography," a work written between 1962 and 1967.

Glassco was wilfully distanced from his society to a degree unmatched by any other Canadian writer save his French-Canadian frère, de Saint-Denys Garneau, Quebec's first modernist and among that society's most fascinating and elusive artists. I discuss the literary association between these two reclusive writers in Chapter Seven of this dissertation where I consider Glassco as translator, particularly as translator of the poetry and journal of de Saint-Denys Garneau. A highly respected translator, Glassco clearly sought to recreate his subject's poetry and prose, rather than merely to translate it. Again, one notes the attraction to form that is so clearly evidenced in Glassco's poetry and pornography. Translation is a process of re-forming form; it is a creative process, but one perhaps lacking in the

artistic agony so common to the writing of poetry. Translation of Québécois literature is the perfect task for the Canadian craftsman, particularly one blessed with the gifts of the poetic muse, one sympathetic towards and at least partly insightful into the crises of the French-Canadian experience (a sympathy and insight beautifully evoked in the poem "Quebec Farmhouse").

In the case of de Saint-Denys Garneau, Glassco was attracted not only to the products of that man's tortured poetic genius, but also to the elegant spirit of the first French-Canadian modernist. Moreover, Glassco's own contradictory nature, at once libertine and restrained, responded to the contradictions of Garneau: the man afflicted by the killing Jansenism in Quebec society, a dualist attitude that tore a man asunder, body and soul wrenched apart in a daunting intellectual and artistic struggle to articulate poetry and aspire to sanctity.

While leading writers of English Canada in the 1930s were taken up with the political strivings against the excesses of capitalism and the cancer of fascism abroad, the progressive thinkers of French Canada were occupied with the creation of a new moral and intellectual order, articulated in the search for voice in the periodical La Releve (1934-40).

During those same years, Glassco was living withdrawn from the world, slowly recovering from near-fatal tuberculosis, haunted by his encounter with death, horrified by memory and by the depths of his own perversion--to paraphrase his own words--but slowly developing his voice; in those years a voice most often articulated in erotica, but frequently in poetry, and occasionally in translation. Alone in his landscape, the external bucolic one of the green countryside around Knowlton, Quebec, and the internal one of memory and nightmare fantasy, in these tormented circumstances Glassco confronted the search for the word, for voice.

When F.R. Scott was to suggest to Glassco that he consider a translation of Garneau's Journal, Glassco was ready, prepared by years of exile in the Quebec countryside. This dissertation discusses the development of the voice of this remarkable translator, of that readiness, as well as the felicitous meeting with Garneau's friend, fellow-intellect and brother-writer, Jean Le Moyne. Collaborating, Glassco and Le Moyne produced first a journal, then a collected poems that remain, a generation later, landmarks in the literature of Canada.

While some seventeen years after their launching on 28 March 1970 the Memoirs continue to sell some five hundred copies a year (confirmed by Mr. William

Toye, March 1987), it is in the poetry, now regrettably out of print, where Glassco most handsomely portrays his talent. These works are considered in Chapter Eight. He published only two collections, The Deficit Made Flesh (1958) and A Point of Sky (1964), his Selected Poems (1971), for which he won the Governor-General's Award, being almost wholly derived from his earlier collections; of the thirty-four poems in this final collection, only seven are ones that appear for the first time in book form.

Yet for all the brevity of his poetic creation, there is no loss of quality. Glassco's poems are the work of a craftsman who strived not only for a precision of verse form, but for a tight control of language. His "Eastern Townships poems" render perfectly that closed, Anglo-rural community between Montreal and New England, and capture the self-satisfied superiority (based in ignorance) felt by a narrow and at times mean-spirited people who no matter how poor or inelegant could "at least" scorn their French-Canadian neighbours. How clearly did Glassco see those people? Very clearly indeed, and what is more, he heard them. Among the Glassco papers at McGill University there is a curious artifact: a sheet of crisp, browning paper, covered in Glassco's minute hand; a paper full of expressions, curiosities of

speech, and particular turns of phrase gleaned from his neighbours' speech. None of these words or phrases actually appears in his poems, but they have done their work, entering the poet's mind where they guide and direct him to the telling detail, the key image of landscape, the expression that makes everything clear:

Far as I'm concerned, the war can go on forever!
A man can make a dollar, with hens.

"The Rural Mail" (Deficit)

Yet the Township poems make up only one category of Glassco's poetry. There are as well the poems of feeling, works of memory such as "The Whole Hog," which captures the nightmare of the poet's childhood; works of affection such as "A Devotion" written for Elma von Colmar, or "One Last Word" dedicated "For M. Mc." (Marion McCormick); works of form, which explore a particular poetic discipline, such as "Villanelle II" or a poetic fancy such as "Catbird/For Marian Scott"; works of contemplation that portray, in stately measure for the reader's consideration, ideas, ideals, and perceptions, such as "A Point of Sky," "The Day," or "The Death of Don Quixote."

Thus, this dissertation concentrates on the years of development of the artist, his most significant works of translation, that of The Journal of Saint-Denys-Garneau (1962) and the Complete Poems of Saint

Denys Garneau (1975), and his poetry, memoirs, and erotic literature developed, written, or published during his most fertile period, 1958-70.

John Stinson Glassco, poet, pornographer, translator, memoirist, and man-of-letters, has been dead only some half-dozen years. His widow, the journalist and broadcaster Marion McCormick, is a vigorous woman very much alive and active in her profession. Many relatives and friends have memories of Buffy Glassco that remain fresh and therefore tender. Moreover, certain important papers in the principal Glassco Collection, that held in the Public Archives of Canada, remain under restrictions, for the most human and humane reasons: to protect the privacy of Glassco's widow, relatives and intimate friends. For these two reasons, reasons quite obviously closely related to the conventions of decent human behaviour, no scholar can begin to claim to write the definitive biography of John Glassco.

Nevertheless, there is much to be said about this man and his work; indeed, much needs to be said as we see Glassco's popularity increasing: he is written about, talked about at symposia, discussed on the radio; a bibliography has been published and other books on his work are in the process of publication; a number of articles have appeared on his writing to

date. There has not been, however, any sustained examination of Glassco that attempts to portray the extraordinary life lived by this quintessential Anglo-Quebecer, and to conduct that examination in concert with a discussion of his principal published works. This dissertation attempts to take a step forward in Glassco research by presenting the events of the writer's life, placing and discussing the works within the context of that life, and demonstrating the harmony that exists between the creative personality and the poetry and prose of this Canadian artist.

In order to shape the dissertation, so that it may be not only scholarly in itself and useful to other researchers, but also pleasing in form and manageable in length, I have taken certain decisions that are, as all decisions must be, somewhat arbitrary. First, my discussion of the life itself is based on the developmental years, the years of apprenticeship as a writer, and the dozen or so years of significant publication c. 1958-1970. My reasons are simple: in 1970 Glassco met and later married Marion McCormick; they lived together in Montreal and at Jamaica Farm in the Eastern Townships of Quebec until his death on 29 January 1981. As I have already mentioned, any detailed discussion of the final years of the writer's life would, at this time, constitute an invasion of his

widow's right to privacy. My second reason is based on a scholarly assessment of Glassco's work. Virtually all his best writing was either composed or published before 1970. During the 1970s Glassco continued to be a busy writer: he prepared The Fatal Woman for publication in 1974, a work principally developed during the 1940s; he continued to work as a translator, publishing, for example, Jean-Yves Soucy's Creatures of the Chase in 1979 (Jean-Charles Harvey's Fear's Folly appeared posthumously in 1982); he took to journalism, contributing reviews and other pieces to The Gazette in Montreal and The Globe and Mail in Toronto; he was an active reader for the Canada Council; as well he conducted a wide literary correspondence. Still, for all that, I argue that the publication of the Memoirs of Montparnasse in 1970 marked the climax of his literary career. He had, to recapitulate, begun that project in 1929, took it up briefly in the 1930s when recovering from his three admissions to the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1932, 1933, and 1934 (J.F. Meakins, M.D.), resumed the task in 1963, and saw its triumphal launching on 28 March 1970. He had, by 1970, chiefly accomplished the goals he had set for himself as a writer. In a final entry in the McGill Journal, dated March 1961 Glassco wrote, as he once more faced the dreaded tuberculosis that had blotted his life and

career in his youth, of his aspirations and successes as an artist:

My ambition has always been too widely diffused: I wanted to write one book of good poetry, one good novel, one successful play, one good erotic book, one good work of pornography, one best-selling book of memoirs, one fine piece of translation. Now I see that I have only done the poetry [The Deficit Made Flesh, 1958], the erotic book (Under the Hill) & the pornographic book (The English Governess)--at least these have been published; the novel (Mairobert) & the play (The Liberator) are written, but they are unacceptable to the public; the translation (Garneau's Journal) will probably be published in the spring.

Come then, cheer up: your ambitions are almost half realised! I never realised this before.

Only two more books to write--The Monster (this could be my one good bad book) and the Memoirs of a Young Man, still untitled.

To work, to work! Once more I thank you, comfortable book.

Let success come if it will, & if it will not then I've done almost my best.
(fol. 160)

Glassco never published a novel per se; the works he describes in this entry as novels are in fact novellas, collected as The Fatal Woman. He failed to write a successful play; his papers include several attempts, but it is obvious that writing for the stage was not his forte. Similarly, in the 1970s, Glassco and McCormick collaborated on a film script of the Memoirs, but the project was never realized.

Thus, the work Glassco did during the 1970s, as worthwhile and interesting as it may be, was not the stuff of his ambition. These goals, save that of being a published playwright, were achieved by 1970. Further, while I shall touch upon other literary activities carried out by Glassco during the 1960s: the editing of English Poetry in Quebec (1963), or the editing and introduction of The Poetry of French Canada in Translation (1970), I shall not consider these endeavours as essential to an understanding of the artist and his oeuvre. These books, like everything Glassco published, were accomplished works. The anthology, The Poetry of French Canada in Translation, remains a valuable introduction to the poetry of Quebec for those unable to appreciate the work in its original language. Nevertheless, Glassco was no editor by inclination. Neither was he a scholar. Now and then he would publish some musings on poetics. It is enough to say that he was a poet, not a critic or literary theorist. Similarly, the short story form, although he experimented with it, was not his own.

Thus, this dissertation will examine John Glassco as memoirist, pornographer, translator (particularly as translator of de Saint-Denys Garneau), and poet, and will do so within the context of his life from childhood to its literary climax in 1970. I shall

attempt to reveal at least some of "the secrets of Glassco's mind," to paraphrase Balzac's words, and thereby to illuminate the work of this captivating author.

Chapter One

Arrivals and Departures: 1909-1928

John Stinson Glassco (1909-1981) was, in the brevity of his literary career, a unique figure in Canadian literature. Glassco, known as "Buffy" to his friends, published undergraduate writing in the McGill Daily and in the McGill Fortnightly Review as early as the mid-1920s; and his final poem, "The Heavenly Boy" appeared, just before his death, in the December 1980 issue of Saturday Night. Such a bracketing of his career gives, however, a false impression. Glassco was a life-long writer, yet most of his best work and virtually all of his significant publication belong to a period of about a dozen years: 1958-1970. His first book of verse, The Deficit Made Flesh, appeared as number nine in McClelland and Stewart's Indian File series in 1958, its dust jacket bearing an enthusiastic blurb by A.J.M. Smith. The Memoirs of Montparnasse, among our literature's most graceful prose works, and one of its jests, appeared in 1970.

Let me, first, in this chapter, provide an outline of Glassco's writing career, and then proceed to trace key episodes in his life. To be sure, his writing had appeared here and there before 1958. The well known "Extract from an Autobiography," later to become the

basis for chapter one of the Memoirs, was published in Paris by Ethel Moorhead's little magazine, This Quarter, in 1929.¹ Years later Glassco's poems began to appear in the Canadian Forum; his "Rural Mail" in September 1943 marked his first published poetry in Canada.

Glassco's mature prose was published initially in this country by the critic and editor John Sutherland. Sutherland and Irving Layton, both First Statement men

¹In Back to Montparnasse, a memoir published by Sisley Huddleston in 1931, This Quarter is described as a little magazine of singular importance:

Just as I was settling down to work the concierge brought up the new issue of This Quarter; and I put aside my work until I had looked through it from cover to cover. There are, I suppose, more important publications in the world, but at the present moment there is none which is so interesting to the expatriate. Transition was equally interesting but transition was allowed to lapse. The Transatlantic Review was equally interesting but The Transatlantic Review was allowed to lapse. It means supremely much to feel, when one is resident abroad, that there is a magazine which is at once local and universal.

This Quarter is ours We know most of the contributors; we are among the contributors sitting on café terraces and we swop ideas with them. It is our parish magazine. Yet it is not written by amateurs for amateurs. We like to think that it has a wide circulation outside Montparnasse; that it can be bought at Brentano's bookshop in the Avenue de l'Opéra, and at Smith's and Galignani's in the rue de Rivoli This is what our colony can do; and it is not to be despised. (99-100)

at the time, had got wind of the reclusive Glassco who lived with his companion Graeme Taylor in a large and beautiful white house just outside the village of Knowlton in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. They travelled down from Montreal to meet Glassco, finding at the White Mansion an interesting but not altogether conventional household.² The result of this contact was the serialization of "Frogmore's Folly" in First Statement, three excerpts having been published between August 1944 and January 1945.³

It was not, however, until A.J.M. Smith went to his assistance that Glassco achieved significant literary success, publishing at the age of forty-nine The Deficit Made Flesh. Glassco, who had had a passing acquaintance with Smith at McGill, got to know him again in the mid-1950s. The first mention of Smith in Glassco's Journal occurs on 7 November 1956: "Deserted

²Holograph, Public Archives of Canada, John Glassco Papers, MG30/D163, Vol. 17. "Came across an old note from 1944, when John & Audrey Sutherland, Irving and Betty Layton and some others were visiting me in Knowlton." "Note-book (odds & ends)," 27, n.d. This visit was confirmed to me by Irving Layton and by Neufville Shaw.

³J.S. Glassco, "Frogmore's Folly," First Statement, II, No. 8 (Aug. 1944), 2-7.

"Frogmore and the Fatal Woman," First Statement, II, No. 9 (Oct. and Nov. 1944), 1-10.

"Frogmore's Fancy," First Statement, II, No. 10 (Dec. 44 and Jan. 45), 16-22.

Buildings under Shefford Mountain appeared in the Canadian Forum, & a few weeks later I had a request from Art Smith to let him include it in the Oxford Book of Canadian Verse. He also read it on the radio." (See Appendix A.) On 21 March 1957 Smith wrote to Glassco from East Lansing:

Dear Buffy

Thanks for the ms. It has real quality, as you know Will take it to Toronto next week and see what I can do I have yr Spring & All--must return it after all these years. Arthur. (McGill Papers)

This letter, while suggesting prior acquaintance, does not imply a close relationship, at least in the mid-1950s, although, by summer of 1957, the two men seemed to be resuming their friendship. On "Dominion Day 1957" Smith sent a postcard to Glassco:

Dear Buffy:

Next Saturday the sixth I am going over to Cowansville to pick up Ralph Gustafson and bring him back here. Would it be convenient if we stopped in to see you--say just after lunch? (McGill Papers)

"William Carlos Williams's Spring and All was published by Contact Press in Paris in 1923. See Hugh Ford's Published in Paris, 405.

According to Leon Edel, in his article "The 'I' in A.J.M. Smith," Smith, enjoying his Edinburgh years "visited the little Canadian enclave in Paris--myself, Buffy Glassco and his friend Graeme Taylor" (89). Smith was a student at the University of Edinburgh 1927-29.

This focus on the reintroduction of Smith into Glassco's life is intended to emphasize that Glassco's period of greatest creativity and of most prolific publishing corresponded to particular human events in his life: the death of Graeme Taylor in February 1957 and his growing love for Elma von Colmar at about that time; the impetus that F.R. Scott gave to Glassco on 3 November 1957 to begin his brilliant career as a translator ("since you like Garneau, may I suggest you read his journal, published by Beauchemin? There is nothing like it in Canadian Literature. There's a translation for you!"); the beneficial effect of Smith's support: Glassco wrote to Jay MacPherson on 26 September 1957: "Arthur said last summer that he would be happy (at my initial request) to write an introduction to this book of mine . . . " (McGill Papers). Graeme had earlier played the rôle of encouraging friend in the earliest attempts Glassco made to resume the Memoirs, begun in Paris and later abandoned as tuberculosis overcame the young exile. Glassco recorded in his Journal, on 15 July 1934, that while recuperating from yet another bout of surgery to drain infection in the chest, his good friend visited him in the country:

Graeme came out and suggested I should continue those old Memoirs of mine, and make some money. I suddenly saw how a good book

might be made of them--frank & "all myself" as I was back in those years--in fact became tremendously enthusiastic and next day wrote 500 words, the next 700, which I think are quite good. (fol. 29)

Glassco needed friends. I do not suggest that any one circumstance or indeed any particular cluster of incidents or personalities is utterly determining to an artist; nevertheless it is clear that Glassco was a writer who desperately needed the reassurance of those he loved and admired in order to create. The early years of his love for Graeme seemed to have provided that stimulus, a stimulus lost in the years of a relationship gone sour by the 1950s, but one very much alive in 1934, when he wrote in his Journal on 28 March: "Yesterday and today I felt as if I was dragging myself up out of the morass, but I am not quite clear of it. The fears I am not quite certain of: they seem to rise out of my love for Graeme, and centre around my imagination of what life would be without him--the thought is too terrible" (fol. 25). The meeting with Elma, their rediscovery of Paris together in 1958, seemed to have had an effect similar to that of the early times with Graeme. Not surprisingly, after Elma's ultimate breakdown in 1970 and her death in 1971 Glassco seemed too exhausted to resume his creative work. The Memoirs of Montparnasse, published in 1970 and dedicated to Elma, were not only Glassco's triumph

in prose, but were also his artistic tribute to their times of happiness together. While it was this tragic and vulnerable woman who shared Glassco's life through the years of rediscovery that culminated in the Memoirs, the genesis of this work was both longer in process and more scattered in development than these preliminary remarks suggest. To grasp fully the place of the Memoirs in the Glassco canon it is necessary to go back to his very boyhood, to identify the circumstances that first impelled him towards exile, and to the experiences recounted in the Memoirs of Montparnasse.

Born 15 December 1909 to Archibald Glassco and to his wife Beatrice Rawlings, Montreal heiress of great wealth and social prestige, Glassco passed his early childhood in a house on Golf Avenue opposite the Beaconsfield Golf Club and in the Rawlings mansion at 41 Simpson Street in Montreal. The Simpson Street house had been built by Mrs. Glassco's father, Edward Rawlings, executive of the Guarantee Company of North America. Rawlings had emigrated from the British Isles with some six months to live; he was suffering from tuberculosis. As did his grandson years later, Rawlings threw off the disease and went forward to success. (To strengthen his lungs, the old gentleman,

clad only in his long underwear, was fond of parading about the galleries that surrounded his great house, inhaling the fresh northern air into his tubercular lungs. Evidently this singular approach was efficacious: when he died in 1911 Mr. Rawlings left an estate that included stocks worth some million dollars, quite apart from the other wealth he had accumulated).

The Guarantee Company of North America, on the occasion of its centenary in 1972, published a booklet describing the firm's history: 100 Years of Service to Canadians: 1872-1972. This pamphlet explains the company's beginning:

Following the formation of the Grand Trunk Railway, Sir Alexander Galt and other directors realized the need for some kind of fidelity insurance for the railway's money-handling employees. Sir Alexander visited England and suggested to the European Life and Guarantee Company that there was fidelity business waiting in Canada for a company that wanted to come and get it.

They agreed and, in 1863 opened a branch in Montreal. A young man of twenty-four--Edward Rawlings--was dispatched from London as manager. [v]

This young man was to become John Glassco's maternal grandfather, Morgan's The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography (1898) describes Edward Rawlings as having been born in England in 1839, having been educated there and in France, and having begun his business career "in the

service of European Life and Guarantee Co. of London, Eng., Sept., 1883." Morgan outlines the career of a extraordinarily successful businessman, who was even known to take up his pen, being "the author of a paper containing suggestions as to how defalcations by bank employes may be averted, which has been highly praised by ins. [insurance] and business men generally all over the Continent." Outside his business interests, Morgan notes that Rawlings was a Justice of the Peace of the Province of Quebec, and was sometime president of the St. George's Society of Montreal, as well as a member at the St. James in Montreal and the New York Club in New York City. Politically, Morgan states, Rawlings was "Ind., [Independent] with a leaning towards a good Con. [Conservative] policy." An Anglican, in 1865 he married Lucretia, daughter of the Reverend Dr. Carter, Rector of Ballintoy, Ireland. Meanwhile he concentrated on his business affairs and:

on April 9th, 1872, the first truly Canadian fidelity insurance company came into being. Sir Alexander Galt was named president; John Rankin, vice-president and Edward Rawlings, manager Head office was located at 40 John Street in what is now 'Old Montreal' [eventually moving] in 1879 to St. James Street." (100 Years [v-vi])

During the late nineteenth century there was a ready market for the company's product: "the new concept of fidelity bonding to insure against dis-

honesty or 'infidelity' of money-handling employees." The company moved forward under Rawlings's leadership: "Based on his past experience, Edward Rawlings drew up very careful rules for the avoidance of bad risks. He developed firm guidelines regarding the sort of person acceptable for bonding--from occupation (clergymen acceptable) to habits--(gamblers unacceptable)" [vi].

Upon Sir Alexander's death in 1892, Rawlings was elected to the presidency of the firm, and removed the company offices to their impressive new site on Beaver Hall Hill where a ten-storey structure, "lavishly finished in oak and marble" was built, "replete with fire-places in the executive offices and cuspidors beside the elevator cages." Rawlings did not, however, live to enjoy these surroundings so symbolic of his personal and corporate success since he died shortly after retirement on 11 December 1911 at the age of seventy-two. He was succeeded by Hartland S. MacDougall (1911-1916), then by his son, Henry E. Rawlings who served as president until 1949. Upon his death, Henry's son and Edward's grandson, H. Millar Rawlings, became president and served until 1959 [ix].

On 19 September 1905 Edward and Lucretia Rawlings, then of 41 Simpson Street in Montreal, gave their daughter, Beatrice, in marriage to Archibald Patrick Stinson Glassco. Beatrice and Archibald were married

in the family parish, St. James the Apostle, at five o'clock in the afternoon. The Montreal Daily Star of the nineteenth described the scene:

The decorations of the church will be carried out in white and green, palms, white asters and chrysanthemums being used The bride, who will be given away by her father, will be gowned in white Bruges lace over white taffeta veiled in white chiffon, the skirt having frills of accordion pleated chiffon under the lace The tulle veil will be caught with orange blossoms, and a bouquet of roses and lilies will be carried. The bride's only ornament will be the gift of the groom, a brooch in wreath design of pearls and diamonds. (13)

Miss Beatrice Glassco was attended by her sister Edith, and by Miss Mary Glassco of Hamilton, a Miss McIntyre, and by Miss Snowball of Chatham, New Brunswick. It is interesting to note that Henry Edward Rawlings, Beatrice's brother, attended from New York City; he was to marry Laura Snowball, daughter of Lieutenant-Governor J.B. Snowball of New Brunswick at Chatham on 3 July 1907. Possibly, in fact likely, this was the same Miss Snowball who was one of Beatrice's bridesmaids.

Although the bride's attendants were attired in Irish lace, "Mrs. Rawlings, mother of the bride [wore] blue Pompadour silk trimmed with Brussels lace, a blue chenille toque with velvet flowers," while Mrs. John Glassco, mother of the groom, decided upon "lace rose

over white silk, and white bonnet." The Rawlings entertained at Simpson Street in a flower-bedecked house, white and green, before the couple were to leave for "Toronto, Niagara Falls, and points further west," the new Mrs. Archie Glassco swathed in blue Irish lace beneath a "long travelling cloak of Rajah silk . . . with a touch of gold embroidery."

Upon their return, the young Glassco couple settled at 49 St. Luke Street. Archie, a McGill B.Sc., but before that only a graduate of Hamilton public schools, had married well, the newspaper telling its readers that the bride's presents were "very handsome" and included such as a cabinet of silver, a Turkish rug, a piano and bedroom suite (from her mother), and a "combination tea, coffee, and cocoa set from the Draughting Office of the Grand Trunk Pacific." The latter was Archie's employer; he held the post of Assistant Bridge Engineer, 1905-1908 (Who's Who in Canada, 1930-31).

Archie, son of John Thomas Glassco and Charlotte Stinson Glassco, was born in Hamilton on 9 November 1880. He followed his elder brother, John Girdlestone Glassco, to study science at McGill (Roberts and Tunnell). Having taken his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at McGill, registering in 1897 and graduating in 1901, Archie remained in Quebec, and

began work as a bridge designer for Dominion Bridge Company at Lachine (1901-05) (Who's Who in Canada 1930-31 and 1936-37), before seeing military service, 1915-18: "He served in the Great War with C Company, 245th Battalion, Canadian Grenadiers [sic] Guards, as a lieutenant" (The Montreal Daily Star, 14 September 1945, 18). He was appointed Secretary and Bursar of McGill University in February 1918 (Who's Who in Canada 1930-31), a post he was to hold until his retirement.⁵

⁵Archibald Glassco's retirement was marked by the McGill News for Spring 1936 with a portrait of the Bursar and a substantial description of his accomplishments at the University up to the date of his official retirement, 31 December 1935, on which occasion "Mr. Glassco's colleagues in the Administration Department of the University gathered at an informal ceremony to present him with a gold watch." The article, "A.P.S. Glassco Retires," recorded further:

In February, 1918, Mr. Glassco accepted the post of Secretary and Bursar at McGill. At the beginning of the post-war period, the University entered upon an era of great expansion and development: one new building after another sprang up around the campus, and Mr. Glassco's engineering experience and training particularly fitted him for his administrative position during this period. Among the new buildings erected were: the Biological Building, the Pathological Building, The Pulp and Paper Institute, the new sections of the Arts Building, an addition to the Royal Victoria College and the Neurological Institute. The power plant and heating system were also completely remodeled and many improvements were made in the university grounds and property. (Vol. 17, No. 2, 42-43)

After the death of Mr. Rawlings, the Archibald Glassco family moved into Simpson Street. At this time there were two children: John (born 1909) and his dazzlingly handsome and thoroughly mischievous elder brother David (born 1907). Known as "the Greek god" at Selwyn House School where he preceded the younger Buffy, the beautiful David was nevertheless to suffer torments equal to those endured by the quiet little brother. While David could charm his mother into giving him whatever he craved, he was less effective in getting round his father. Archibald Glassco was a problem. Glassco spoke openly of the boys' unhappiness in a candid interview with David Cobb in The Canadian, 21 February 1976. Cobb has written bluntly of Archie Glassco's behaviour towards his sons: "on those frequent occasions when he felt discipline was called for--[he] beat the hell out of his two sons" (8). In recounting what Glassco had told him of his childhood, Cobb has presented a chillingly succinct description of the relationship of parent and sons during the children's early years as schoolboys:

Sometimes the beatings, with inventive cruelty, were scheduled over three days. David, quite an athlete, would be thrashed if he didn't measure up to his father's visions of excellence in athletics; until much later, David would be sick to his stomach with terror before, say, the 440 yards at a track-and-field meet.

But father was impartial. John was his younger son, by two years. He was not only good at sports, he was extremely bright at school. His father therefore let John know, early on, that in his eyes he was the fool of the family. No matter how well either son did, both understood that it would never be good enough. And to make sure they grasped the fact securely, Archie Glassco invented two other sons, Jim and Bob, who lived (he explained) in the Montreal suburb of Notre Dame de Grâce and were everything a father could wish for, everything his two real sons weren't. His sons knew Jim and Bob were fictions, their father knew they knew, no matter, it was a device of humiliation, and it worked. (8)

Naughtiness was not taken lightly in the Glassco home; the children's transgressions were recounted to the father by Mrs. Glassco when he returned from business each day. Marched upstairs, the boys awaited their "punishment." When it suited him to do so, their father would mount the stairs and beat the exposed buttocks of his young sons until their screams of agony filled the neighbours' ears. The abuse suffered by the little boys was both physical and sexual in nature. (Personal Interview with the late Mrs. Cecilie Glassco, 21 July 1984). These incidents of abuse were frequent, sadistic, and involved direct sexual contact between Archie Glassco and his sons. The mental health and well-being of the little boys was profoundly damaged. In John Glassco's case, the effect can hardly be overstated. Even in adulthood, he was plagued by the

most horrifying of nightmares, recreating the abuse he had suffered at the hands of his own father.⁶

One records these alarming details and dramatic comparisons not to pursue the sensational, but rather to explain the magnitude of John Glassco's decision to leave behind the wealth and prestige of his life in Montreal, to suggest the significance of the Parisian interlude, not merely as a flight into sensuality, but rather as a deliverance from the loathsome past of his childhood.⁷ The Memoirs of Montparnasse are a record of how John Glassco wished he had been: carefree, devil-may-care. The reality was tragically different.

As a small boy, Glassco began his education at Westmount's Selwyn House School. Photographs of Selwyn House groups, taken as early as 1917, identify John Glassco as "Buffy," and show him to be a slight,

⁶Quentin Bell's eloquent words, words he uses to try to express the enormity of the outrage inflicted on the child Virginia Woolf and her sister Vanessa by their half-brother, express most perfectly the utter devastation wrought on the sensitive and vulnerable child by the persistent, incestuous attacker: "he came to pollute the most sacred springs, to defile their very dreams Eros came with a commotion of leathern wings, a figure of mawkish incestuous sexuality" (2: 44).

⁷The young John seemed to blame himself for these domestic outrages. Precocious, ready for McGill at the age of fourteen, this gentle, sensitive child grew to crave the punishment he had once feared. Sadly, on 17 June 1934 Glassco wrote: "I got frightened at the depths I found in myself, depths of sexual perversion" (McGill Journal, fol. 28B).

diffident-looking child, small of build and serious of expression. After this preparatory experience he went on to Bishop's College School in Lennoxville, Quebec. His elder brother, Edward David, had preceded him at Bishop's in September 1922, when he entered the fourth form. David enjoyed sports and played on the "Second Football Team" in the fall of 1922, and was a member of the "Track Team" during the spring term of 1923 (J.B. Winder).

Bishop's was an institution proud of its academic record, and the Christmas 1922 number of the school magazine celebrated her achievements: "As regards the scholastic aspect, all the boys in the sixth form (i.e., all possibles) passed either into McGill University or the Royal Military College, more boys passing into R.M.C. from B.C.S. than from any other school" (Bishop's College School Magazine, Christmas 1922, 2).

Young John Glassco was obviously fit for any academic challenge offered by Bishop's; he joined his brother David, nearly two years his senior, in the fifth form on 12 September 1923. The brothers were boarders and remained at school for the Michaelmas (September-December 1923) and the Lent (January-April 15, 1924) Terms; both were withdrawn from B.C.S. at Easter 1924. Before that time, however, both boys were

noted in the Christmas 1923 number of Bishop's College School Magazine feature "'Fifth Form' line up": Glassco I was "Dave" who gave his ambition as "To be a farmer," with his probable future listed as "Farm Hand", favourite pastime as "Weeding" and favourite expression as "Gosh, you're dumb." Glassco II does not come off much better, as Buffy's ambition is listed as "To talk faster" and probable future occupation as "Professor." His weakness was said to be "His brain," his pastime "Printing names" and favourite expression "Don't be rude" (31).

Buffy's moment of glory appears to have been his taking the leading rôle of Monsieur Perrichon in the B.C.S. Dramatic Club's production of the play Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon. The school magazine for Christmas 1923 reprinted a favourable review from the Sherbrooke Record:

The outstanding incident of the evening was the presentation of "Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon" penned by Labiche. It was a somewhat unusual departure to find Bishop's presenting a French comedy and is merely another instance of the great importance which leading educational institutions are placing upon the value of French, particularly in this Province.

The French comedy was a great success, and now that the ice has been broken it is confidently expected that yesterday's play will merely be the forerunner of many others. The distribution of the responsibilities through "Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon" is arranged in such a manner that each and every

member is called upon to play a substantial part in the performance. (43)

In spite of David's sporting success and John's dramatic flair, a fragment of a letter in the school archives, addressed to one of the directors of the school from the then headmaster, S. Percy Smith, records:

. . . . Mr. Glassco has withdrawn his second boy. If he had remained here he would not have matriculated fully until July 1925; but he is having him coached so that he may enter McGill this fall, when he will be under 15 years old. (Winder)

The restrained polite tone of this letter masks what must have been a desperate situation. Buffy Glassco had been mocked and sodomized at Bishop's (Glassco, Autobiographical Sketch 1961), and abused at home by a brutal father; the humiliation of John Glassco was indeed complete. He escaped Bishop's by means of a nasty self-inflicted infection; but once recovered, he was again sent to school.

The young Buffy was enrolled at Lower Canada College in the fall of 1924, where he was placed in the sixth form. He was a day boy, the school being located in Montreal, and studied the standard curriculum with an emphasis on English. It is said, however, that "In those days, [he] showed flashes of writing poetry" (D.W. Wood).

A classmate, Jack Donaldson, himself a resident in the Foster area since 1956, who "sat across the room from Buffy" at Lower Canada College recalls him as a "fragile-looking boy, not on the football or hockey teams [at L.C.C.," and "probably more interested in studies than sports or games at school". (Telephone Interview, 10 May 1987).

Buffy matriculated from L.C.C. in spring 1925 at the age of fifteen. He undertook undergraduate studies at McGill in the fall of 1925, being listed in the Old McGill annual for 1927 as expected to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in 1929. While university was rather a disappointment to young Glassco--he was less than a committed student--it was here where he made fast his loving friendship with William Graeme Taylor and here where he began to write seriously and to publish. In his public persona Glassco wrote of abandoning the stuffed shirts of Montreal. His interior self sought freedom from the gruesome burden of his father's presence, a presence that no matter how far he was to travel he could never elude (Mrs. Cecilie Glassco). Glassco's attempts to escape Montreal were no mere whim of a rich young man; they were the painful attempt of a psychologically-damaged young person to preserve himself from further suffering.

Glassco's first escape came in the summer of 1926. Restless, quarrelling as usual with his father, the boy accepted a gift of \$500 from his mother and set sail for Europe. On board ship he met a young man who persuaded him to disembark at Glasgow and to proceed with him to Hodden Castle (perhaps Hoddam?) in Scotland.⁸ The two young men, after a homosexual

⁸The records of Scottish history I have been able to consult identify no Hoddem Castle. There is, however, a Hoddam Castle, mainly fifteenth century, located about two and one-half miles from the town of Ecclefechan (birthplace of Thomas Carlyle) in the county of Dumfries. There is no Hoddem (or Hoddam) Castle in Kirkcudbrightshire, but since Dumfries is adjacent to Kirkcudbrightshire, it is probable that Glassco's memory was confused about these details. While the castle now stands empty, the grounds open to the public as a caravan site, during the 1920s the house was inhabited by the Brook family, whose seat it was from their purchase of the property in 1878. The house is indeed a castle, large, dignified and bedecked with towers and turrets, and situated on a vast estate of thousands of acres. The Scottish Field for December 1903 described the house as having "become one of the most lovely residences in the South of Scotland. The interior . . . is luxuriously furnished, and fitted throughout with the electric light. Many beautiful and valuable pictures adorn the walls of the various apartments In close proximity to the castle are the gardens, which, with the fruithouses and conservatories are eminently worthy of a visit. The splendidly-equipped stables always command admiration" (Scottish Homes 320).

The Valuation Roll of the County of Dumfries, 1925-26, Parish of Cummertrees, identifies the owner of Hoddam (note this third variation in spelling) as Charles Brook. Who's Was Who 1929-1940 identifies Charles Brook (b. 1866) as the second son of E. Brook of Melthan, Hoddam Castle, Dumfriesshire. Charles Brook inherited Hoddam when his elder brother, Edward, (b. 1865), died on 17 July 1924.

interlude, went on to London (Autobiographical Sketch 1961). It is possible that it was during this summer's visit to London that Glassco met the writer George Moore. Glassco admitted to having no mind for dates, and he in fact appears to have telescoped events of 1926 and 1928 in the Memoirs. Such confusion is quite possible since in 1926 he went on from London to Paris for a brief stay before his return to Canada in early autumn in time for the fall term at McGill.

Meeting Moore had been a crucial experience for Glassco, one that had distilled over a period of some forty years before the publication of Memoirs of Montparnasse. Glassco had two opportunities to meet Moore. The first, already alluded to, was during the summer of 1926 when Glassco visited London in the company of his Scottish friend. As a matter of fact Moore's biographer refers to Moore's being occupied at about this time with "the preparation of the text of The Brook Kerith for an illustrated edition" (Hone 404). It was, of course, The Brook Kerith that Glassco claimed to most admire of Moore's works (Memoirs 12).

Charles Brook and his wife Mabel Francis, daughter of William Brook of Healey House, near Huddersfield, had two daughters and one son. Mr. Brook died 14 June 1930 (Who Was Who 1929-1940). One assumes that if Glassco visited Hoddam it would have been with Mr. Charles Brook's son or possibly grandson, Mr. Brook himself being aged sixty-one in 1926.

If Glassco's meeting with Moore, and indeed we have no way of knowing if there was more than one, did not take place in London during 1926, the opportunity was there in 1928 in Paris. As Hone notes in The Life of George Moore: "Later in the year' [1928] he [Moore] was able to go to Paris" (423). My concern for dates here is not without its purpose. Not only is the exact dating of the manuscript of Memoirs difficult to establish without doubt, but so is the sequence of Glassco's life experiences, including literary influences, that contributed to the final autobiographical work.

It is probably useful to note, given the widespread confusion surrounding Glassco's Memoirs, that in addition to his reference to the 1926 European sojourn in the 1961 Autobiographical Sketch, he made reference to this experience in a note sent to Michael Gnarowski, undated, but written about August 1966:

N.B. for Mike: the quasi-Baudelairian sonnet on p. 19 of A.P.O.S. [A Point of Sky] in "The Day" was first written in French, when I was 17 & had come back from my first visit to Paris in 1926, then turned into English, feminine endings and all; it originally part [sic] Conan's Fig (PAC Vol. 4)

Apart from the fact that Glassco has his numbers wrong as usual, he would not be aged seventeen until December of 1926, this note is a useful confirmation of the 1926

journey abroad. Mrs. Cecilie Glassco also assisted me in the dating of her young brother-in-law's first trip to Paris.⁹

Once returned from his 1926 trip to the United Kingdom and to Paris, Glassco again resumed his desultory studies at McGill, quarrelled with his father, and eventually left the family house in 1927, after registering for the 1927-28 academic year, to support himself by the sorts of odd jobs one might pick up in such circumstances: shop assistant at Eaton's, taxi driver, general helper in a theatre, ending eventually as a clerk at Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, undertaking employment there on 27 December 1927 (Gendreau), just after his eighteenth birthday. Graeme Taylor had already joined the firm on 12 December 1927, although Taylor is recorded in the McGill University Directory of Students for 1927-28 as being registered in fourth year Arts. While Sun Life

⁹Cecilie Helliwell Glassco, the beautiful wife of David Glassco, born, as Buffy was, in 1909, was his playmate at the Beaconsfield Golf Club as a little child of eight or nine years. Although she grew up to marry David on 15 September 1928, she and John Glassco remained life-long friends, fond of each other and caring of one another's well-being. Cecilie recalled that her first quarrel with her husband took place over their breakfast table in 1929: the subject was young John's having been permitted to go abroad again to Paris; the young Mrs. Glassco was appalled that he had been granted such premature freedom. (Telephone Interview with Mrs. Cecilie Glassco, 29 July 1984).

has no records of Glassco's departure from their employ, the dating of that event in the Memoirs would appear to be fairly accurate, Glassco claiming that he was with Sun Life for about two months (Memoirs 2). An initial employment in December 1927 and a departure for Europe in February 1928 would be approximately correct:

"At last Graeme received a note. we were to sail in three days' time on the Canadian Traveller . . . on the 4th of February . . . " (Memoirs 3). Glassco had found a direction, indeed an orientation, for his life.¹⁰

¹⁰In the Memoirs Glassco asserts that Graeme was to write a supplemental examination at McGill just before their departure. This supplemental may explain why Taylor was registered in Arts IV during 1927-28, even though Old McGill for 1927 lists Taylor as being a member of the class of 1927; he should, therefore, have been graduated in the spring or fall of 1927, and have had no need to register in fourth year at McGill for the 1927-28 academic year. As it turned out, neither man ever took a degree from the university; thus Glassco avoided the schoolboy joke and never became a "Professor."

Chapter Two:

Writing Memory

For a biographer the Memoirs of Montparnasse present problems: how to sort "fact" from fiction, and from life as lived; life as written about, and life as remembered. The Memoirs of Montparnasse are, or rather they encompass within them, the legend that John Glassco made of his life.¹ In the Memoirs Glassco created his legend in the persona of "Buffy." This Buffy is a figure of romance: young, attractive and eager, he is as much in search of himself as he is of his muse. Untested, open to experience, he is the youth longing for greedy indulgence in sensuality and beauty. Glassco made this young man out of the past; the figure of his character-self encompassed historical truth, but surpassed simple recording of incident in its striving towards the expression of a particular

My use of the word "legend" in this context is intended to convey the idea of that "which implies a nucleus of fact" (see OED "myth"). Holman notes that "Legends often indicate the lore of a people, and, in this way, serve as at least partial expressions of the racial or national spirit" (243). The OED (see "legend") permits a "generalized sense" wherein a person may be said to bear the force of legend within himself. I suggest that, for Canadians at least, "Buffy" and the story of his European sojourn represent one aspect of "national spirit," a reaching out to the "cosmopolitan" world of modernism current in the 1920s. In common speech, one speaks of the 1920s Paris as a "legendary" place, where literature, painting and music flourished.

spirit of time. As he wrote to Kay Boyle on 28 November 1967:

We're all in this book, rather glamourized [sic] and fictionalized; the chronology is a bit juggled; and the dialogue re-written, but I think it catches some of the spirit of those years. The only person who gets a mild ribbing is Morley Callaghan (Pudd'nhead Wilson's 'great' novelist, now, I ask you . . .) and he has it coming to him with his fake 'histoires' of me. You, by the way, are brilliant. (PAC Vol.12)

The character of Buffy Glassco was not only an idealized self-portrait; was not only a figure of particular time in particular place; but also was an expression of the very spirit of the artistic ferment among the McGill group of poets captivated by modernism.

One must, of course, differentiate between the character "Buffy" and the man John Glassco. While a McGill undergraduate in the heady days of Leon Edel, F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith, Glassco was not of that group. He candidly wrote to Michael Gnarowski on 22 March 1965:

I was not one of the group, attended none of their meetings, and contributed very little to it. Remember I was only 16 at the time. I didn't even know Arthur, Frank, Leon Edel, Leo Kennedy, Louis Schwartz, Percy Colbourne or Allan Latham at all well then. They were so much older and more dedicated. I simply didn't know what was going on then, and there's no use pretending now that I did.

(PAC Vol. 4).

In fact, it would seem that Graeme Taylor rather than John Glassco first gave indication of a writing talent. In Anne Burke's article "Some Annotated Letters of A.J.M. Smith and Raymond Knister," she quotes a letter written by Smith to Knister during the time Smith was studying abroad. In this cordial letter dated 8 February 1928, and written at 94 Bruntsfield Place, Edinburgh, Smith replies to queries about the McGill Fortnightly Review:

And now to answer your questions about stories in the Fortnightly. I am sending you one or two copies that contain fairly good stories. But the people who wrote them have, I know, unpublished stories that are much better than any that appeared in the Fortnightly. Three men particularly have been doing some interesting work, though I don't think they have published anywhere else as yet. They are Leo Kennedy, Graeme Taylor and Leo Edel. (127)

In a footnote to this letter, Burke records that "'Hans Mann' or Graeme Taylor published 'the flow will return'" in the McGill Fortnightly Review on 27 April 1927 on pages sixty-eight and sixty-nine (128). Smith mentions this story in his letter to Knister but notes that Taylor "has since done some longer and better tales" (128). Smith continued to follow Taylor's fortunes, writing to Knister on 11 August 1928 from 95 Columbia Avenue, Westmount: "P.S. Graeme Taylor, who wrote some stuff for the Fortnightly is having some

stories in Transition--one I think in the June number" (132). In her notes to this letter, Burke writes:

Taylor published "Deaf-Mute" a short story in Transition, No. 13 (Summer 1928), pp. 172-73. He published in This Quarter what was described as his first appearance as a writer: "Extract I." This Quarter, No. 4 (Spring 1929), pp. 171-86 and "Extract II." pp. 186-92. He was twenty-three years of age and resided in France. (John Glassco published "Extract from an Autobiography" in this issue, pp. 198-210.) In a review of Strange Fugitive for This Quarter Ethel Moorhead wrote: "Scribner's will do well to keep their eyes on other young authors appearing in this [issue of This Quarter] [sic]: two more young Canadians:--Graeme Taylor and John Glassco. (132)

In his abrupt departure from Montreal to hasten to Paris, the young John Glassco disburdened himself of sexual oppression, of bourgeois pretension, and symbolically, of his enthrallment with the creaking Georgian poets he so admired as an undergraduate. Was John Glassco aware of himself as symbol of liberation? Well hardly; we have his own words: "I simply didn't know what was going on then."

Yet to take one's part in "legend," is consciousness a prerequisite? Obviously not. John Glassco wanted to extricate himself from the oppressive authority of his father first of all. Secondly, he most certainly did want to write, an ambition not altogether appreciated by his parents. In the being of the young Glassco was nevertheless that legendary

"Buffy," who one night slipped away to Paris to court death, to seek freedom.

Not only the figure of Buffy Glassco, but also the very book itself are characteristic of legend. It is obviously a blending of historic fact and of fantasy. If this was not how the Paris of the twenties was, this was how it ought to have been: beautiful, creative, decadent. Moreover, any book of memoirs by its very nature as personal reminiscence is bound to distort at least to some degree; obviously Glassco was not the centre of attention at every gathering of artists and writers, quite the opposite. In his Personal Journal, Glassco himself is painfully truthful about the matter, writing on 2 June 1965:

And now it is time to state, in the privacy of myself, that one-quarter of this book was lies. This is what I have been trying to avoid saying even to myself. I never met Frank Harris (it was Graeme who did, & told me about it later); Man Ray never discussed Jane Austen with me; Joyce held no conversation with me about Ulysses or "Gob" (he did attack Richardson); Ford's conversation is more than half fabricated . . . Ah, confession is good for the soul. Already I feel better. (4)²

²"Personal Journal 1965-69" PAC Vol. VI. This restricted material is used with the kind permission of the estate of John Glassco and his literary executor, Mr. William Toye. No further use of this quotation, or any other quotation from the "Personal Journal 1965-69," may be made by anyone without the written permission of Mr. Toye.

Yet one reads memoirs to absorb the perception of that writer. Being written in the first person it is inevitable that the memories, the feelings, the opinions expressed will be those of the memoirist and of no other. What he remembers, or perhaps chooses to emphasize, are the characters and events that had the greatest meaning for himself. What Glassco has accomplished in the Memoirs, is a recording of those episodes which best dramatize the persona of Buffy: faun-like, a trifle precious, polished yet with an engaging vulnerability characteristic of youth. The character of Buffy Glassco is the embodiment of the elegant rogue. There is, however, another dimension to this legend.³

³One cannot help but feel that the year 1970 was a propitious one for the publication of the Memoirs. The renaissance of Canadian letters taking place in the late 1950s and in the 1960s was a time marked by the birth of new publishers, and the publication of such journals as Canadian Literature (1959) and Alphabet (1960). Three years after the Centennial celebrations and Expo '67, we were ready to see ourselves in a new light, one that emphasized the new urbanity, the new sophistication. In Quebec, Marie-Claire Blais' Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel (1965) had earlier turned in fury on the stereotype of the roman de la terre; her rage was taken up and intensified by Victor-Lévy Beaulieu's Les grand-pères (1971). In English Canada the liberation from our past was articulated particularly effectively by Atwood and by Lee. It was in Glassco, however, in his Memoirs that we find a joyfulness, a gaiety, even a daring play with folly that is new to our literature. How delightfully perverse and ironic that this youthful, ebullient, assertion was written by a man in his mid-fifties who suffered from chronic, clinical depression throughout his life.

I maintain that the Memoirs of Montparnasse constitute legend in our literature; they express an aspect of ourselves never before fully articulated. And they so express us, through the persona of Buffy, with enormous good humour. Their equal, in both style and wit, is Robertson Davies' Fifth Business, also published, interestingly enough, in 1970. These works seem to climax the creative 1960s and introduce the dramatic 1970s, a decade that ended not in laughter but in the fear and terror expressed in Hugh MacLennan's masterpiece, Voices in Time (1980).

Obviously no author can be aware of the context of his own work, of the ultimate role it will play in his nation's literature. There is certainly no indication in Glassco's papers that he himself felt the Memoirs to be an "important" book in the sense that scholars would use the word, nor that he considered Buffy to be the stuff of legend. Glassco was free of such pretensions. In his most despairing moments he dismissed the Memoirs, and with the book himself, in the harshest terms:

Admit it: you were trying to write a 'popular' book, a book to make money, you wanted to cash in on the 'twenties. And you just weren't competent, you simply produced a piece of cheap, frivolous, backstairs gossip, a false, vulgar, conceited, adolescent, amateurish book. You deserve this rejection. More, this aspect of yourself deserved to be

kicked. You should be happy no one saw it but an agent who doesn't know you from Adam.

("Personal Journal 1965-1969")⁴

And yet, as his fleeing to Paris in 1928 metaphorically expressed the rebellious mood of the McGill Group, so also his Memoirs emerged in 1970 as a joyful celebration of a new spirit in Canadian life and literature: this was neither Glassco's intention nor objective; it was merely so. On their appearance, the Memoirs were marked as legend. Malcolm Cowley wrote of Glassco in his review of the Memoirs, "We Had Such Good Times":

He becomes such another exemplum as Scott Fitzgerald, but with an important distinction. Fitzgerald made his experience seem representative by regarding himself as a figure in history. Glassco regards himself as a figure in literature or legend
(27-28)

"The rejection referred to here was written by the firm of Wing of New York City (an agency recommended by Morley Callaghan). Glassco wrote in the "Personal Journal 1965-1969":

The force of this rejection was multiplied beyond endurance by the fact that the book was a reflection of myself, my whole youth, the Paris I loved & the period when I had been happy. I could hardly believe it: for three days I was numbed. (2)

The mature author was crushed by Wing's rejection of the Memoirs not only because the book was refused for publication, but more important, because the portrait of himself, his "whole youth," had been rejected out of hand as "not likely to be of interest to a publisher" (2).

Cowley is obviously correct in his assessment of Glassco as a figure of legend; one would question whether Glassco so regarded himself; these latter words imply a self-conscious intent not established either in the Glassco papers or in the Memoirs themselves. Still, the point is taken: John Glassco in the persona of Buffy was a figure of legend. In addition, the Memoirs themselves became for Canadians a fresh expression of themselves. As Susan Dick has written of George Moore, one of the writers whose memoirs inspired the Memoirs of Montparnasse: "[Moore's] Memoirs is an autobiography of a personality, not of facts. Every anecdote adds to the configuration of the narrator's character, and it becomes the real subject of the book."⁵

Whereas the Memoirs were composed chiefly during Glassco's period of revived creativity, the 1960s, their genesis took place, as has been suggested, over some thirty years dating back to the initial publication of Chapter One in This Quarter in 1929.

I have already alluded to the attempted resumption of the Memoirs in 1934. On 6th March 1934 Glassco wrote in his Journal that he was very ill, suffering

⁵Susan Dick, ed., George Moore: Confessions of a Young Man (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), 18. Dick is here referring to Moore's later autobiographical work, Memoirs of My Dead Life (1906).

still from the sequelae of yet another operation for the treatment of his tuberculosis. He was running a fever, a result of a retention of infection; the putrid matter was finally released in a rush from a still open wound in his side (McGill Journal, fol. 24). Naturally Glassco suffered terribly and feared for his fragile health. "O Lord," he wrote, "I hope another retention doesn't occur" (24). Although ill throughout the spring of 1934, Glassco was well enough to welcome a visit from Graeme in July. Glassco entered in his Journal on 29 July:

Then about four days ago Graeme came out and suggested I should continue those old Memoirs of mine, and make some money. I suddenly saw how a good book might be made of them--frank & 'all myself' as I was back in those years--in fact became tremendously enthusiastic and next day wrote 500 words, the next 700, which I think quite good. (fol. 29)

Inevitably, however, quarrels with his parents followed and Glassco, weak and ill, grew discouraged about the progress of the Memoirs. On 29 November 1934 he wrote: "I decided long ago to give up the Memoirs of a Young Man, and after all my enthusiasm! How many unfinished projects, and what a deal of planning and hopes, and how little to show for it all" (McGill Journal, fol. 32).

While Glassco temporarily abandoned the composition of the Memoirs in the 1930s, he developed

the ideas and the frame of mind which formed the structure of the finally completed book: nostalgia, times past, lost youth. Again on 29 November 1934, he mused:

Before I was taken with t.b. I was often bored, but jolly & careless for the most part; now I am never bored, having worry, black depression, fear, and erotic fancies to keep me busy. I don't know which state is the worst; but I am inclined to think it is the former, which is comforting. (fol. 32)

The suggestion of some self-deprecating humour in this entry had disappeared by 10 February 1935 when Glassco wrote:

I felt that I didn't want to travel again: it is too melancholy. The idea of manufacturing memories, and resuscitating buried ones, in a foreign land. I am almost frightened of reviving feelings I had five years ago--they seem strangely sad to remember now--why I can't tell: just because they are gone, dead, perhaps? The result of which has been to make me feel dreadfully old . . . youth seems dead, dead, dead. (fol. 34)

It is perhaps difficult to remember that these despairing words were written by a young man aged twenty-five. Glassco's near-mortal illness, a hideous experience in itself, seemed to meld in his mind with the dark horrors of his childhood and with the memories of the times of respite in Paris to yield a fascination with decay; with decomposition; with the wasting away of youth; with lost halcyon days; with the macabre, the

perverse. He wrote that whatever he read, and he had been reading A rebours,⁶ seemed to confirm "the hideous truth Out of Good comes Evil, and out of Evil, Good" (McGill Journal, 25 October 1935, fol. 50). This confession of the decadent, and his acceptance of his masochism (22 September 1935, fol. 45), seemed to have flowered in his love of the nostalgic. On 8 January 1936 he wrote "nostalgia: that's the only word I can think of for that keen and yet luxurious pain that the sense of past gives" (fol. 51). Glassco seemed to live, in the words of his poem, Montreal, composed in the 1960s at about the same time as much of the Memoirs:

In the abode of desolation
A cauldron of impurity
And a haunt of demons (ll. 176-178).

On 15 February 1936 the plague of memory seemed particularly acute. Always moved by the changes in

⁶The John Glassco Collection at Queen's University, Kingston, holds Glassco's own copy of John Howard's translation of Huysmans's work Against the Grain, with an introduction by Havelock Ellis. (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1930). The book is signed "John S. Glassco" but also "H. Burton Bydwell," and dated 14 January 1931. (Bydwell is identified by Glassco in the bound page proofs of the Memoirs of Montparnasse held at the Public Archives of Canada as the model for "Bertie Ballard, a fat little lecher who was one of our sub-lessors.") Inside the back cover, in Glassco's hand, there are calculations of Against the Grain: "This Book / 200 words per page / 43.3 signs per line [signs calculated on p. 125] / 28 lines per page / 155 words per 1st page of chapter."

weather, he wrote: "A thaw today, and all the spring-like disturbance in me." Like many who have suffered the pain and degradation of physical and sexual abuse as children, he suffered from bouts of profound depression. For some reason as not yet fully understood, depression seems at its worst in autumn and spring. Glassco's Journal confirmed these cyclic swings as he wrote on this early spring day of the pain of memory: "I seem to have been asleep for the past four years, [1932-1936] moving among shadows." These "shadows" were not without substance. As I have said, the pattern of Glassco's life was marked with specific figures. The passage continues:

And with this I find I am remembering Peggy again: will I never free myself of that woman? I think not: just to picture her in that spring coat of hers & the fawn beret, tramping through the streets of Paris, or in that rough white painting smock that I used to find her in and embrace her as soon as she had opened the door,--oh, it's a hundred times more than this house or the lunch I have just eaten, or my own face in the glass. I think I shall have to see her again ever to be free of her influence: she must be 34 now, and yet I think she will have aged well: that's it, I'm afraid of seeing her again, I should be wildly jealous of Roley if I saw him even look at her possessively, and I should be miserable. God, hasn't this woman done me enough harm already? Even in dreams I have experienced again the madness of jealousy I used to be in during that terrible month in Mallorca,--and woken up with the misery of it still strong. (fol. 55)

"Peggy" was, of course, the great love known as "Mrs. Quayle" in the Memoirs. In the author's copy of the Memoirs of Montparnasse held in the Public Archives, Glassco's emendations identify "Mrs. Quayle" as "Mrs. Margaret Whitney." On page 240 he has identified his rival, the "married Englishman" as "Roland Lushington-Hayes. He claimed descent from the family of Lusignan who were Kings of Jerusalem & Cyprus in the 12th century." It seems reasonable to conclude that these figures were the "Peggy" and "Roley" of the McGill Journal; but Glassco was ever complex. In his unpublished Autobiographical Sketch (1961) he identified persons with whom he had had brief affairs in Paris: among them were a Mrs. William Whitney, Mrs. Peggy [Marguerite] Guggenheim, and the lover with whom he went to Spain, Mrs. Marguerite Lippe-Rosskam. (In later years Glassco owned a smart little mare whom he called "Peggy" but doubtless that beloved animal does not avail here.)⁷

⁷Among the unpublished poetry in the Public Archives collection is one typescript of an untitled poem beginning "I loved you early, lost you soon" (Vol. 1). In Glassco's hand there are the emendations: "To M--R--[struck out]--Song." Is this Marguerite Lippe-Rosskam? Then Glassco has superscribed "For Marguerite Whitney." The poem is dated: "Westmount, Aug./33 [struck out]--March 26 [unclear]/Revised (Montreal) 1933." The McGill Journal identifies this poem as having been considered "as finished" on 17 June 1935 (fol. 34C).

During a week-end I passed in the company of Miss Marion McCormick (Mrs. John Glassco) as her guest at Jamaica Farm, Foster, Quebec, in April of 1982, I explained to her the dating of the Memoirs I had uncovered during my review of the Glassco papers at the Public Archives. She in turn told me that her late husband had maintained that the "fatal" Mrs. Quayle was in fact Mrs. Whitney.

Whether or not, it was one "Peggy" or two who figure in the character of Mrs. Quayle, the importance to the Memoirs is that the woman of Glassco's memory helped to keep alive in him that sense of the period of intense youthful experience. In 1936 he wrote that his cure for "romanticism and nostalgia" was "masochism." In seeming consequence he sought out women with whom he could act out his sexual fantasies. The experiences with one such woman were alluded to in an undated entry (c. September 1936):

The McGill Journal also identifies an early love poem (Spring 1934) composed for Graeme Taylor, MS, fol. 30:

Love, for you alone,
I have made this bosom rhyme:
Show it to no one,
Be you its world, even as you are mine[.]

A completed revision of the poem appears in the PAC, TS, Vol. 1, as "A Birthday Present." Holograph "Westmount & Knowlton, 1934-1938."

. . . sense that I was undermining my health, and that a woman was somehow meant to work my ruin; and then, I had a moment of terror, realizing that this new woman was extraordinarily like Peggy! Just a bit more stupid, but the same outlook on life, the same mannerisms, even the same smile with eyes and mouth: For a while I was almost sweating with fear of her and what she might mean to me, in my access [excess?] of superstition. Now I see that this was very ridiculous of me,--but I should regard it as a warning and take better care of myself (McGill Journal fol. 64)

As Glassco experienced a "moment of terror" in recognizing the similarity of this dominatrix to Peggy, so he experienced acute pain in the memory of Paris, and of what Paris represented: the elegance, the wit, the perverse pleasure, the whimsical impulses freely pursued, the fastidious irony.

In what was probably the autumn of 1936 Glassco, nearing his twenty-seventh birthday, reflected on Paris:

For a long time we [Buffy and Graeme] had had the intention of eventually returning to Paris,--but now I see it would not be wise: the city wd. be full of ghosts. No, better a new city, Berlin, Vienna or Brussels, than the melancholy sight of the changes, and the load of memories, that would afflict us in Paris again. 'Tears, idle tears!' I feel them coming even when I think of the streets there.--And so perhaps it is better just to see other places & cities as a visitor,--to give up the intention of ever making one's home in new places, to discard all that,--with one's youth! No, I am afraid I am no Bohemian. And neither of us can really stand life in the city any longer. The radio has changed city-life absolutely,--and think of

the Paris cafes with their radios now: a common wave of vulgarity has flowed over them, as I hear. 'No, no: not Paris,--except on a definite 'excursion' with somewhere to return to. And another thing: I should never do a stroke of work living that kind of life--that I know. (fol. 66-67)

Glassco was indeed no Bohemian. As has been noted, his "liberation" in Paris was marked by an indulgence in pleasure and sensuality cushioned by the knowledge that back in Montreal waited his mother's fortune. Mrs. Glassco had lost a good deal, some million dollars, in the crash of 1929, but she was by no means impoverished by this reversal. In fact, through shrewd investments made by Graeme Taylor, John Glassco and his brother David, the two companions, and later Glassco himself, were able to live the life of country gentlemen without the necessity of outside employment. One does not, as did Glassco and Taylor, ride out the Depression of the 1930s and World War II, ensconced in a rural mansion, by selling a few gallons of milk from one's farm and by taking 'round the mail. Glassco was a fugitive from his father's viciousness, never from his mother's money. Such a duality (suffering and money) can produce the aesthete.

Chapter Three:

"The Aesthete: Contraries and Ambiguities"

It may be argued that the development of Glassco's aesthetic sense was as much dependent on his economic security as on his poetic gifts and his tragic childhood. Reality, and by reality I mean the need to feed and clothe oneself, can rudely intrude upon one's contemplation of self. For Glassco, such an intrusion, was never experienced. His period of being down and out in Paris was no more authentic than Orwell's. Both could step back from poverty and from its attendant degradation with the simple act of sending a telegram home.

The development and realization of the aesthete, the cultivation of a taste for the decadent, these impulses must have comfort and security as their foundation. The contemplation of decay may be delightfully painful for the personality engaged by masochistic fantasy and cosseted by warm hearths and cashmere jackets; it is merely sordid for the less privileged. For those of means, temporary hunger may sharpen the senses; for the poor, hunger may be all too continuous, numbing, and ultimately defeating.

In his fascinating study of the wealthy aesthete, Children of the Sun, Martin Green explains that the

aesthetes, often bisexual or homosexual, attended university in the 1920s but frequently left without taking a degree (63).¹ They adored the paradox and perversity of Wilde, thus "defying their fathers' mode of seriousness" (12). For the aesthetes, Paris in the 1920s represented an "enthusiasm for fantasy and its assault on realism" (23). Paris of course was associated with Proust and A la recherche du temps perdu, the novel of the dandy and the aesthete: "It turns the experience of young men, young men who refuse the adult commitments of politics, government, power, and marriage, who occupy themselves with questions of social and sexual and aesthetic taste, into the material of great art" (24).

Green's study at this point connects to John Glassco who was the very embodiment of the dandified aesthete; the young Adonis of catholic sexual taste;

Green uses the term "aesthete" to suggest "the worship of art seen as fantasy triumphant over reality, the worship of fantasy and beauty in art in opposition to maturity and responsibility" (7). Green differentiates the "aesthete" from the "dandy" as being one preoccupied with style, in love with the artificial, in manner snobbish. Green quotes Ellen Moers' The Dandy: "A man dedicated solely to his own perfection through a ritual of taste . . ." (Green 9). Holman defines "dandyism" as a style used by the decadents, a group marked by not only a refined fastidiousness but also a fascination for dying, decay, nostalgia, madness and sadism.

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the son of privilege--sound school, eminent university (albeit its degree scorned), and of course the cognoscente of Paris and all its delicacies. As for Proust, Glassco's discovery of him came only in the 1940s but was nevertheless recorded in his Journal with what one can call only the greatest enthusiasm. He appears to have read Proust in late 1942:

The only pleasure I have had recently has been reading Proust 'Cities of the Plain' Charlus is a wonderful character: as soon as he enters a scene, he lights it up--like a sunrise: he is one of the greatest grotesques in literature since Falstaff. --and indeed it strikes me that the whole conception of him as a 'humorous' character, & the comic light in which he is bathed . . . suffuses him in a glow of not only laughter but of affection . . . the hearty delight in him for just what he is,--that he is a great nobleman, a great pederast, a great talker, a man at once gifted and absurd;--this is enough for Proust (fol. 90)

Glassco dwelt on the matter of Proust's Albertine as derived from "the chauffeur Albertinelli"; he noted "the artistic lapse of Proust himself in perpetrating such a subterfuge" (McGill Journal fol. 90-91). Glassco speculated that Proust's creating his female character from a male (and of course this is the very sort of "hoax" that delighted the aesthetes) pleased the author of Cities of the Plain; that Proust must have enjoyed the inconsistencies in Albertine's character, "the play, as it were, with a male character

by which it was feminised just as much as he wanted it
 . . . " (fol. 91).

Glassco's lengthy Journal entry on Proust, in which he had discussed not only the French novelist's artistic effects but also his own erotic prose, concluded: "This is being esoteric with a vengeance" (fol. 92). One could hardly imagine a more appropriate statement of aesthetic satisfaction! The elaborate hoax; the play with character; the transmogrification of male and female; the rare, the beautiful, the exotic; the celebration of the unconventional--sometimes naughty, sometimes perverse; the rarified atmosphere of languid ease; these were the characteristics of the aesthetes exemplified by the character of Buffy and articulated in the Memoirs of Montparnasse. The mysteries of the "true" identity of character; of accuracy of time and place; of details of composition of the very book itself--all were an aesthetic extravagance. The whiff of decadence, the slightly self-indulgent graceful prose, the portrait of the young rascal dandy Buffy himself--all created the tone so readily captured in Leon Edel's Introduction. The delicate faun-like Adonis pranced centre-stage, adored by men and women alike, yet prey to the allure of the deadly enchantment of the femme fatale.

Martin Green's thesis has proposed that certain "types" were particularly represented among the aesthetes: the "femme fatale, the dandy, the rogue, and the naif" (32).² One particularly striking naif figure associated with Buffy in the Memoirs is Harry Crosby: handsome, a wealthy publisher, decadent Sonnenkind, utterly outré, whimsical. Crosby's diaries typically speak of the precious if not of the bizarre, as explained in Edward Germain's edition of those diaries, Shadows of the Sun: The Diaries of Harry Crosby:

January 8. Princesse Persane gray fur and gold eyes and she purrs and afterwards a lioness skin for a thousand francs. And the largest and loveliest bunch of violets and a cluster of hot house grapes and two red-gold oranges from Algeria. (94)

While Rupert Brooke may be taken to have represented the ideal English naif: the perfect beauty of the

²Green derives the "naif" figure from the "commedia dell'arte kinds of categories" (32). Green writes that "The elegance and artificiality and unseriousness of the commedia figures, their power to excite lyric velleities of melancholy, gaiety, and nostalgia, even while including the coarsest farce and the most brutal sadism, and murder in their action--these traits set them in opposition to all moralistic 'realism'" (32).

The naif, essentially a type of "dandy," "offers himself as being in process of formation"; they were young men who offered themselves as essentially responsive to others and open to every invitation, who established their identity in indeterminacy and sheer attractiveness. The most obvious example in fiction is Sebastian of Brideshead Revisited" (13).

boy; the privileged "poetic" life; the tragic early death--the death wish arising from a "consciousness of having been the perfect public schoolboy, having been fulfilled in adolescence" (Green 41); Harry Crosby was the American equivalent. Again a very handsome carefully educated son of wealth and status, Crosby served in that fellowship of heroic, artistic Americans in the Great War--the ambulance corps, so well described by Malcolm Cowley in A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation (11). He sought death in a dream of champagne and opium, finding it in New York City on the 10th of December 1929, leaving behind among his verses the lines: "One is not in love unless one desires to / die with one's beloved" (Shadows of the Sun: The Diaries of Harry Crosby 287).

As early as 1925, after composing a poem all "orchids" and soldiers with "boyish heart," Crosby entered in his diary:

February 4. Decided on the poison--laudanum, the name given by Paracelsus to a famous medical preparation of gold and pearls and it is ruby-colored and "one who has swallowed a toxic or lethal dose of laudanum usually passes at once into the narcotic state without any prior excitement. Intense drowsiness yields to sleep and coma which ends in death, from failure of the respiration." (71)

In the Memoirs Glassco gave Harry Crosby the amusing name of Jimmy Carter and shifted the Black Sun

Press, publisher of Joyce's Tales Told of Shem and Shaun, Three Fragments from Work in Progress³ (August 1929), to a dainty blague; Glassco called his "Jimmy," in McAlmon's words, "the Man in the Moon" (Memoirs 32). Glassco's annotation of the bound page proofs reads:

Rising Sun!

1. The ~~Man-in-the-Moon~~ } originally

In fact Crosby, in a dream-like passage in his diaries referred to the male figure, presumably himself in some form, as "the Man in the Moon" (195).

Since Kay Boyle⁴ was a frequenter of the Crosby retreat at Le Moulin during 1928, as well as being

³Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (1959; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), 627.

⁴Kay Boyle includes reminiscences of Crosby and Glassco in her revised edition of McAlmon's Being Geniuses Together. While this book is full of interest, it is so often inaccurate that one is cautious about using Boyle as a reference. For example: Glassco is spelt "Glasco" in the index; The Dayang Muda of Sarawak is said to have had six children (208); whereas she actually had four: Jean, Elizabeth, Anne and the heir Anthony born 10 December 1912; her husband's family name, he the descendant of (not the brother as stated on page 208) the White Rajah himself, is spelt 'Brooks' (308) rather than its correct form, Brooke; moreover, the Dayang's husband was Captain Bertram Brooke, H.H. The Tuan Muda of Sarawak, brother of the 3rd Rajah, Charles Vyner, who had married Sylvia

Glassco's friend, sometime lover, and workmate, the opportunities for Glassco's and Crosby's paths to have crossed were available. Then too Boyle, Glassco and Crosby attended at the home of the Princess of Sarawak; Crosby wrote: "to see Kay Boyle she was in a chaise longue at the Princess of Sarawak's" (227). Madame Rhoda de Pinto, companion to "La Princesse de Sarawak" during those Parisian years, has remembered the figure of Buffy Glassco as "a charming, educated & nicely mannered young man who often visited Blvd. de

Brett, the despised sister-in-law referred to by Glassco in the Memoirs on page 193. The Brooke family tree may be examined in Joan Rawlins' Sarawak: 1839-1963 (72).

More important than these factual errors is Boyle's misunderstanding of Glassco's sensibility. One cannot but feel that the reference to Glassco as McAlmon's disciple is ill-considered. John Glassco was the Adonis figure, the aesthete marked by an affected "weary elegance" (to use Martin Green's expression). McAlmon, with his flat mid-western American voice was the admirer of William Carlos Williams; was the generous financial "patron" of the 1920s New York little magazine Contact (a vehicle for the new American language). No admirer of Eliot, as Glassco certainly was in the late 1920s, could have been a disciple of one who subscribed to the poetic theory of William Carlos Williams.

These comments in no way cast doubt on Boyle's affection for Buffy Glassco. Her constructive sympathy about Elma Glassco's mental illness and her generosity of spirit are evident in the Glassco-Boyle correspondence. Glassco was particularly grateful to Boyle for her portrait of Graeme and himself that appeared in Being Geniuses Together, as he wrote to her: "You have been kinder to Graeme and me than either of us deserved . . . " (PAC Vol. 12).

Beauséjour when I was there" (Letter to author from Mme. de Pinto, 20 May 1984).

Glassco's Memoirs show certain affinities with Crosby's Diaries. Both men were aesthetes, fascinated by the figure of the fatal woman; both were amused by creating pseudonyms for the famous persons they knew; both were enchanted by a "beautiful Boston-born lady" (Shadows of the Sun: The Diaries of Harry Crosby 302, and Memoirs 105); both loved a mysterious "Mrs. W.," whom Crosby often referred to as the "Sorceress." All fatal ladies, it seems, were fond of gin and luxuries--whether gin and ginger ale and fine leather as were Mrs. Whitney/Mrs. Quayle or gin fizzes and exotic flowers and luncheons at the Ritz as was the Sorceress/Mrs. W.:

July 23 [1929]. The Sorceress and cherry cobbler and orchids and gin

(Crosby 265)

August 8 [1929]. I rushed off to the Ritz to meet the Sorceress and a miraculous luncheon gin fizzes and oeufs suzette and coffee ice cream

(Crosby 268)

While the story of Harry Crosby's life makes Buffy Glassco's Parisian interlude seem positively monastic, and while Crosby's appearance was the more aesthetically ideal and his wealth much more substantial, the striking parallel between these

inventive figures of the North American dandy remains convincing. While Crosby cultivated his own death, Buffy recklessly courted his: better to live one's life as art than to subscribe to the mundane. Yet ultimately Crosby was dead and Buffy was near death: reality had overtaken the fantasy. In his head-strong attempt to escape the terror of his childhood memories, Glassco had encountered an equally sinister threat: permanent disability and disfigurement.⁵

Some ten years after Paris Glassco remained terrified of the possibility of the recurrence of tuberculosis:

How fearfully this terror unmans one! [The fear of death, and the particular knowledge that one will never see beloved friends again.] And how absurdly it is nourished! Oh, how well I know that agonized sifting of all the evidences of a fatal disease,--& at last, on the sudden coincidence of two or three points, the terror of certainty

(McGill Journal, n.d. [1937?], fol. 73)

"February 24th 1938."

This is written under the usual circumstances of a panic belief that I am suffering from a mortal illness. Reason tells me it is only a

⁵In Back to Montparnasse Huddleston notes that tuberculosis was commonplace in Montparnasse. Irregular meals, too much drink, insufficient sleep, and the constant smoking of cigarettes weakened many to the point where they became deathly ill (140-141).

bad attack of bronchitis, but imagination assures me it is fatal: though my judgment credits the first, my emotions (& stomach) credit the second, and if it weren't for the occasional predominance of the former, I would not be writing,--but merely plunged in the terrified apathy that takes command of me at the approach of a danger which seems unavoidable. (fol. 74)

Glassco was haunted by a justified fear of the disease that had infected both his grandfather and himself; he was again stricken by tuberculosis in 1961, and spent the better part of that year in the misery of the Royal Edward Laurentian Hospital at Ste-Agathe. He emerged from that experience with only three-quarters of one lung.

But as a very young man he mourned not only for the loss of his health but for the loss of that Adonis-like beauty that had attracted so many, both men and women, to his side. On 4 April 1936 he reflected that his youth was being wasted; that his last female lover had been Peggy. He recalled a dream, movingly tragic in its realization of loss:

Last night I had another of the melancholy dreams which I have had for the past week. I dreamed that my operation and disfigurement were all a dream themselves, & that I had as unscarred and perfect a figure as I used to have. I was weeping with joy & looking at myself in the mirror: it was all as beautiful as it had ever been, the same chest & back &

belly, all symmetrical & young. I felt almost like dying when I woke at last

(McGill Journal fol. 57)

Such vanity, while hardly admirable, is both typical of the aesthete and understandable in one who has been worshipped for his fashionable appearance. Glassco must have remembered the day when, having been escorted to Montreal from Paris by a doctor and a nurse dispatched by his mother, he lay recovering in the Royal Victoria Hospital. Mrs. Glassco and a nurse were by his bedside when Graeme Taylor entered, bringing with him the gift of a choice orchid; this he presented to his beloved with great tenderness and refinement of gesture.⁶ Such gorgeous acts of deliberate artificiality were typical of the aesthetes. One thinks of the picture of the arch-aesthete Ronald

⁶I am grateful to the late Cecilie Glassco for having related this telling anecdote to me. While a sophisticated woman herself, Mrs. Glassco had a keen appreciation of her mother-in-law's discomfort at witnessing this scene. One must remember this incident took place in Montreal in the 1930s, neither a place nor a time sympathetic to homosexual love. (One perhaps spares a thought for Mrs. Glassco who, while not delighted by this fanciful gesture, at least retained her composure.)

Firbank at Cambridge, bent over a table strewn with orchids.⁷

Whatever fancies Glassco pursued it was a testimonial to his character that in spite of a childhood marked by abuse; in spite of two gruesome episodes of tuberculosis that left his body weakened and asymmetrical; in spite of fearful depression that goaded him into despairing self-contempt and harsh self-criticism of his work; in spite of all this pain, he was an exquisite artist and a man beloved by his friends for his gentleness, charm, and wit. This man was no mere dandy, but rather an aesthete devoted to the art of letters.

After reading Proust, Glassco's acute awareness of nostalgia and memory became even more pronounced, as he recorded in his Journal:

"March 28th, 1943."

It is the spring that brings me back to this book it seems that certain sunny days in early spring, & certain ones in autumn

⁷Brigid Brophy, Prancing Novelist: A Defence of Fiction in the Form of a Critical Biography in Praise of Ronald Firbank (London: Macmillan, 1973), 145.

On page 341 Brophy quotes Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams as translated by A.A. Brill, VI(E): "It is noted that sexual flower-symbolism, which of course is very widespread, symbolizes the human sexual organs by flowers, the sexual organs of plants; indeed, presents of flowers between lovers may perhaps have this unconscious significance."

too, re-establish in one's mind a forgotten connection with the past & with its happiness, so that one's life suddenly takes on a certain pattern, one's self a certain permanence I suppose it is because when we were young, & really came alive for a few months in spring and autumn, those periods were stamped on our consciousness so strongly, with such an impression of our own vitality, that when they come around again the old life stirs in us again--only now we don't come alive, we only live in the atmosphere of that past. And I daresay one even loses this bittersweet experience: 8 short years ago, when I was 25, these periods moved me to tears, to a desperation that I see now was due to my feeling that youth was slipping from me [A long pause]. I have just been indulging in the nostalgic mood: no, it has lost nothing,--nothing: memories of Montreal, Paris, Nice--they are all as breathtakingly vivid as they ever were The strange thing about these memories is the way Montreal looms up: it is the Montreal of my McGill days, the cool autumn nights, the Prince of Wales Tavern, Doug Adams,--& then, the finest thing of all, Graeme. (fol.92)

Through all these long years Glassco struggled to write, chiefly poetry, erotic fiction and his Journal, while he and Graeme lived out their lives together. In about January 1937 they had bought the estate just outside Knowlton, known as the Dawes House, and commemorated in Glassco's poem "The White Mansion." It was from here that Taylor set off to war; from here that Glassco delivered the rural mail, and took 'round the milk produced on their farm to sell at ten cents a quart (Mrs. John Glassco). It was here that the two men lived with the gorgeous "Sappho," a mysterious

horsewoman from Sawyerville in the Townships, in a notorious ménage à trois. Mrs. Cecilie Glassco remembered motoring with Mrs. Beatrice Glassco down to visit John Glassco at Knowlton. They found the house large and handsome but sparsely furnished; they did note, however, a large photograph of the housekeeper "Sappho" in Buffy's bedroom. Taylor eventually married her, much to the surprise of Glassco's family.⁸

Before the ménage soured the three seemed to have had a rather jolly life. Glassco wrote of her, after the end of the affair, in an entry dated 27 March 1946:

it was a paradise [with Sappho]
After her, any others look pale--they just haven't got that beautiful animality, that child-like perfection, that impression of a goddess--dea certe--come down to earth to mix for a while with mortals.

(McGill Journal fol. 115)

Among the more innocent pleasures pursued by the ménage was their fondness for hitching the ox "Rocket"

⁸Cecilie Glassco and her brother-in-law were life-long friends. She did, however, have some difficulty in remembering the names of all the pets and stock at the Knowlton farm; she managed 'Lucy' the dog, 'Rocket' the ox, and 'Peggy' the horse. Her memory rather gave out over the pet pig, however, which she was wont to refer to as 'Sappho'. Naturally and logically she was in the way of addressing the housekeeper by the pig's name.

I am grateful to Susie Cumming, daughter of the late David and Cecilie Glassco, for this amusing and warm recollection of her mother. (Telephone interview with Mrs. D.M. Cumming, 29 August 1984.)

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to a sleigh--Glassco collected cutters--and proceeding to Knowlton for an evening of drinking while Rocket waited stoically in the winter evening (Personal Interview with Marion McCormick [Mrs. John Glassco], 20 April 1982). Sadly, the human trio's relationship ended in court; Sappho attempted to sue them for "improper practices" (McGill Journal, n.p.).⁹

Meanwhile Glassco continued to write, publishing, as noted, three erotic episodes of "Frogmore's Folly" in First Statement in 1944 and 1945 and submitting poetry to The Canadian Forum. Yet he grew even more relentless in his self-criticism, and seemed to regret more and more that the past was indeed gone forever. Driven to write, yet fearful of "stirring up old ghosts, disinterring associations of other days,--and all 'other' days, now, seem 'happier' days." (McGill Journal, n.d. [1945?], fol. 117); suffused with nostalgia for the happier past, Glassco was yet terrified of memory, of the horrors that had been suppressed from his cruel childhood. He became even more self-censorious as his grief and despair mounted:

⁹The actual charge was "immoral practices." Glassco referred to this charge in a letter to Elma von Colmar written 10 September 1961. Glassco and Taylor hired as their barrister Jean-Jacques Bertrand (later Premier of Quebec) and the matter was settled.

--going through my old papers a few days ago (a heartbreaking job at best) I was struck by reading a few pages of 'Every Woman'--the unfinished satirical novel I started when I was in Paris, over 15 years ago, & which only needs 2 or 3 chapters to be finished, and realized that it was better, more readable, and had more sparkle & charm than anything I have done since.

(McGill Journal, n.d. [1945] fol. 116-117)

As the 1940s wore on, Glassco's gruesome memories came to haunt him more and more. His depression, unrelieved by drugs or psychoanalysis, began to overwhelm him. It is highly probable that the death of Archie Glassco on 13 September 1945 was of profound significance to the author. Archie died a painful death from cancer; his family stood around the bed, observed his suffering, but none felt sufficiently moved to so much as fetch him a drink of water to ease his dreadful thirst (Mrs. Cecilie Glassco). There was little love left for the dying tyrant. John and David Glassco attended their father's funeral, held in the parish church of St. James the Apostle on 15 September. The officiating priest was Canon G. Abbott-Smith of Knowlton. (Parish records of The Church of St. James the Apostle.)

While Archie's death may have appeared to represent the closing off of the terrible chapter of John's childhood, it more likely served to reactivate the painful memories of past abuse and to drive John

into deepening depression. He entered a period of depressive agony that stretched on for years. The summer of 1947 was particularly harrowing, with attacks of desperate anxiety filling him with despair as he wrote that he experienced "pure fear--not fear of anything or anyone, just the naked, primal fear that one must have been born with." To free oneself of this horror, he wrote, "one would have to vomit up one's soul and brains" (McGill Journal fol. 127). The source of Glassco's fear was not some nameless "nothing"; it was the nightmare that haunts the unconscious mind of the person who has suffered sexual abuse. If unrelieved, the "pressure" of this unacknowledged pain may eventually result in the agony that Glassco has described. His only escape from this suffering came through the act of writing:

It is only when there is nothing in the world whose contemplation does not fill me with pain, that I begin to believe I may be literally forced into writing, simply to escape the horror of my contemplations nothing can ever equal for me the beautiful serene satisfaction of having (as I believe) written a few good lines: this is the only absolute, untainted good I now recognize, & indeed it is probably the only one available to me.

(McGill Journal, 10 October 1947, fol. 131)

Thus we hear, in Glassco's own words, the acceptance of the fact that only in the act of writing was there to be found any reconciliation of the psychological damage

inflicted upon him. He realized his art through the need "to escape the horror of my contemplations."

While Glassco frequently reiterated the role that writing occupied in his life--his Journal particularly, he often addressed as "dear book"--he seemed to find his principal satisfaction and indeed consolation in the contemplation of incompleted work:

Strangely enough, it is never a finished story or poem that gives me this rare satisfaction, but only the story or poem in an incomplete stage: for me, I suppose, what I write is never really completed, never realised; when I finish any piece of writing, it is rather that I have finished with it, when, exasperated, baffled, depressed & thoroughly sick of it, I fold it up & put it away.

All of this might be interesting if I had ever written anything worth while! Or perhaps that does not really matter?

At any rate I feel better. I can face the night now: No, not tomorrow,--but only the next few hours. I have recovered, for a short time, my identity. (McGill Journal fol. 131)

Glassco's words suggest to one that his identity as a man, certainly as an artist, was temporarily "lost" during the agony of the anxiety attacks that beset him more and more frequently. The act of creation reaffirmed his very existence and reassured him that his ego had not been utterly destroyed in the hopelessness he perceived in everyone and in everything about him.

If I write now, from now on it will be not for the sake of the reader, but for my own--to an extent that the Art-for-art's-sake school could not have comprehended [but the past clings to every page] Well, perhaps I will have to break with that past completely,--or wait until such time as its emotions have become assimilated & even 'sublimatable'.

(McGill Journal, 4 April 1946, fol. 119)

Like all who have suffered childhood sexual abuse, Glassco's doubts about himself, about his competency, were nearly ego-destroying. How does one hold on to identity when that identity has been soiled and outraged during the tender years of trust? In "The Whole Hog," describing the brutal father who "set himself to become / Great God to a little child," whose actions stamped on the child's mind the terrible association of memory with "vistas of personal hell," Glassco has written that the father "Projected himself into infinity / And silvered a looking-glass in his son's eye" (The Deficit Made Flesh). Where does one see one's identity? One's own self is seen as somehow shameful; one's father is seen not as a model for one's own behaviour but rather as, in the words of a Hopkins-like "Sonnet" (written 1932) inscribed "To My Father": "Thick shoulders thou thrasher of children A roaring Punch or a rueful, worked by a panic power." (TS, unpublished poem, Glassco Collection, PAC, Vol. 12.)

In later years Glassco hung a mirror in his tiny bedroom at Jamaica Farm in Foster. It was huge, baroque in decoration, over-powering and over-crowding the little dark room where he slept. What did he see there? Some shadow of himself? It hung on his wall throughout the 1960s while he completed the Memoirs: "a looking-glass" in his eye. It was, in fact, "the Venetian mirror / In my father's house." Glassco looked in the mirror and saw, as he wrote in "The Whole Hog," that his "father's demons spoke of his hold forever / On my heart" His very self, in his own word, his "identity" had been invaded, occupied, by the force of his father's oppression. It is, of course, a commonplace that the mirror may be taken to represent the consciousness of man. So John Glassco, the small frightened child, reflected in his own eye the terrifying spectacle of his father's sadism.

The principal emotions of this poet's life--pain and terror--had been evoked in The Invitations, as early as 1935. In this unpublished poem the speaker contemplates nature but receives no consolation; the consciousness can see only the sorrow and decay in life:

the wind

Went sobbing over the land, it seemed that then
The voices were raised in lamentation: grief
Of the bowed trees afflicted me, the wail
In lonely corners, the complaint of streams

Surcharged or choked with rooted stumps and limbs,--
 All these became, like echoes from a prison,
 Prefigurings of some ineffable pain [...] (15)

For all this poem owes to the influence of Wordsworth, Glassco had infused this early work with his own ambivalence about the past; the past is where lurks the monster of a father, but the past is yet also the brief years of freedom abroad:

--Parisian nights! when youth and spring were there,
 And neither thought on more than air we breathed,
 When smiles were native to our lips, and kisses
 Their rule and habit; sadness but a mood
 That gave a relish to successive hopes.

.

 and the works we made
 Were, as we thought, the first, rough, hasty draughts
 Of the perfection that would flower in time
 And come to ripeness yet:--what vanity! (24)

The "glasses of humanity," Glassco wrote, reflect "fervent imagery and horrid shapes; the speaker is "weary," "perplexed" and "with doubt a shadow / Hanging on every judgment formed."

Chapter Four:

Finding the Subject

The memory of Paris echoed in Glassco's troubled mind. Whereas the experience in France had been actual enough, it is as a reflection of Buffy's consciousness, as the place of legend, that Paris signifies. His self-exile in Paris was no mere adolescent rebellion against decent and long-suffering parents; Paris was the place, representing the state of being, where Buffy Glassco found a reflection of selfhood disburdened of shame and terror. Paris seemed to create for him, in the landscape of his mind, a place not only beautiful but safe. It was Proustian, a "private universe" (McGill Journal, 6 December 1943, fol. 106).

Glassco's sense of humour, wit, and cleverness, were never altogether lost, even when the demons of his soul most tirelessly pursued him. He transformed his sadness and exasperation at incompleting work into the pompous musings of "Narwhal" in the Memoirs:

I don't like an unhappy ending to a book. I'm not saying I like a happy ending either. I'm led to wonder if a book should end at all I suggest there might be some merit in a book that was either left unfinished or ended, say, by repeating the sense of its beginning. I mean a kind of discontinuous or possibly circular, rather than a linear, structure. (230-231)

The comical Man Ray figure of "Narwhal" is in fact made to describe the Memoirs themselves. Throughout the book Glassco not only played with character, the play he had admired in Proust, he delighted in ignoring the "logic" of events, of dates. He wrote indeed as George Moore had done in taking "a certain amount of experience" and trying "to mold it" (Hone 300). The Memoirs' ending is both happy--Buffy has had the full champagne cocktail of life--and unhappy--he has suffered tuberculosis. In fact the Memoirs has a beginning--back in the mists of 1928, even further back in the formation of Glassco's mind--and an ending of sorts. Only of sorts, however; he left his joke about the so-called "date" of composition to keep tidy-minded scholars happy for several years at least. Meanwhile the Memoirs waited, waited until "such time" as the past's "emotions have become assimilated."

Some twenty years after his Parisian experiences, Glassco entered in his Journal, dated "April 11th, 1949": "Another year. I have just glanced through Moore's 'Confessions', & have laid it down. What possessed me to do this I don't know; but it is as if my vernal nostalgia finds a proper expression in those pages. What a fool Moore is,--and how his pictures haunt one!" (fol. 137). This entry in Glassco's Journal is pivotal, as it comes at a point mid-way

between his life in Paris c. 1928-32 and his final preparation of the Memoirs for publication c. 1969.¹

We can, moreover, be reasonably confident that Glassco's copy of Moore's Confessions of a Young Man is extant. Among the books in the partial Glassco library acquired by Queen's University is Moore's Confessions of a Young Man in "The Modern Library" edition published in New York, but giving no date. Since, however, the edition is identified as having an introduction by Floyd Dell, the probable date of publication is 1917. (I have examined this book and believe it to be the 1917 edition. Inside the back cover there is a mounted newspaper clipping dated Saturday, 22 February 1969, and identified as "George Moore 1879 pastel portrait" and "p. 41." Opposite this insert, Glassco has calculated, in pencil, the approximate word count of this 227 page book as "64,200 words total.") This edition is described by Moore's bibliographer, Edwin Gilcher, in A Bibliography of George Moore as "Modern Library, No. 16, New York, 1917, with an 'Introduction' by Floyd Dell." Similarly, in her excellent edition, George Moore: Confessions of a Young Man, Susan Dick discusses the matter of editions and reprints, noting that the "text of the first edition was . . . used for the Modern Library edition, first published in 1917 with an introduction by Floyd Dell . . ." (26). This edition contains, therefore, a preliminary version of the Confessions, one not satisfactory to Moore himself. Dick describes how Moore was constantly revising his work, changes ranging from "small stylistic revisions" to "replacing entire paragraphs with wholly new material" (27). She notes that in 1918 the author "was preparing a uniform edition of his works . . . and he clearly wanted Confessions to endure in a form which would reflect his mature style" (27). Like Glassco, Moore appears to have been more concerned with the aesthetic effect than the specific accuracy of his memoirs. It appears from the portion of the Glassco collection available to us at Queen's that John Glassco was sufficiently interested in Moore c. 1926 to "borrow" a copy of Heloise and Abelard, published in London by Heinemann in 1925; "his" copy bore a bookplate "Ex libris Catharine Howard Chapin, March 1926."

For some time after Glassco's rediscovery of Moore's Confessions in the spring of 1949, he continued to concentrate on his erotic writing; having written a good deal of poetry during the winter of 1947-48, having finished Squire Hardman (1952-54), he had completed the manuscript of Under The Hill by July 1954. He had read Mizener's biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald that same summer. A little earlier, in 1952 he had reread Flaubert's Sentimental Education; he greatly admired this story of the young man in the great city. Obviously, in both his writing and his reading he was maintaining his fascination for both the aesthetic and the decadent as well as sustaining his interest in French literature and in the Parisian "scene" of the 1920s.

Curiously enough for someone so au courant in his reading, for someone who would soon resume work on his Memoirs, in an entry dated c. October 1952, Glassco complained about his memory: "my memory for the chronology of events is atrocious. I do not remember years, only seasons" (McGill Journal, fol. 143). As yet unconscious of the book being conceived within him, on 2 December 1954 he wrote: "Unbearable gloom for the past ten days. I can't write any more . . . if I only had a subject, a subject!" (McGill Journal, fol. 146). Later in the month he recorded that "it is a bad

sign that I am returning to things that once charmed me, half hoping things will charm me again. Well, I had better find my 'subject' soon" (fol. 147).

One observes the incidents--some as minor as rereading Flaubert, some as significant as the search for "subject" that slowly accumulated in Glassco's life over these years, incidents that would ultimately, by their sheer numbers, at last lead him to the subject he sought: Paris and his years of emotional release.

Meanwhile, the despair of Glassco's personal life increased. In 1956 Graeme Taylor took seriously ill with Buerger's disease, refused to see doctors, and died in great anguish on the first of February 1957. Glassco had recorded in the McGill Journal: "Another cause for dismay is that Graeme has developed Buerger's disease--& as this is incurable it means he will never be able to walk more than a hundred steps a day" (fol. 152). Black's Medical Dictionary defines the condition as "Thromboangiitis Obliterans":

an inflammatory disease involving the blood vessels of the limbs, particularly the lower limbs. The cause is not known, but the use of tobacco is an important factor in its

²Kildare Dobbs, in "The Great Glassco: Memoirs of a Gentleman of Pleasure," published in Maclean's in August 1975, claims that Taylor died of peritonitis, having refused medical attention. Dobbs notes that Graeme had grown "increasingly strange and jealous" of Elma's presence in Glassco's life (52).

causation. It is almost entirely confined to men, and is more common in Jews than in Gentiles. Pain is the outstanding symptom, accompanied by pallor of the affected part. Sooner or later ulceration and gangrene tend to develop in the feet or hands. There is no specific treatment, but, if seen in the early stages considerable relief may be given to the patient.

Years later, when faced with yet another crisis in Elma's chronic illness, Glassco wrote to Kay Boyle on 25 February 1969, of Graeme's death:

This has been a bad six months for me. Elma is now dying, of self-imposed starvation. The doctors tell me this is the schizophrenic's last resource: suicide. I refuse to send her to a hospital where they would prolong her life for a few weeks by intravenous feeding, injections of vitamins and so forth. Long ago, when she was her brilliant and beautiful self, we made a mutual pact that neither of us would let the other die in a hospital.--I had seen what they did to poor Graeme in 1957, keeping him alive for 2 whole weeks when his condition was hopeless, with the doctors and internes coming in three times a day, waking him to prod and pull him around, auscultate, finger his eyelids, take blood tests, inject drugs. While they took their notes . . . In his last rational moment he asked me, "How could you do this to me? If you ever loved me take me home, get me out of here." And this was in a private room in the finest hospital in Montreal! When I told the head doctor I was going to take him home by private ambulance he said it was against the law, he would not allow it, and would use force to prevent it. For 48 hours before he died I sat out in the corridor listening to him moaning in his coma: I was not even allowed to enter his room. He never recovered consciousness, thank God. (PAC Vol. 12)

Glassco himself suffered ever more intensely from the agonies of the past; his spells of horror nearly drove him to suicide in attempts to break loose from the demons of his mind. In spite of meeting Elma von Colmar in 1956; of the relief and release of Graeme's death; of being one of the Montreal poets, socializing with Frank Scott and A.J.M. Smith; in other words in spite of the end of Graeme's suffering, of the friendship of many of Canada's important poets, Glassco yet dwelt alone in that universe of hell inside his mind. Even his new-found happiness with Elma, expressed with great tenderness in their earliest correspondence, brought only temporary, if delightful respite. On 4 August 1956 Glassco sent her holograph copies of some of his poems, accompanying the following letter which was written on Jamaica Farm stationery, the paper bearing the "trademark" of the hackney pony and driver:

I'm sending you my five best poems all now polished--written out to make them more personal as you had asked

I'll be meeting you on Friday night as usual at C' [??]--if the blond Venus doesn't break down--in which case I will get Joe Beaudry--

In the meantime I kiss you all over figuratively, pending such time as I can do so in actuality.

Love, love, love

John

XXXXX

Deserted Buildings

"Elma: This is about Clark Baird's old place in Iron Hill, when we went last week--remember.

J

A Devotion

"To E. von C. (that is my darling)"

(McGill Collection)

He tried to restore a little of the magic of Paris to his life by returning in 1958, this time with Elma. He had earlier written to Kay Boyle, on 10 May 1958, just as he was recovering from double pneumonia:

I do so want to see you--I am so damnably alone But I am definitely going back to Paris for good this coming August 10th--to hell with the xxx bomb: is there any chance of seeing you there? I do so want to see you my dear I don't want to be dead alone there--though what I want most of all is to walk the Blvd. St. Michel & perhaps meet one J. Glassco (aged 18) though of course I know that is out of the question: poor boy, what in God's name happened to him? Please write me. (PAC Vol. 12)

In 1958 in Paris Elma was "positively blooming with pleasure"; although Glassco greatly enjoyed himself as well, he underwent painful periods of depression: "in the midst of my delight I was often acutely miserable, often sleepless & always sick with nervousness" (McGill Journal, 15 September 1960, fol. 158). John and Elma returned to Paris in the fall of 1959, settling in to live permanently at 22 rue de

Seine. The experiment of living abroad failed, partly because of financial reasons, and they returned to Foster in the spring of 1960.

In the autumn of 1960 Glassco developed a persistent cold; by March he was diagnosed as having tuberculosis again. One can only imagine his reaction to the diagnosis. When ill with tuberculosis as a youth, he had been admitted no fewer than three times to the Royal Victoria Hospital, in 1932, 1933, and 1934. Once admitted to the Royal Edward Laurentian Hospital at Ste-Agathe, north of Montreal, he remained there until his discharge in December 1961.

During this period of pain, fear, and despair, John Glassco wrote regularly to his beloved Elma. The McGill collection holds some three-hundred letters, dated from the first holograph of 31 March 1961, to a postcard dated "Monday" [11 December 1961] announcing his release from the Royal Edward the following day.

The greater part of the correspondence (regrettably only John Glassco's letters are included in the collection) is typewritten, and signed "John." In reading his letters, one is struck by this man's dignity in suffering. In spite of a large cavity in his one remaining lung, the trials of a long stay in hospital--unappetizing food, lack of privacy, noises, smells--Glassco remained as courageous as could anyone.

under the circumstances. He continued to write poetry, and on 8 May 1961 informed Elma that he had "fixed the last trouble-spot in Garneau's Journal and it is all packed and ready to go off to Toronto on Monday."

In addition, to his therapy for tuberculosis, Glassco was being treated for gout. The "cure" caused distressing side effects and lowered his morale. By the end of May, he became dejected: "I'm still numbed by the idea of spending another year here, perhaps two, or five, how do I know? I'm hardly rational" (letter, 25 May 1961 to Elma von Colmar). In spite of such discouraging circumstances, on 11 June Glassco asked Elma to send him "Garneau's Poésies Complètes send me the one [of two copies] with my drafts of translations scribbled on the margins." On the evening of 7 June he had finished the "first draft" of a poem of 148 lines; he wrote "I may call it A Point of Sky" As well as composing poetry, maintaining a regular correspondence with Elma, and working on the translation that would become the Complete Poems of Saint Denys Garneau, he read steadily. In a letter dated 29 June 1961 Glassco wrote:

I sent you a book by Montherlant (swiped from here) which I think you'll like. I enjoyed it very much, and thought you would too. I met de M. once, years ago, in Paris, when he was not so well known; he speaks very good English. Now he's in the Academy, as he should have been long ago.

By early July Glassco was at work on what he called the "Hospital Journal." On 24 July he reported to Elma on his writing:

Bob Weaver wrote me that my five poems (Brummell, the Music Box, Screaming Child, Quebec Farmhouse and I don't remember the other) will appear in the August issue of Tamarack Review, that the Garneau extracts are slated for the December issue, and that he wants to see whatever I have ready of the Hospital Journal. The first half of the J. is almost finished, and I'll send it to him this week.

The letter Glassco refers to in this letter to Elma is one he received from Robert Weaver dated 19 June [1961]:

Art Smith showed me a letter in which you described the hospital, the strange jumble of books you're reading from the library and so forth. I wonder if you would feel able (and interested) in writing a kind of hospital journal for "Tamarack"--for publication next winter after your poems and Garneau Journals have appeared. (McGill Collection)

The Hospital Journal did appear in Tamarack, in Spring 1962 under the title "A Season in Limbo," ascribed to the pseudonymous Silas N. Gooch. (Possibly Glassco intended a humorous reference to Rimbaud's Une saison en enfer in his title). Some thirty pages in length (pages 55 to 84 in issue #23), the setting is the "Diamond Jubilee Hospital, Montreal" in March. This corresponds to Glassco's stay in hospital in

Montreal in March 1961 before being transferred to the sanatorium at Ste-Agathe-des-Monts north of Montreal. In "A Season in Limbo" this sanatorium is named "Ste-Misère-du-Lac."

The first person narrator, Gooch, describes the process by which an adult person is reduced to dependency; his only act of rebellion being the secreting away of his trousers in the bedside cupboard, ready to hand for a dreamed-for escape:

Disturbing . . . to have your clothes taken away and hidden in some unknown region five floors down. In pyjamas and dressing-gown you feel defenceless, infantile, forlorn, especially in the middle of the day: probably a childhood reminiscence of being sent to bed as a punishment. At the same time, I had a bit of luck: the orderly somehow overlooked my trousers, which are now locked safely away in my bedside cupboard, instantly available.
(56)

But the dream of escape, "I could slip out and run through the streets of Montreal," is just that, a dream. The reality is only too tangible: "But now I'm beginning to think I'll go mad if I have to stay here for more than a month. Everything here smells of death, boredom, despair . . ." (56-57). The fateful words of the house-doctor, Dr. Czablonski, follow quickly: "For you a year, at least a year!" (57).

The narrator traces his painful passage through the stages of acceptance of this "sudden disaster":

shock, attempted denial, and the merging of this phase of disbelief, what the narrator terms the diffusion "in what might be called that of comparison or collation (really only a variant of disbelief), which consists of comparing the disastrous present with the happy past, that is, before the blow has fallen" (58).

Gooch tries to cope with these distressing stages, the three tending to meld, diverge, then flow together again, by the relief of tears, walking slowly up and down the hospital corridors, deep sighing and "when all these failed, the occasional reiteration under my breath of the common word for the human faeces" (58). He soon recognizes, however, that "I am now entering on a fourth stage, that of irrational anger. A great improvement on the other three, and one I seem to share with many of the hardier patients" (58-59). Gooch entertains himself by thoughts of delivering a sound beating to Dr. Czablonski: "I indulge in fantasies of boxing his ears, smashing his glasses, kicking him" (59). Alas, this fanciful rage merely "dwindled into simple irritation and a kind of fatuous disgust."

Cast down, the narrator describes the sensory assault of confinement in hospital:

I can get used to sleeping in the same room with three other men, to queueing up for a toilet every morning, to facing a meal of boloney, noodles, and tinned peaches at five o'clock, even to being called 'a good boy' by

a student nurse for eating some of it, but not to the smell of this place, that peculiar hospital smell so indistinguishable from the greasy, sweetish smell of ear-wax. It's everywhere, lying on the air like a coating of oil on water: everywhere, that is except in the bathroom where the smell of man is supreme, heated and intensified by the steam from the showers, almost cloacal in its power to evoke the human, all-too-human--the smell of the locker-room and barracks, that stupefying blend of cheap soap, cigarette-butts, toothpaste, chewing-gum, and dried sweat. (59)

The oppression of this incarceration begins to tell on the narrator's mental state: "Terrible depression today . . . claustrophobia has been added, and a growing feeling of personal uncleanness. Also moments of fear: am I going to spend the rest of my life in places like this? A few friends have telephoned, but I won't speak to them. Some visitors, too . . . but I'm not at home. I would be ashamed to be seen in a place like this . . ." (62).

With an intensity that is nearly perverse, the narrator focuses intently on describing the most distressing details of the disease: the smells of the ill old men: "a mixture of unaired beds and rotted leather . . . the smell of dried sour milk, the insides of old hats" (62). And they cough:

Coughs. There are four kinds here: the hard, dry, metallic cough, more a bark; the interminable, grasping, wheezing cough, like a broken bellows; the deep powerful mucous cough which ends with phlegm being hurled

into the mouth to be spat, generally with a report like the stroke of an outboard motor, into one of the little waxed cardboard boxes supplied for the purpose; and finally the soft, loose, furry cough which is not really a cough at all but only a kind of cautious agitation of air in the bronchus, not designed to bring the mucus up but just to shift its position, turn it over, blow it around a bit: this is the way the three old men of the urinals cough, the old professionals. (62)

On 15 April the patient is transferred to the sanatorium, Ste-Misère-du-Lac, a welcome of "Loads and loads of warm tasteless food. Drugs and more drugs . . . diarrhoea . . . blinding headache . . . heartburn and . . . something in the soup to inhibit sexual desire" (70). In spite of such assaults on the body and spirit the patient progresses in beginning to regain his health and is permitted library privileges; he wades through:

Edwardian, Georgian, and modern rubbish, deadbeats like Galsworthy, Walpole, Charles Morgan, Joyce Cary. This is where all the dull books of England end up, their own private limbo As Garneau said of the tombs on Côte des Neiges, d'autres prendront la place des morts et les mêmes caveaux les abriteront. Among them a few well-worn Canadian books: Ralph Connor, L.M. Montgomery, Thomas Raddall, Pierre Berton; they blend nicely With all this a number of oddities: The English Governess, a work of domestic flagellation; Strindberg's The Inferno; Memoirs of a Dope Fiend by Alistair Crowley; Nadia by André Breton, with the original illustrations. How on earth did these fantastic, vicious creations ever get up here, cheek by jowl with Hugh MacLennan,

F.P. Grove, Ethel Wilson, and Morley Callaghan, the purest of the pure? (70-71)

Here one hears the echo of the authorial presence: the incongruous catalogue, so typical of similar fantastic lists in the Memoirs, so typical of Glassco in the playful inclusion of his own pornographic work, The English Governess. Indeed this short piece, descriptive, expositive, sometimes meditative, prefigures within its limits the method employed by the author in Memoirs, begun two years later. It is the same combination of experience grounded firmly in fact, lightened and animated by fiction, humour, and whimsy, with an undertone of sadness, fear, loss of dignity, indeed of life itself. Curiously, there is an analogy between the actual composition of "A Season in Limbo," a factually-based but fictionalized account of experience of a man undergoing the pain and fear of an episode of tuberculosis, with the purported composition of the Memoirs. Glassco seems to be experimenting with the form of the "actual memoir," the journal, in this work published in 1962, a few months after being discharged from the Laurentian sanatorium. In the Memoirs, which he resumed the next year, he adopted the form, at least in part, of a record of experience, experience described against the backdrop of the tuberculosis ward c. 1932-34. While both accounts are

fundamentally factual, both are fictionalized. Paradoxically, the sense of immediacy for which the Memoirs is admired, is much less well developed in "A Season in Limbo," which was actually composed "on the scene" as it were. The sense of immediacy so apparent in the Memoirs owes its success not to actuality but to art. As interesting a document as "A Season in Limbo" may be, it is not particularly successful art. The tone is flat; the authorial voice intrudes, diluting effect, edging our reaction towards an uncomfortable pity for the narrator rather than an empathetic discernment of suffering. This is not to suggest that "A Season in Limbo" is without merit. But it is worth noting that the supposed "authenticity" that the Memoirs lack is no lack at all, but rather the artifice of the work of art. In short, the fact that the Memoirs were composed "after the fact" has allowed the artist, paradoxically, to gain perspective and thereby create a document of artistic immediacy.

Compare, for example, the tone of self-pity for "lostness" that creeps into the narrator's voice in this passage from "A Season in Limbo":

August

Once again this feeling of utter misery, of abandonment, of lostness. It is midsummer now, and spring has come at last to Ste-Misère. In the woods below me, opposite my cage, the thrushes are singing. What did they come all the way up here for? Already,

at home, they will have raised their first brood and gone off to the deep woods to sing by themselves. And at night, now, there are whip-poor-wills, my unfavourite bird. All evening long I hear that monotonous pirri-pip, pirri-pip, pirri-pip. A dreary note.

Now the old crocks, the "drunks, the addicts have ceased to touch me with pity or sadness. After five months I have developed an immunity to whatever is pitiable or exasperating in them, like this hardy tuberculosis bacillus of mine which seems to be adjusting to all kinds of attack. To hell with them, let them die, and the sooner the better: let them fall downstairs, roar like bull-calves, cough their rotten lungs out--that's their business and it may be all they're good for. They will leave a gap in the television audience, that's all. It's all the same to me. (77)

However professional the prose, the narrator's voice remains querulous in its disgust at the surroundings. Of course, as human beings we understand how miserable poor Gooch must be--but that is the very clue, "poor Gooch," and his "it's all the same to me." It is the artist's task to move us to sorrow, not to embarrassed pity, not only for what has befallen Gooch, but also for the qualities of memento mori that such a work should quicken in us as readers.

In the Memoirs, the supposed "artificial" record of experience, the narrator has succeeded in banishing that unpleasant odour of self-pity we detect in "A Season in Limbo," and replacing any hint of a lack of dignity with bravery, honesty, and artistic aplomb c. 1932:

I admit I am worried about this operation. Timor mortis conturbat me. Dr. Archibald assures me there is an even chance of my surviving; the administrative head of the hospital has also advised me, very tactfully, to make my will.

Fortunately I have nothing to leave but my clothes, books, and manuscripts--none of them of any value. But the impulse to leave things tidy behind me, which is after all the whole duty of man when faced with death, has made me draw up a will properly witnessed, in which I have left everything, including the six scribblers in which this book is written, to Graeme. He was touched to hear it.

"I haven't read the last three-quarters of your book, of course," he said, "but it should be quite amusing. As for the clothes, they won't fit me without extensive alterations, and truth is they're rather ragged by now. There won't be any succession duties anyway." (237)

What a marvellously bloodless passage! This is the stuff of courage: looking death in the eye and laughing out loud: the bourgeois "dignity" surrounding death--the will, the parcelling-out of one's worldly goods--all deflated by Graeme's casual comment "it should be quite amusing." The only hint of hope in the concluding pages of the Memoirs is the ironic remark that Dr. Edward Archibald "had lost fewer patients by thoracoplasty than anyone else" (241). This is pain filtered and transformed by art. In short, the actual authenticity of "A Season in Limbo" is its very weakness; the artifice of the Memoirs makes its strength. This surely is the process of art: to take human experience and while preserving its grounding in

reality, transform that experience into a form accessible to the reader, so accessible that he can not only empathize with the experience (in this case, facing death) but do so with humour and grace. What could be more poignant than our observation of another's encounter with death, and knowing and feeling that experience as our own, an experience that absorbs not only the very real pain of body and spirit, but the memory of Paris, of "the plum-blue light of Montparnasse evenings . . . the sun-washed clarity of its noon . . . freedom, lightheartedness and comradeship . . ." (Memoirs 238).

Meanwhile, as hospital patient, Glassco maintained his sense of humour; kept faithful to the discipline of writing; patiently advised Elma on matters of tax, hay, bats in the attic and all the details of life as the "man of the house"; and yet still searched for the elusive "subject." "I also like your idea of writing a novel some day but oh how I dread the work involved! And I have no subject!" (l. to Elma von Colmar, 2 September 1961, 2-3).

A few days later on 10 September 1961, Glassco joyfully related to Elma the details of a most pleasant visit from F.R. Scott; they had discussed Paris:

for him, as for you and me, Paris still the loveliest city in the world and, as he says,

'as soon as you are there you feel more alive yourself and more in the midst of life.'

Glassco was still unaware that his "subject" was "Paris," but the time drew nearer for that realization. On 2 October he recalled a Parisian anecdote for Elma (the "He" is a friend referred to as "Milton" in the correspondence):

He wrote just last week asking whether Foujita's first wife died up here of t.b. If I should see Dr. Phelps I'll ask him; but this would have been ten to twenty years ago and there's nobody who has been here that long. I remember her quite well in Paris in 1929: a very clever, monkey-faced woman, most attractive, who helped him enormously in his career and found him a number of beautiful young girls to sleep with; and then he divorced her and married one of them, a beautiful, coarse-minded, tough little tart.³

On 7 October Glassco wrote that he was longing to return to Paris: "Well, we're going," he wrote "and that's all there is to it!" He referred to Kathie and Laurence Vail in passing; it would seem Glassco and

³Foujita was to make a "cameo" appearance in the Memoirs; previously Bob McAlmon had described him in Being Geniuses Together: "his bobbed hair, earrings, kimono shirts, and altogether arty getup" (341). Hugh Ford has noted that Tsuguhara Foujita wrote the introduction to Kiki's Les Souvenirs de Kiki de Montparnasse (145). Hemingway wrote the Preface for the English translation of Kiki's book (Ford 147), which included a portrait of the memoirist Kiki (Alice Prin) by Foujita (Ford 149).

Elma had visited with them on earlier trips to Paris.⁴ Glassco included in this same letter a long and engaging reverie on a past trip to Paris with Elma:

I saw that about the dear old Liberté, and I thought too about the fat waiter and the dining-room steward and the beautiful bar where we had martinis and the man who wanted 'san'wiches' at night and all the beauty and happiness we had on that lovely boat. We'll do it all again, my own sweetheart, and see the little notions-store on the Place St. André-des-Arts and go to the bird-market and sit at the pepper-and-salt café (Au Vrai Sancerre it's called) and do a lot of other things too, like going out to Chartres for the day and seeing the Cathedral and incidentally a little of the country-side, and also getting inside the Hôtel de Lauzun on the Isle-Saint-Louis, the most beautiful house in Paris, even if it's on one of those 'days' when they take little groups through: after all Victor Hugo's house in the Palais-Royal was somewhat the same kind of deal and I found it fascinating, didn't you? Only this time we won't have any preoccupation about buying a place and we'll be travelling light and will have nothing to do but just wander around quite fancy-free the way two pussies should. And I think it might be a good idea for us to get up earlier and go to bed ditto: we've seen enough of the rather stupid night-life, or at least I have!

In mid-October Glassco was faced with the possibility of surgery. Naturally his thoughts

"In a letter to Kay Boyle dated 1 August 1967, Glassco wrote "In '59 I only saw Laurence [Vail] and your beautiful daughter Kathie, Rachel Jacobs, Man Ray, Zadkine and Tzara" (PAC Vol. 12)). Laurence Vail, a one-time husband to Kay Boyle, appeared in the Memoirs as "Terence Marr" in company with his then-wife Peggy Guggenheim, called "Sally" in the Memoirs (117).

returned to Dr. Edward Archibald who had treated him on his return from Paris in the early 1930s. It was then, Glassco wrote, "touch and go" as to whether or not he would live; Archibald, he recalled "is really tops in his profession"; "he was engaged by my parents who were then wealthy people and there was a fee of \$1000 (1930 dollars) involved" (l. to Elma von Colmar, 13 October 1961, 2).

On 26 October, Glassco encouraged both himself and Elma that once he were well again they could "go to Paris for as long as we want." Two days later he wrote that he had seen the film of West's Miss Lonelyhearts with Myrna Loy in the role of Mrs. Shrike:

Who do you imagine they had for Mrs. Shrike? Myrna Loy, of all people, whom I used to know slightly when she was with Rex Ingram in Nice 30 years ago. She has certainly changed: then she used to do sex-pot parts like dancing girls in Biblical movies, and once as Vashti in 'Esther'; silent movies then, of course, with artificial eyelashes and slithery hip-movements for the vamps.

28 October 1961

In a particularly interesting letter dated 5 November, Glassco discussed George Sand at length; he had been reading André Maurois' Lélia:

I noticed that when she first came to Paris she lived at 31, rue de Seine, in the building right opposite the windows of No. 22, [where Glassco and Elma had lived in Paris in 1959] and after that on the fourth

floor of a house on the Quai St. Michel (with each lodging a different lover!) and that for that whole district she expressed a love which most people regarded as almost crazy. For the Seine, the place st. [sic] André-des-Arts (probably pretty much the same then), Notre Dame, the bird market, the mists of evening, the purples of the night, the lights on the river. So that we have really something in common with her: at any rate we like the same little part of the world! These two pussies are going back there in a year's time, and then to Nice and Venice

On the 10 November, as Glassco's health was greatly improved, he wrote to Elma to begin looking for a suitable ship to take them to France for their next trip: "I want to see Nice and Cannes and Monte Carlo again, with you. March is a beautiful month on the Riviera, as I remember: the weather there is about a month ahead of Paris." In the same letter he discussed Flaubert, and Paris once again:

Tweet, I'm so glad you're enjoying 'Bouvard and Pécuchet'. It's an absolutely crazy book, with poor Flaubert going through the catalogue of all the idiocies of his century and somehow, quite marvellously, not managing to be boring. Did you ever read 'Sentimental Education'? That's his finest, better than 'Madame Bovary' though most people don't know it. It has a curiously odd, modern technique, almost like a movie; and it has something no other book of that time had, that is, a kind of breathless speed. I think you'd like the period, too: it's the Paris of 1840-50. There are some wonderful wild parties, and a beautiful girl called Rosannette with whom I was in love when I was sixteen, and beautiful little vignettes and action-pieces everywhere. That

was the France that I adored when I was a boy

Glassco left the hospital in December 1961, full of hope and eager for a champagne cocktail and a plate of oysters. He had recovered his health, written poetry and a hospital journal, and prepared a book for publication. In 1962 he published, with McClelland and Stewart, The Journal of Saint-Denys-Garneau; he had finished the translation of Gilles Marcotte's Introduction in the last weeks at the Royal Edward.

By early 1963 John Glassco and Elma were again in France, just as he had dreamt of being during the trying months in the sanatorium. He had re-experienced Paris and tuberculosis; he had at last found his "subject": Paris and himself. Like Flaubert he would write a work of "a kind of breathless speed"; of "wonderful wild parties and a beautiful girl"; of "beautiful little vignettes and action-pieces." Like Proust, like Moore, Glassco would write words of remembrance; of remembrance evolved through the reliving of suggestively similar experiences: in the 1920s-1930s there had been the love of Graeme, the excitement of Paris, and the near-death by tuberculosis. In the 1950s-1960s there had been the death of Graeme, the pleasure of returning to France three times, and once again, the endurance of a grave

episode of tuberculosis. Like Moore, Glassco found his subject "in an autobiography of a personality, not of facts." Clearly Glassco's Memoirs were just such an autobiography. As Moore was the "exuberant prodigal" in his Confessions, so was Glassco in his Memoirs.

Like Moore, Glassco scorned the mundane. He found McAlmon's works unsatisfactory, at least in part, because "They were obviously literal transcripts of things set down simply because they had happened and were vividly recollected" (Memoirs, 79). It is, nevertheless, wrong to conclude that Glassco was unsympathetic to McAlmon, either as a man or as a writer. In a letter to Kay Boyle written on 28 June 1968, to thank her for a copy of Being Geniuses Together, Glassco is unsparing in his criticism of McAlmon, but concludes his remarks on a note of affection:

You have been kinder to Graeme and me than either of us deserved: and such lovely photographs . . . My reaction of a personal sadness--it all seems so long ago, almost like something I am re-reading--is overbalanced by a wonderful feeling that the whole period has really been pinned down for the first time. Your idea of alternating your own work with Bob's was brilliant; it gives both variety and a kind of double vision trained on the scene. Your own part strikes me as better than his: Bob never gave himself, the way you do. Also his humour is positively painful. And all that pride in drinking is just a little infantile: as if heavy boozing were a proof of something, of some obscure aspect of manhood. For him,

drinking never seemed a celebration, a means of happiness or joy, not even wholly a way of release or escape, but simply a kind of tribal or adolescent display. He actually hated the taste of either wine or liquor. And it didn't sharpen his faculties, I remember: he only became more combative and absurd.

But it was a tremendous experience knowing him. He was always so alive and refreshing. and I was fond of him--even when he became intolerably insulting: somehow, one excused him everything . . . (PAC Vol. 12)

While deploring McAlmon's "pedantry, Glassco greatly admired the approach adopted by the "superb raconteur and inspired liar" Frank Harris, whose work he praised as the "best mixture of adventure, documentation and sheer nastiness ever written" (Memoirs, 121). Glassco was, in short, a poet, not an historian. Like all aesthetes he had "the need to startle, baffle, dazzle his victims" (Green, 8). Mrs. Cecilie Glassco, in describing her affectionate memories of Buffy Glassco, presented his behaviour in just such a way: tasteful, considerate, kind; nevertheless enjoying just a little making his audience gasp at his wit, at his cleverness. And so he did with the Memoirs.

In "Notes for Interview," Glassco wrote of Proust's perception of the form taken by the past in the mind of the artist. While the cynic might see such comment on Glassco's part as self-justification, the

cynic would be, as usual, quite wrong. Glassco's nostalgia for the past evolved not after his writing of the Memoirs, but rather was in itself a motivation in his life, in his decision to live in the horse and carriage world of Knowlton on the very eve of the nuclear age. More significant, that nostalgia, those memories, were the stuff from which he derived his art, from which he derived his own legend of self:

Proust declared in the last volume of his great novel that only the past has reality, that is, the past as it is recalled & recorded in words--The real historical past does not exist, any more than the present. In other words, the past must be transformed & transmuted before it has any reality or permanence. And it is only art that can do this. (Holograph, n.d., PAC Vol. 17)

Before resuming work on the Memoirs, Glassco had made a related entry in his "Note-book (odds & ends)," dated March 1961. At this moment, on the occasion of his admission to hospital for treatment of tuberculosis, he confided that he wrote not in order to gain money or fame but "for the sake of the work itself, its own existence as a permanent record of some ~~moment-of-truth~~ [struck out], apprehension of truth or beauty, of some essence of despair . . . " (16).

It was on such impulses that Glassco acted in creating the Memoirs. On 18 March 1963 Glassco wrote to A.J.M. Smith, by then a cherished friend and

literary adviser, that he and Elma had just returned to Canada from France. They had visited Nice and Cannes and spent a week in Paris. Of Cannes Glassco wrote: "We didn't really get out of town much, it was just too bloody cold all the time. And I only got to Chapter 7 of my memoirs" (McGill Papers). Obviously, approximately one year after his recovery from tuberculosis and his release from the Royal Edward Laurentian Hospital, Glassco had again visited France and had written, at the very least, nearly one-third of his draft of the book that would become the Memoirs of Montparnasse.

While one cannot posit an irrefutable causal relationship between the events of the early 1960s and the resumption of the Memoirs in 1963, Glassco was, after all, entering the most fertile decade of his life as an artist; one cannot but assume that the experience of once again suffering from tuberculosis, and once again living in France with a beloved companion somehow stimulated him to draw together the necessary creative forces to, in his own words, transform and transmute the past into art.

Chapter Five:

Making the Memoirs .

The actual manuscript of the Memoirs, as it were the "complete artifact," was written during 1963-1964, in ball point pen in six small scribblers. Why then did Glassco deceive the Canadian public by ascribing the notebooks to the 1930s? Why this prank? Among the reviewers taken in by this falsehood were Arnold Edinborough in The Financial Post, of 16 May 1970, William French in The Globe and Mail (a review later reprinted in the midsummer 1970 number of the Book-of-the-Month Club News), Paul Showers in The New York Times Book Review of 29 November 1970, and the late Margaret Laurence in her discussion of the Memoirs, "Roses and Yew" in The Tamarack Review (PAC Vol. 2). Was Glassco enjoying the sort of elaborate hoax of which the aesthetes were so fond? The one thing of which we are sure is that his original intentions were not to deceive the reading public. The original holograph was dated "1964" with the "6" later scraped away and replaced by a "3."¹ Glassco was, moreover,

¹I am grateful to William Toye, Glassco's editor of the Memoirs, for having acknowledged my verification of the manuscript in his Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature (1983).

I discussed my findings with Mr. Toye at the Oxford University Press offices in Don Mills in

quite open about the composition of the Memoirs during 1964, telling all sorts of friends about his current project. He wrote to A.J.M. Smith twice in January 1964 about the progress of Tender Juvenal as the Memoirs were then called. On 20 January 1964, for example, he wrote to Smith: "I have over half of the memoirs of my dead life written, 40,000 words so far. Tentative title is TENDER JUVENAL (from Love's Labour's Lost, V.i)."² Ten days later, again to Smith, he wrote: "Tender Juvenal is now 47,000 words written. Only 30,000 more" On 4 May 1964 Glassco once more wrote to Smith: "Almost 60,000 words of Tender Juvenal done. Only 20,000 more!" On Easter Monday 1964 he hastened to tell Smith that "The memoirs have swollen to 80,000 words, and The End is in sight. I left the "I" copulating in a bain sabot last night in the middle of Chapter XVII" (PAC Vol. 1).

On 4 May 1964 Glassco wrote to his good friend Jean Le Moyne:

All this winter [1963-64] I have been 1) preparing my next book of poems which will be published this fall, [A Point of Sky, OUP, 1964] 2) writing the 'MEMOIRS of my dead

February 1983. Naturally, he had no prior knowledge of the dating, nor had any other researcher of whom he was aware.

²Glassco is mistaken in his Shakespeare here; the reference is to I.ii.

life' (in Flaubert's phrase) in Paris from 1928 to 1930, and 3) editing the Proceedings of the Foster Poetry Conference of 1963 My memoirs (no title yet) now amount to 75,000 words, with only 20,000 left to write: this is a gay work, full of ebullience and absurdity; while writing it I am really under 20 again,--poor, predatory, restless, happy, taking nothing seriously, always hungry and digesting the nuts and bolts of experience like an ostrich. Every night now I enact the first scene of Faust, I shed my robes and my false beard, the wrinkles disappear, I have a new head of hair, and I sport for about 1,000 words in the green meadows of a well misspent youth. (PAC Vol. 1)

Glassco began to correspond with Michael Gnarowski in the early 1960s. During the summer of 1964 the two men spent a few convivial evenings together, drinking and talking about literature and "literary history" in the making. Glassco was open with Gnarowski about the composition of the Memoirs. Later on in the year, on 5 December 1964, Glassco wrote to him about the book's development:

Sorry not to have answered your letter of November 25 before this. I have been slaving at my MEMOIRS OF MONTPARNASSE, trying to finish it before the reaction set in. I just made it in time, because now it is just 300 pages that I can't read. Gestation and birth-pains are always bad--but it's worse when you open your eyes and see a little Mongol. (PAC Vol. 4)

Eventually Glassco did feel more confident about the Memoirs, at least in sufficient measure to have a typescript proceed. On 22 March 1965 he wrote to

Gnarowski about the delight he had found in reading Terry Southern's Candy:

This is the final deprecation of 'sexy' writing, it reduces sex to a horse-laugh And what pace. This kind of pace is what I've tried to get into my Memoirs, which are now finished and being typed in Granby. (PAC Vol.4)

In spite of Glassco's cheerful letter, it was at about this time that the very serious illnesses that were to destroy Elma eventually were all too apparent. In February 1965 Glassco had written to Ralph Gustafson that Elma had a "spot" on her lung and was most unwell. By 25th October 1965, burdened by Elma's illness, very discouraged about the Memoirs, Glassco wrote to Gnarowski: "The Memoirs are no good, and I've canned the whole book, much though I hated to." In fact, by mid-November of 1965, Glassco had rejected the Memoirs altogether, as the document "Note for Memoirs of Montparnasse" (PAC Vol. 1) attests:

This book is the result of an attempt, made in the winter of 1964-65, to put into some coherent and consecutive form the mass of notes, reminiscences and jottings produced during the six months I spent in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, over thirty years before, when I was undergoing a series of operations for pulmonary tuberculosis. These notes were intended, at the time, to be a kind of testament of youth which, though made in the shadow of death, was to be of a light-hearted and frivolous nature.

The attempt to make a proper book of these fragments, so many years later, appears

to me to have been a total failure: the gaiety and élan which were sought after turned into a tedious flippancy, the satire into cheap and often vulgar malice, the humour into flatness, the hero into an unconvincing liar and intolerable coxcomb.

Seeing it at last in typescript, I found the book so foolish, weak and disgraceful that I decided never to submit it for publication, and have adhered to that decision.

My disappointment in this work is considerable. I ask myself how I could have written it, how I could have so wasted my time. But no matter . . .

The fact that everything related to it is circumstantially true is no excuse for its tone. It is a thoroughly bad book.

Knowlton, November 17, 2 a.m., 1965

On 28 January 1967 Glassco again confided in his friend Gustafson:

I was fussed over Elma: you probably know she has had an involutional psychosis lately, and I could see a relapse coming on (it did the next day: the suffering of this illness is really grim: try to think of a night-mare from which you can't wake up and which seems to you quite real) (PAC Vol. 4)

By 25 March 1969, when Glassco wrote to Gnarowski, the situation with Elma looked hopeless:

3 days ago Elma told me she wanted to go to the Royal Edward Hospital in Ste-Agathe, to die there. She was taken there by ambulance yesterday morning. I am taking a hotel room in Ste-Agathe today so I can be with her to the end. It will not be long She is not suffering at all, and her mind has now gone completely. (PAC Vol. 4)

Glassco was even more frank with Kay Boyle, who was such a source of comfort and strength to him during the last terrible years of Elma's disintegration; he wrote to Boyle on 19 March 1969:

Your dear sympathy for Elma's condition was like you in the greatness of your heart, as always. She has just now, however, past beyond all mental and physical suffering. Her doctors tell me she can last until May, thank God: this gives me two more months with her. Her poor dear arms and legs are like matchsticks. She lives on a daily ration of two or three grapes or strawberries, or a teaspoonful of caviar, and a glass of champagne. But her mind is quite clear now, she is comfortable, even happy: she tells me she was the re-incarnation of Queen Nefertiti (whom she in fact resembles astonishingly) and will have a further re-incarnation on the moon. Listening to her I half believe these things. And she could always read anyone's thoughts. (PAC Vol. 12)

On 25-27 March 1969, Glassco again turned to Boyle in a letter that on the one hand celebrates his artistic success: "My God, Oxford UP have accepted Memoirs of Montparnasse and planning some kind of simultaneous publication with Little Brown and Faber and Faber. I had no idea"; while on the other frankly chronicles the agony of his personal life:

Elma was taken to the finest sanitarium [sic] in Canada [Ste-Agathe-des-Monts where Glassco himself recuperated from tuberculosis in 1961]; at her own wish, yesterday, by ambulance. I know the director, and he is a fine and kindly man whom I have known and trusted for the past ten years. She will die there in peace, comfort and dignity. I will

be beside her to the end. She was raving and prophesying almost incoherently when she left here, but since I am told she may 'come back' at the end I have taken a hotel-room in Ste-Agathe close by.

Thursday, March 27

I had to break off this letter and come back here after visiting Elma in Ste-Agathe yesterday. She is now much quieter and quite happy, and likes everything there; "such sweet young nurses." And they love her, too. She may last 2 weeks yet.

I found your last letter waiting for me here. But don't you see, Elma wants to die. This is the crux of her psychosis; a genuine impulse and drive towards death. She told me all about it yesterday, mixed up with her absolute conviction of re-incarnation. At any rate, she has simply had enough of this life, and wants to move on. In spite of our love and all our past happiness, she wants to go. She is sorry for me, but tells me her desire for death is stronger than her love for me. "You will adjust," she says. "You loved me more than I loved you, though I loved you more than any man I knew. Perhaps I am incapable of love. My bridegroom was always Death." She was speaking of this very quietly and "rationally" yesterday in Ste-Agathe, and will refuse all nourishment except water. She now weighs 55 pounds. (PAC Vol. 12)

By 1 May 1969 he was able once again to bare his heart to Boyle, in a letter replete with daunting detail and yet with some hope for Elma's recovery. Glassco's emotional stability was badly shaken by the uncertainty of his personal future. He wrote that: "All that keeps me going these days is a kind of paradisal dream that Elma will be restored to me

sometime, as she was. "And it is just possible. If it weren't, I think I would go mad from loneliness and despair." Such a condition is hardly surprising in the writer, given the situation he described in the same letter:

Your letters comfort me more than I can say. I am now so unutterably alone and, worst of all, unloved. Please find time to drop me a line now and then.

4 weeks ago Elma begged me to send her to a hospital, to die in comfort. Suicide by starvation is quite horrible: the skin of the face dries up and flakes off (from dehydration), abscesses come out on the neck, and the spots of scurvy appear She is now in a tuberculosis sanatorium in Ste-Agathe, 100 miles north of here. Since she had active t.b. (one lung completely gone), no other hospital would take her.--Would you believe it, this hospital have brought her back from the edge of the grave with largactil, tubular feeding through the nose, artificial evacuations, and the abscesses, dehydration and scurvy are all cleared up.³

I saw her ten days ago, and she was almost rational and quite happy. The head doctor told me the next month will be crucial for her physical condition; the resident psychiatrist says a cure for schizophrenia may soon be discovered. She may yet be restored to me! I just keep praying But I could not live with her in her schizophrenic state: she is absolutely unmanageable and refuses all drugs here: she has this illusion that the local doctor and I have conspired to murder her. The psychiatrist tells me the psychotic's hatred

³Largactil (chlorpromazine), a psychotropic drug, is particularly effective in the treatment of highly agitated or psychotic persons.

and distrust are a measure of his love--which is small comfort. Her hallucinations continue, also the illusion of omniscience through messages received, voices heard, etc.--But everyone at the hospital is in love with her: she has always had that peculiar childlike gift for evoking love wherever she goes, a kind of simplicity, trust and helplessness. Yet she believes that everyone hates her in their hearts. (PAC Vol. 12)

Again, as happens so frequently in Glassco's life, one is quite astonished at how much work he accomplished in the face of such a mass of personal tragedy. As if the agony of his own childhood and the misery of his two extremely serious episodes with tuberculosis were not enough, his wife's fragility was a source of constant worry and concern.

Elma Koolmer, who claimed to be Elma von Colmar daughter of an Estonian baron, was the epitome of the dainty ballerina she said she had been in Europe.⁴ At her most robust she weighed no more than some eighty pounds; she suffered from periods of anorexia during

"Although Elma claimed to be a baroness, the parish records of 10 September 1963 of the Church of St. James the Apostle in Montreal, identify John Glassco's bride as "Elma Rosalie Koolmer, spinster of major age, Ballet Teacher, of Foster, Brome County, in the said Province [of Quebec], daughter of the late Michel Koolmer and of Ann Mitri, his wife." The Glasscos' wedding announcement in The Gazette on 21 September 1963, names the bride as "Miss Elma von Colmar, daughter of the late Baron Michel von Colmar of Courland and Narva, Esthonia, and of Baroness von Colmar . . . (13)."

which she could eat almost nothing. Cecilie Glassco remembered lunching with her brother-in-law at Knowlton in the 1960s, during the very time the Memoirs were being composed, and John's telling her that Elma's health was very delicate; she could manage only smoked salmon and champagne. Devotedly, Glassco purchased these items to take home for his tiny wife's delectation. (One thinks of Ronald Firbank, dining only on champagne and caviare).

Somehow Elma seemed a perfect expression of Glassco as aesthete. Haunted by the memories of internment in a concentration camp, she seemed to many like "a little sparrow." Death never seemed very far from either John or Elma Glassco. On 25 March 1969, Glassco had been able to describe his wife and the state of her health in a letter to Kay Boyle:

These things are mysterious. But she was always hardly a person of this earth. A kind of sylph. I think I told you once she could read anyone's thoughts. And this unearthly gift terrified her: "so many people's thoughts," she told me once, "are full of fear, envy and hatred: I have to close them off." (PAC Vol. 12)

It would be, however, a serious misunderstanding of John Glassco's life and career as an artist to in any way romanticize the horrors of much of his life with Elma. There is no doubt that she was a woman of a quiet charm; although not beautiful she had a dancer's

supple body and moved gracefully. When in good health she took care of her appearance and photographs of the time show her to have been of a kindly and pleasing face. Her health problems were, however, of such severity that it seems a wonder that her husband's love and loyalty were of a mettle to withstand the strain, particularly when one recalls the condition of his own health, a condition described in a letter to Jean Le Moyne written several years earlier, when Glassco was frighteningly ill:

for the last 3 days I have been listening to my bronchus crackling with inflammation, and remembering that my doctor said my next recurrence of tuberculosis in that area could be fatal. (11 March 1962, PAC Vol. 1)

The tragedy of Elma's illness is painfully and bluntly documented in the John Glassco-Kay Boyle correspondence. In a letter to Boyle dated 12 September 1967, for example, Glassco admits that Elma's health problems were of a long-standing nature:

I've just had a bad blow. My wife has now definitely gone insane and will have to go to an asylum this week I knew of her bias that way when we first met; but one tends to disregard these things, thinks they'll improve, believes love and care can cure anything: well they can't The last three months have been grim. (PAC Vol. 12)

Perhaps because two of Boyle's daughters suffered from schizophrenia, she was able to offer Glassco not only her sympathy, but practical advice. They exchanged information on treatment and medication. Throughout the 1960s, Glassco was constantly elated, then cast down as his wife's health improved only to be once again nearly destroyed. On 10 June 1969 he wrote to Boyle:

I've just spent two weeks in Montreal, where Elma has been transferred for some mysterious 'tests.' I believe they are going to save her But she will be bed-ridden for at least two years. She now has a kidney infection, cavities in both lungs, and weighs about 60 lbs. Lifting her in bed is like lifting a small boy. But her spirits have come back marvellously, the psychosis seems to be weakening, and she is much stronger physically. Most important (for me) is the way she wants me beside her: the hatred seems to have stopped, though I'm not sure whether she's not playing some kind of games. (PAC Vol. 12)

The "hatred" Glassco referred to in his letter to Boyle was explained to me with great sensitivity by Ralph and Betty Gustafson. They recalled how their friend Buffy would escape the loneliness of Foster to drive over to visit them at North Hatley. A little breathless from the exertion of climbing the stairs to the house, he would stand in the Gustafsons' kitchen in tears. The urbane writer, the knowledgeable manipulator of the stock market, wept out his misery at

seeing the woman he had so loved turn on him in furious hatred during his visits to her in hospital. In spite of the fact that he repeated to himself the advice of Elma's doctors, that this "hatred" was merely the inversion of the love she had felt for him when well, he suffered greatly. One can hardly underestimate the pain his wife's illness caused him (Interview with Ralph and Betty Gustafson, 12 October 1984). He had written in a similar vein to Kay Boyle in March 1968 from a penthouse flat he had taken at 1444 Mackay Street in Montreal:

How I would like to go out there for a few days--and simply to see you!--but my poor Elma has had a bad relapse and has been in the asylum here in Montreal for the past month (I've taken this apartment to be able to see her every day) and still shows no improvement. She regurgitates all drugs.

What is most horrible is her now absolute hatred of me. This is a kind of nightmare: unrequited love with a further diabolical twist, as if 9 years of devotion and happiness were having to be paid for, by both of us, with this pointless and gratuitous suffering.

So I can see no immediate prospect for my going away, anywhere at all. Unless or until her case is declared hopeless and she is put away for good, and this is something I am still fighting against. I still cannot bear the thought of her being a prisoner--the endless monotony of the days, lack of companionship or occupation, tasteless food, blank walls, locked doors, cheerful inhuman nurses, and indignity

This suffering is a motif in much of Glassco's correspondence from the mid-1960s onwards. The cyclic nature of Elma's illness added to the misery. No sooner would Glassco begin to adjust to one state, when she would shift to another. On 28 July 1969 he wrote again to Boyle:

Elma is getting steadily better and stronger. I drive up to see her twice a week now. Her mind seems greatly restored, but it's as if it had been taken to pieces and then re-assembled with a few important pieces left out. She has stopped hating me, and is even quite affectionate in a polite way, but for her I've become a person whom she just happened to marry in a fit of absent-mindedness some years ago, and who now brings her fancy things to eat.

If that sounds bitter, it is certainly not meant to be--merely rueful!

I am getting used to this loneliness and this empty house. Even the chastity part doesn't bother me so much now--after almost two years! But its sad, all the same . . . [J.G.'s ellipses].

On 15 November 1969, two days before he wrote his depressive "Note for 'Memoirs of Montparnasse'" he wrote to Kay Boyle that he was busy correcting the proofs of the Memoirs, then described Elma's condition in terms that are redolent of painful resignation, faint hope, and tenderness for his wife and his friend:

All goes well with me now, and Elma is back on the long, slow road to recovery. The t.b. has been cured, the paranoia only recurs in fits and starts and she now weighs 69 lbs.

. . . . The last two years seem like a long nightmare--I wonder, Kay, did you pray for her just a little.

She, who has always perfect recall, tells me that the experience of dying is very pleasant: it seemed to her to comprise and prefigure an eternity of beautiful dreams--all light, greenery, bird song and repose--perceived with a great but tranquil intensity. This is good news indeed. I only hope it is the same for everyone else!

An exhausted Buffy shared his final thoughts of Elma with Kay Boyle in a letter dated 14 January 1972, when he spoke of Elma's death on 2 December 1971:

My poor darling went off quietly, peacefully and painlessly at last, in the same nice hospital where she had been a few years ago. She had not recognized me for at least a month before the end.--My God, schizophrenia is a terrible thing: she weighed 62 lbs., and looked 90 years old. And she was only 53. I suppose it was all for the best, but I'm still rather numbed. I loved her so much. I scattered her ashes in the little brook running through my farm here, at the place where she used to sit in summer and look at the minnows and forget-me-nots. I had to break a hole in the ice.

II

Yet, as he so often did after the recurrent crises in his life, Glassco gathered his resources, put aside his personal sorrows and his fears for the future and returned to the scorned manuscripts. Between the sixth and the thirtieth of September 1969 he wrote some four

pages of the first and second draft of a document, "AUTHOR'S PREFACE," meant to precede the Memoirs. This holograph, on yellow newsprint, is a discursive, rambling work. There is the criticism of Canada in the 1920s, a portrait rather differing from his fond memories of Montreal expressed in the McGill Journal:

In Canada, no less than in the United States, the cult of money & success, with its two dreary faces of Mammon & Moloch, was supreme. The career of poet, artist or writer was regarded as a disgraceful form of escape, at best a kind of laziness, at worst an indication that one was either Communist or homosexual, but in any case as an aspiration both pathetic and absurd: in a word people were rather sorry for him. (PAC Vol. 2)

William Toye, in whose talents as editor Glassco had justified faith, rejected this musing. Glassco was really expressing worn ideas voiced earlier, and better, by such as Leo Kennedy who, in 1928, wrote in "The Future of Canadian Literature" that the:

least attractive aspects of Victorianism still hold licensed Canadian writers firmly by the gullet [The Canadian Authors Association] that pillar of flim-flam, is a stumbling block over which the aspiring younger Canadian writer must first climb before approaching his local Parnassus. (99-100)

In Glassco's second draft of the "Preface" he wrote, freshly and movingly, of himself as a young man:

What did he mean to do with his life? He wanted to write poetry and had not the ability; he wanted to love, and could hold no woman; he wanted, perhaps more than anything to amuse people--or at least, as he says, not to be a literary bore. (PAC Vol. 2)

Naturally, Toye edited out this paragraph too. It was too sentimental and exaggerated for publication; Glassco wrote to Toye on 14 October 1969: "I am grateful to you--I can't say how much--for having cut down and restructured my original rambling and complacent effort" (PAC Vol 2).

He did indeed set out to amuse his reader in the Memoirs and who could deny his success?, While seeing through Glassco's naughty tricks, Louis Dudek greeted the Memoirs' appearance with unequivocal affirmation in the favourable review published in The [Montreal] Gazette on 7 February 1970:

John Glassco's Memoirs of Montparnasse strikes me as the best book of prose by a Canadian that I have ever read. I simply devoured the book. It's extraordinary, delightful, thoroughly enlightened. The pleasure comes, I think, from reading someone who is an accomplished literary stylist, a man of strong personal taste, a devotee of literature.

Dudek was not, however, fooled; he continued:

I fear, also, that to recognize this book for what it is is to betray Glassco's little game. For a little while, I've been worrying whether I should reveal what I know, or suspect. But the Gazette on Saturday is read by a small elite, the happy few, so I don't

think it will spoil much if we whisper a few secrets.

Dudek's respect for Glassco's achievement was obviously generous and sincere; yet, he did not equivocate: "In the Memoirs of Montparnasse we see how he [Glassco] can write in 1970, at the age of sixty."

One of the most interesting and insightful reviews of the Memoirs was written by a then young undergraduate, Jack Kapica, who published his article, "Memoires [sic] of Montparnasse" in "The Supplement" to the McGill Daily of 13 November 1970. Kapica described the Memoirs as "what may be considered the best novel written in Canada in many years."

"Memoirs" is an odd work. The old razzle-dazzle of the Paris-in-the-twenties euphoria is impaled on Glassco's pen and hovers between a true fictional novel and genuine memoirs. It is anachronistic; debauched, fin-de-siècle art nouveau. It combines the judicious mendacity of Frank Harris, the wit of Leacock, the hedonism of Beardsley and the architectural carefulness of Flaubert. And yet it seems as if it were written yesterday.

Glassco adamantly insists that he wrote the memoirs in 1932-33, in the Royal Victoria Hospital where he was waging a fight for his life against tuberculosis. As he would have you believe, the memoirs sat on a shelf for thirty-five years before he even looked at them again.

The first chapter of the book was printed in the Parisian magazine "This Quarter" in 1929, and a quick trip to the library and a comparison of the original with the one in the book easily disproves his assertion that he had "changed very little of the original". Moreover, some of the judgements that he passes on characters that

flit in and out of his prose smack of time-cured criticism. It is in a consideration such as this when one is tempted to believe him in his insistence that he is an inveterate liar.

But who cares? (3)

All the same, most critics accepted Glassco's word that the Memoirs were an artifact unearthed from the past. His story about their origins varied from time to time, but this inconsistency seemed to have passed unnoticed. When, for example, Marion McCormick went to interview him at his Montreal flat in the spring of 1970, he was nonplussed by her comment that the Memoirs had "an eerily contemporary sound." In response to her question as to why he had not published the Memoirs years before, Glassco replied that the publication was Elma's idea, she having come across the manuscript during the process of their moving house (an event that took place during January or February 1966, some two years after the writing of the book). He continued:

So I took it and made a very few revisions, it was quite a problem about revisions, there were many things I wanted to cut out . . . I did revise the first chapter almost entirely, the first chapter was very weak The second and third chapters were written when I was nineteen and surprisingly enough, they're a lot better.⁵

⁵"Books and Writers," an Interview with John Glassco by Marion McCormick, CBC Radio Montreal, 30 June 1970. This programme, on tape, is part of the

While Malcolm Cowley accepted Glassco's dating of the Memoirs manuscript, it is useful to remind oneself that his review of the book in The New Republic recorded crucial observations:

But Glassco's book, published from a manuscript nearly forty years old, is fresher and truer to the moment than the others, as well as being more novelistic and, in a sense, legendary. ['the others' refers to "a whole genre of books, by Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Henry Miller, Kay Boyle and fourteen more authors, at a hasty count, all more or less acquainted with each other and all except Miller given to dropping the same names."]

The others--again with an exception for Tropic of Cancer--were written long after the events they colored with various shades of repentance, resentment, and nostalgia. Glassco was writing on the very scene, then soon after leaving it, so that events baldly happen instead of being reconstructed He [J.G.] becomes such another exemplum as Scott Fitzgerald, but with an important distinction. Fitzgerald made his experience seem representative by regarding himself as a figure of history. Glassco regards himself as a figure in literature or legend
(27)

Glassco did, as has been maintained here, make his persona and his life a legend of chic and style. The Memoirs' light tone, their fizz and bubble, were the work of a stylist of perfection. But the Memoirs reflected an understanding of memory and of experience

Marion McCormick Collection, Sound Archives, Public Archives of Canada. Restricted. Used with Miss McCormick's kind permission.

that goes beyond recall into the psychological depth of authentic "flashback." In a letter to Al Purdy dated 16 November 1964, Glassco had recounted how he had read and admired Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle; he had been most deeply impressed by the perception of man's pronounced fondness for dwelling on vivid experience. Whether the experience be joyful or painful, "it [the psyche] wants to go back and that's all" (PAC Vol. 1). Now, this propensity for full recall is typical of the sexually abused. They have suffered so acutely it is as if the memory were burnt into their minds; the memory of childhood suffering and degradation is not merely "remembered" it is "lived." It should be stressed that this "flashback" is not fully comprehended by the greater number of us; yet our lack of similar cognition should not cause us to question the profundity of such experience in those so afflicted. This memory is not, moreover, the memory of dates and times; it is the actual and sensory apprehension of times past.

It would appear that Glassco's ability to remember--in the special sense of experiencing these particular "flashbacks"--while a source of intense pain was also a fountain of compelling remembrance of things past. It is, one maintains, this cursed gift that gave the Memoirs their sense of immediacy, of freshness.

Certainly Glassco cultivated, as the McGill Journal has shown, a conscious memory of the early Parisian years. It was, however, that extraordinary, that "blessed" curse that granted Glassco the power to experience again those Parisian days and nights, when he sat down to write the Memoirs.

Glassco was aware of the association in his own mind between the creation of the Memoirs and the memory of his father's harshness. In other words, the composition of Memoirs of Montparnasse was linked inextricably to memory, to "flashback": memory came to him in a flood, good and bad; courageously he withstood the evil and made the good the dainty art of his Memoirs.

Now that I'm writing the Memoirs I'm writing about four-hundred or five-hundred words a night . . . but I don't regard the Memoirs as a serious work . . . it's beamed at a popular audience . . . the 'best-seller' . . . to write something that the world will approve . . . will take to its heart . . . what's more it's old daddy-o . . . the old father image still striking at me from beyond the grave. I still have nightmares about my father . . . he's still beating me, he's still whacking away. It's awful really. Only last night I had a dream he was trying to strangle me . . . arms around my neck in true perfect love . . . he was trying to strangle me. I woke up sweating and crying out for Elma. (Glassco-Gnarowski Interview)

What this passage shows is that John Glassco, pursued by demons of memory, yet managed to transform the past

so full of ghosts and horrors into work of wit and grace. While it was primarily the poetry, and correctly so, that Glassco considered his most important work, the Memoirs derive from that same personality, that same gifted mind that longed to see the ideal world of Shelley: one governed by love, purity, decency; a world of getting along together in harmony.

Both the poetry and the Memoirs are nevertheless the work of that aesthete, that dandy of the immaculate breeches and smart hacking jacket: "Brummell has always been a hero of mine" Glassco maintained. He admired the idea of the man who has "done nothing and yet will never die"; "like Byron," he said (Glassco-Gnarowski Interview). Or in the words of that "predatory bird," Mrs. Quayle:⁶

"Oh what can ail thee, man-at-arms?" she whispered. "Alone and palelee loitering? You have acquired a beautiful tan, as well as a most Birrhonic melancholy since we last met" (Memoirs 177)

In spite of the frequent agonies of his existence Glassco not only created his art, he challenged his existence. As he wrote in the Memoirs:

⁶In Beryl Rowland's study, Birds With Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolism, she writes of the quail that "among moralists the bird was condemned for eroticism . . . for its salacity . . . the bird was not only lascivious but exemplified envy" (143).

In any degrading situation one must refuse to admit the degradation: one is never more ridiculous than one feels. . . . man is not only a living creature but the person of his own creation (187-188).

One needs little persuading to see Glassco's own assertion of character in the preceding words. He did indeed create, perhaps with greater urgency and effort than most, a graceful persona, an ironic manner, to shield that tormented child who lived on in his dreams in the grip of violence and perversity.⁷

Lest one give the impression that Glassco appeared only as the tormented soul to his friends, one must balance the understanding of his pain with an appreciation of his sense of fun, of his sophistication, and of his amiable manner. He was the handsome young man who sat "in a comfortable cellar all night long over

⁷The degradation that Glassco suffered as a child must have contributed to the formation of his own sexual desires, most obviously and particularly his inclination towards masochism and his fascination for the allure of that fatal woman typified in the belle dame sans merci, Mrs. Quayle. With her, so aptly named, he found in the embrace of love that which kills, the pain that gives life. It was such a paradox that propelled the Memoirs, that propelled Glassco into the arms of "this little divorcée from Boston [who] smells like an Asiatic bazaar" (Memoirs 183). He found in this "foolish, affected, neurotic" woman (Memoirs 183), "the first pure love I've ever felt for a woman" (180). The child Buffy had learnt at one blow the mysteries of death, love, and sex. The mature man not only endured that untimely knowledge, but made of it his art: "Absolute power and absolute submission / Locked in each other's loving arms" ("The Crows").

excellent gin fizzes, listening or dancing to the music of accordions before staggering out into the smoky violet dawns" (Memoirs 38). He was the mature man, who in serious correspondence with fellow poet Al Purdy, could laugh at his fondness for decay, for the paradox of life in death: "You're right about this attraction for decay going too far. One could end up all misty-eyed fondling a farmer's old rubber boot . . . " (18 September 1964, PAC Vol. 1).

The many who knew John Glassco well, among them his widow Marion McCormick; his late sister-in-law, Mrs. Cecilie Glassco; his niece, Mrs. D.M. Cumming; his editor, Mr. William Towe; his fellow poets such as Eli Mandel, Irving Layton, Louis Dudek, and Ralph Gustafson; all these persons and more have spoken to me of Buffy's talent, charm, gentleness and kindness. All remembered Glassco as both a beautiful writer and a lovable man.

This beloved man with the subtle wit created in the Memoirs a work of ambiguity. It obviously amused him to "disguise" his characters and to indulge in what Michael Holroyd in his masterful biography of Lytton Strachey has called "extravaganzas"--that is to say to indulge in a certain heightening of narrative that goes beyond the "normal" limits of autobiography. Luckily for us, Glassco left among his papers an annotated

author's copy of the Memoirs. As all readers of the Memoirs are aware, a number of famous personages did appear "as themselves" as it were. Others, such as Alice Prin, were called by their familiar names, "Kiki" for example. Some were openly mocked, such as the unfortunate Colonel Wilfrid Bovey of McGill who appeared under the name "Birdlime." Some were named, it would appear, simply because Glassco liked and admired them: Raymond Knister, Arthur Smith, Frank Scott, Leo Kennedy, Paul Morin, Robert Choquette, Emile Nelligan. Some characters were disguised for obvious reasons, others for no apparent reason other than perhaps for the sheer fun of mischief, of the dandyish love of the elaborate hoax. Why, for example, did Glassco disguise Hugo Scantena, "a romantic painter and a Christian Socialist from California" as "Hugo Quattrone" (15)? Why was Rupert Fordham made to appear as "Rupert Castle" (20)?

Perhaps, like George Moore, Glassco enjoyed the play and pleasure of creation within the genre of autobiography. How curious, one feels, that Glassco presented Graeme as looking "a poor figure . . . in his long green frieze overcoat and black hat" (Memoirs 7); Moore had portrayed the "mirror image of Edwin Doyne" as "a young man in a long green coat" in his Confessions (Dick 10); Dick explains that this work of

Moore's, "Parnell and His Island anticipates Confessions in a number of ways" (10).

Glassco seemed to take pleasure in the mysterious, in creating a delightful labyrinth of proper names, pseudonyms, names of books and places, serving not only to amuse, but more significant, to provide a pattern of artistic unity. To take an example: the characters of "Angela Martin" and "Daphne Berners" are identified in Glassco's annotated copy of the Memoirs as "Grette Ledoux" and "Gwen Lafallienne." These two women were lesbians; when "Buffy" spent a night a trois at their studio he played Gluck's Echo and Narcissus on the gramophone (25): male and female; female and female and so around it goes, reflection, inversion and counter-reflection. This jolly trio was indeed the Pagan Love Song of decadence (25).

Jean Cocteau, to mention another figure from the Memoirs with whom Glassco had an affair (Autobiographical Sketch), had "inherited the various dandyisms of 19th century French art, and concentrated, purified, intensified them in his own person. He sometimes signed himself Narcisse" (Green 25). This was the same Cocteau who, with Lucien Daudet and Maurice Rostand, "were the three early promoters of Proust's reputation" (Green 27). Glassco, as has been pointed out, was greatly motivated by reading Proust

and described his own meeting with Daudet in the Memoirs.

Glassco's Gwen Lafallienne is probably Gwen Le Gallienne (Memoirs 158) whom he identified as the step-daughter of Richard Le Gallienne.⁸ Gwen was actually not the step-daughter of Richard but his sister-in-law (sister to his wife Eva).⁹ Le Gallienne began as a failed accountant in Liverpool, and later went on to write the first book-length study of George Meredith, Meredith: Some Characteristics (1890), as well as The Romantic Nineties--published in 1926, the year of Glassco's first trip to Paris.

In another connection, Le Gallienne wrote enthusiastically about George Moore. In the most complete biography of Moore, Jean C. Noël's, George Moore: L'homme et l'oeuvre (1852-1933), it is noted that Le Gallienne had referred to Moore in Vanity Fair as "the best living writer of prose" (c. 1924). Noël

⁸Richard Le Gallienne, Sisley writes, bought Oscar Wilde's writing table, the one he was said to have used during his days on the Left Bank; Le Gallienne moved this literary relic from the little Hotel d'Alsace where "Sebastian Melmouth" (Oscar Wilde) died, to his "garret studio on the rue Servandoni" (262).

⁹It is interesting to note that shortly before Glassco resumed work on the Memoirs, The [Montreal] Gazette announced "Eva Le Gallienne Begins 35-Week Repertory Tour" (14 September 1963, 16). One wonders if this event might have stimulated Glassco's recollections.

wrote: "En accordant à Moore ce titre au superlatif, Le Gallienne [note spelling] lançait une mode. Après lui, dans le monde des critiques, on prit l'habitude de dire que si Moore survivait ce serait grâce à son style" (534).

It is both interesting and instructive to trace a particular maze of characters, which either appears in the Memoirs or is referred to. One thoroughgoing example may well suffice to illustrate the complexity of the Memoirs. As the figure Moore related to Glassco both directly and through the literary connection to Richard Le Gallienne, so Meredith related to another extraordinary character of the Memoirs, the Dayang Muda of Sarawak, La Princesse and sometime employer of Buffy. She was Gladys M. Palmer, daughter of Sir Walter Palmer of Huntley and Palmer biscuit fame, a "somewhat eccentric person but very interesting" (l. from Madame de Pinto to author, 20 May 1984). Her mother was born Jean, daughter of William Young Craig, M.P., a mine owner and scion of an old Highland family.

Accustomed to an open and hospitable home where her father entertained Charles Stuart Parnell, Disraeli, Darwin and John Stuart Mill, young Jean grew up to become a noted hostess and friend to Oscar Wilde, William Morris, D.G. Rossetti, Swinburne and Meredith. Lord Randolph Churchill said of Lady Palmer that she

was the only woman who could have a pleasant dinner with Ruskin, Wilde and Gladstone at the same table. She was in fact described in her daughter's book, Relations & Complications: Being the Recollections of H.H. The Dayang Muda of Sarawak as "a pioneer of the more artistic social life of the nineties" (26).

Meredith admired Lady Palmer extravagantly, addressing her as "Sweet Queen Jean" or as "Sweetest and Dearest of the Power of Earth" (Brooke 51 and 52). She had read all his work, much of it in manuscript; seated in a basket chair on the terrace "he would read his manuscript to her until tea-time, in a voice that was as profound and stirring as organ music" (Brooke 23). In return for these confidences, Lady Palmer assisted Meredith in uncovering the food allergies that caused him digestive distress. Sir Walter, naturally always keen on biscuits, assisted by "composing a biscuit which was free from starch and malt, and which he called the 'Breakfast Biscuit'". He invented this especially for George Meredith and it became known as Meredith's biscuit. Meredith was delighted " (Brooke 24); obviously a most convenient marriage of art and trade. There were, nevertheless, times when Meredith's enthusiasm for the Lady Palmer seemed rather to get the better of him, as when he, at the age of

sixty-four, and affecting a doddering innocence addressed his beloved:

Beloved Queen Jean! Kneecap, Bent brow,
Hearthrob salute you! Toad-belly transforms
to arrow-head at the thought of you!
(Williams 191)

As much as the child Gladys respected the squinting Meredith, loved the kindly "Uncle Oscar," admired the figure of Ruskin pacing in the garden with Lady Palmer as he quoted descriptive passages from the Stones of Venice (Brooke 8), it was a younger visitor to her parents' house who captured her attention: Lucien Daudet. Sir Walter and Lady Palmer had dined with Daudet's parents, Madame and Monsieur Alphonse Daudet, in Paris. Lucien, following the practice, or so it would seem, of all men of taste was at once enchanted by "Queen Jean." Once circumstances permitted, Lucien visited the Palmers at Ascot and later at their new house at Sunninghill, called rather regrettably "Frognaal." Gladys remembered Lucien with enthusiasm as a tall slender young man with dark hair and eyes, and with a manner particularly marked by the "social grace and culture which a traditional French education gives a man" (Brooke 34). Not only blessed by Gallic charm, but the young fellow could dance exquisitely and draw charmingly. Naturally, Gladys admitted that "I fell in love with Lucien Daudet, the

first time I saw him" (Brooke 34). Lucien eventually sought to marry Gladys but her parents refused permission, preferring her to marry a man nearer her in age and especially in nationality. It was some twenty years after Daudet's rejected proposal that the couple met again: he wrote to Gladys in Paris "il me semble que c'est hier." They were able to take up their friendship, and indeed Gladys, or more properly The Dayang Muda, was able as well to meet Lucien's mother. "Madame Alphonse Daudet invited me to her afternoon salon, and one November afternoon I sped across Paris to pay homage to Lucien Daudet's mother at her apartment in the rue Bellechasse" (Brooke 239). The Dayang Muda, too nervous to eat, watched Madame Daudet nibble at chocolate cake, and admired the portrait painted of Madame by Renoir.

As Glassco related, ultimately The Dayang, or Princesse de Sarawak as she preferred, did become a Roman Catholic, received into that Church by a Father MacDarby, Rector of St. Joseph's, Avenue Hoch, Paris (Brooke 246). Eventually Gladys Palmer was to surpass even herself by becoming a Muslim. Glassco set out his version of these religious conversions, as well as his general impression of the household of the Dayang, and their sharing in the preparation of that lady's

memoirs, in a letter he wrote to Kay Boyle on 28 November 1967:

I'm sorry, I can't for the life of me recall any other imaginary quotes we put into Relations and Complications. All I remember of this book is the tragic photograph of old Ruskin (broke and doting) wearing the fur mittens 'Daddy' Palmer gave him . . . Had you thought of picking out something good from R. and C. and labelling it spurious? But perhaps you haven't a copy, after all this time.

I had forgotten much of what happened on the rue Louis David. Most of my memories of the Dayang Muda date from a little later when she was in a much larger apartment on boulevard Beauséjour and under the influence of a revolting Russian confidence-man called Paltov.¹⁰ When she was trying to sell the genuine seamless shirt of Mohammed and subsidising a news-letter called Informations Musulmanes with P. as well salaried editor . . . Did she never undo that long cardboard box for you, unwrap a rather greasy kind of shorty nightgown from its tissue-paper, and announce, "The Shirt of the Prophet!" Paltov had supplied the shirt of course. Thank Heaven she threw him off eventually, just before she turned Roman Catholic with Mme Alphonse Daudet as her godmother; this was after her conversion to Mohammedanism which took place in an aeroplane looping over Paris. What a dear old soul she was! (PAC Vol. 12)

It was in the Dayang's Paris household that Glassco assisted Kay Boyle in the writing of Relations

¹⁰Paltov was a Russian emigré, Michael de Paltov, something of an artist, who brought many friends, including Prince Yousopoff, to the Princesse's apartment. Later Paltov was to travel to India with the Princesse on an artistic enterprise.

and Complications. One suspects his role in this enterprise was secondary; there is no mention of a "John Glassco" in the book; whereas Kay Boyle is fulsomely described as "twenty-three; arrogant, self-contained, but with the indescribable Irish charm that is so hauntingly reflected in her work" (206). Similarly, Boyle's lover Ernest Walsh, co-editor of This Quarter with the admirable Ethel Moorhead, Glassco's first European publisher, is described as being an "amazing person," of "brilliant personality" whose "conversation held us spellbound" (204). Miss Moorhead:

had been a prominent figure in the Militant Suffrage movement in England, and was one of the first women to go on a hunger-strike and to be forcibly fed. I admired her courage and her directness; in social encounters, she held her own royally, and refused stoutly to be bullied into changing her opinion. Her contempt for young people who attempted to be 'literary' was as strong as her admiration for an honest artist, whenever or however she might meet him. I was astonished to think that anyone who lived as intensely as Ethel Moorhead could yet keep herself aloof from all intimate contact. Her life was one of uncompromising honesty, but she was shy and reserved with those she knew little. One day I lent her Frank Harris's "My Life and Loves" to read. Half an hour later, when I came into the room, she looked me severely in the eyes and asked if I possessed a dictionary, or if I could tell her what the word 'orgasm' meant. (207-208)

In turn This Quarter is modestly referred to as "undoubtedly the greatest Quarterly the arts has ever

printed" (204). The narrator goes on to assert that "The magnificence of its form impressed those not in sympathy with the modern spirit. The editorial by Ernest Walsh, his poetry, and his vigorous prose radiated belief and vitality; and the young artists of the world realized that at last a prophet worthy of their faith had come to them" (205).¹¹ Thus Walsh is portrayed as marginally more significant to the world of letters than was Proust, who while doubtless brilliant, had been unwise enough, on meeting "Queen Jean" at the house of Monsieur and Madame Daudet, to take the lady aside and to pour out to her his theories on the "psychology of sex-perverts." Lady Palmer's reaction was rather what one might have expected from an enthusiastic admirer of George Meredith: "Mother sat rather glum on the sofa" (Brooke 32). Luckily that evening had been saved by Proust's companion, the Comte Robert de Montesquiou, who gallantly kept his sexual predilections to himself and had "taken the violets from his own buttonhole and pinned them on her lace shawl" (32). The Comte offered further comfort and amusement in his admiring of Queen Jean's little white

¹¹To be fair to Walsh, he does appear to have been admired widely. Sisley writes that This Quarter "has printed many poems by Ernest Walsh. Walsh had real gifts, and his early death was deeply regretted by a wide circle of admirers and friends" (104).

hand and in his sending her the very next day a basket of similarly coloured violets; the verse he attached read:

Deux bluets, deux roses, deux lys,
Ce sont vos yeux, ce sont vos lèvres,
Ce sont vos mains. (34)

Proust's meeting with Lady Palmer was not altogether unsuccessful however:

But mother felt a sympathy, if not a commiseration for Marcel Proust, as, subconsciously, the train of his dissertation indicated that he felt that his contemporaries were unappreciative and unsympathetic to the subject with which he was innovating literature. His dissertation was rather a defence than a mere exposition of his views: somehow subconsciously he seemed to ask the question, "n'est-ce pas j'ai raison?" He was very interested in the personal life of Oscar Wilde and overwhelmed mother with questions about his personal habits and personal appearance, and was particularly anxious to know whether Oscar Wilde's courage failed him in the great legal battle with the traditional Philistines. He had the idea that Oscar Wilde was fighting all that was stupid and that the codes which condemned him was [sic] as much an anachronism as the law for burning witches in the Middle Ages. But he was consoled and smiled delightfully when mother described to him the courage with which Oscar Wilde faced the malice of his accusers.

'What harm did he do them? He gave them beauty, wit, and a renaissance of the stage, and an intimacy with the culture of Athens--and yet they wanted to kill him. They put the old mildewed codes before the great spiritual beauties which he gave them'. (33)

Whether Lady Palmer ever met the poet and critic Le Gallienne is uncertain. He and his wife took luncheon at Meredith's Flint Cottage at Box Hill on 1 May 1892 (Cline, II, 1081):

Mr. and Mrs. le [sic] Gallienne were there . . . he young and handsome, she 'a boneless heap of green liberty stuff and smocking.'

. . . .

The persistent Le Gallienne kept butting in. He wanted permission to take away a manuscript of Meredith's. And then, quite suddenly in the middle of lunch, the Le Galliennes scooted for the train. (Williams 187)

While one cannot be certain of the manuscript Le Gallienne hoped to get hold of, it might have been Lord Ormont and his Aminta --the book that Buffy was tempted to steal from the Dayang in partial payment for his typing of her memoirs (Memoirs 205). It was, perhaps more probably, a poetry manuscript that would emerge as the happily-named The Empty Purse published in December 1892. Recalling the difficulty young Glassco had in securing payment for his services to la Princesse and to Le Gallienne the title of the latter work seems a pleasing coincidence.

As Le Gallienne connects to Moore and to Meredith, and in the Memoirs, to Glassco and to the Princesse, so through her Buffy encounters the Proustian Lucien Daudet and Bosie, Alfred Lord Douglas, lover of Oscar

Wilde (bosom friend of Lady Palmer), and briefly, lover of John Glassco. Daudet was, moreover, friend to Cocteau, who was yet another brief love in Glassco's life in Paris. Lucien Daudet's mother was "the pretty little Irene of Sappho" (Memoirs 198); Sappho was the pet name of the lover and companion of Glassco and of Graeme Taylor during their years in the White Mansion, Windermere, at Knowlton when they were known to the local folk as the "Dirty Hermits" (Dobbs 52).

The purpose of this diversion is to point out two things: that the web of character in the Memoirs is complex yet neatly integrated, and to establish the social milieu in which Glassco moved while in Paris. No one disputes that there are fictional elements in the Memoirs, but the bulk of the book is based on actual occurrences. Rhoda de Pinto, the Dayang Muda's companion in Paris from 1929 to 1932, remembers young Buffy Glassco well as they shared life in the Parisian apartment that was, in de Pinto's words "like a mad-house." de Pinto recalled Glassco's coming, "like a down-and-out student without any money" to the "great big duplex apartment on the top floor on the boulevard Beauséjour . . . the lap of luxury" where one was "waited on hand and foot." Mme. de Pinto remembered her meeting with the shy and rather diffident Buffy:

That was how I met Buffy. He was just one of a lot of young students and people who used to sponge off her and come there. I know he did. But I singled him out in my mind's eye, unconsciously, even then. I singled him out because he was different from the usual run of students and sponges who went to the place; and I used to think what a nice young man he was. He was a refined young man; he was educated; he was well-spoken, he was interesting when you could get him to talk and I never could somehow, not really; he was always sort of "shut-up" inside himself, you know He was not like the rest of them.

He moved slowly, like in a dream really; he was slow-moving, nervous, shy and charming. He gave one an impression of being nervous; he seemed shy with everyone, but in a very charming sort of way. He was very quiet, very retiring, kept in the background somehow.¹²

Young Buffy Glassco, "shy and charming," was a participant in most incidents described in the Memoirs; it is also true that he fictionalized occurrences when it suited his artistic purpose. As he wrote to Boyle on 2 December 1968 about the manuscript of the Memoirs:

(The events of the whole book have been rearranged, telescoped, and speeded up and dramatized in the same way.) You see, we have long invented dialogues, do things we never did, go places we never went, etc. It's really fiction: I was trying to re-create the atmosphere and spirit of the Paris

¹²All quotations from Rhoda de Pinto are taken verbatim from my interview with her in London, England, on 17 June 1986.

of those days as it was for me. The way George Moore and Casanova did for the world of their youth. (PAC Vol. 12)

Whatever the exact details, Glassco's experiences with La Princesse and her household are essentially accurate, not to mention fully evocative of the atmosphere of the boulevard Beauséjour apartment, and one thing is certain: "She (the Princess) gave the impression of being practically illiterate. She couldn't have written a book like that, like Relations and Complications" (Rhoda de Pinto, 17 June 1986). Boyle and Glassco collaborated on the manuscript; their correspondence during the 1960s, when Boyle was writing her version of Being Geniuses Together and Glassco his Memoirs of Montparnasse, reveals their attempts to recall and reconstruct the details of Paris in the nineteen-twenties.

On 4 September 1967 Boyle wrote to Glassco:

Did I ask you in a previous letter if you mind my referring to your slipping phonograph records of the Dayang Muda's into your jacket at the end of a day's typing? It's such a funny scene that I'd hate to have to take it out. (PAC Vol. 12)

Glassco replied on 12 September:

I don't remember pinching phonograph records from the Dayang Muda's--though it's quite likely I did. But use the scene as long as it's quite clear I was taking them in payment for typing, in default of cash (you remember

there was never more than 10 francs in the apartment in the Boulevard Beauséjour!), and not simply stealing.--Would you mind sending me a carbon of the scene--very much? I remember Morley Callaghan's condescending and fairly malicious fantasies of Graeme and myself in that super-fantasy That Summer in Paris (or, Every Man his own Hero; what a little twerp C. is!) and since then I'm a little sensitive (PAC Vol. 12)

And so the two old friends wrote their memories of Paris, sometimes tried to settle "old scores," strived to piece together the events of thirty years past when they were young, glamorous and full of promise. It must have been a comfort and a pleasure both for Boyle and for Glassco to share again their friendship and their youth in remembering this extraordinary incident, and the remarkable Princesse, who had figured in the romance of Paris, and too the remembrance of who Buffy Glassco was in 1929, as described by Rhoda de Pinto, in a letter she wrote to him in 1976: "I remember you as a charming and quite handsome young man who was very, very shy and self-conscious who (unlike many others I met there) had the perfect manners of an Englishman" (PAC Vol. 14).

Shy and quiet perhaps, but there nevertheless, the Paris of the nineteen-twenties belonged to Glassco too: he gave it to us to share in 1970, still as fresh and delightful as it had been when he was that perfectly-mannered boy at 51 boulevard Beauséjour.

III

The Memoirs are a formally perfect expression of legendary times, and of a legendary figure of Canadian literature, Buffy Glassco. Memoirs is his book; the narrative belongs to him; it is his autobiography. These are real memoirs, but they are the memoirs of the legend, of the narrative voice. Only coincidentally and erratically are these the Memoirs of John Glassco. They are the Memoirs of Montparnasse, a legendary place; the Memoirs of Paris in the 1920s, a legendary place; and of Buffy, a legendary person, the "Echo" of John Glassco.

Glassco wove the tapestry of the Memoirs; he wove the literary, personal, and geographical references into a piece of prose that carries the book far beyond its pleasing surface into Buffy's mind and heart. Glassco admired de Sade. He owned a rather substantial collection of the works of de Sade; sado-masochist literature held him in its sway his life long. The fatal woman; the arms that lock round in love and death; the paradox of good evolving from evil--these obsessions haunt the Memoirs. Yet all the while the book snaps with wit and pace; the dandy puts words in McAlmon's mouth that thumb their nose, as it were, at the world: "The triumph of the fake, the old come-on, the swindle--it's marvellous, it's just like life"

(Memoirs 57). Buffy dwelt in "sinister street" (Memoirs 53) but he was as well an orchid of divine decadence: "A petal, a feather, a regular pussycat on his footsies" (Memoirs 53). He was the dandy sipping absinthe, the drink of Oscar Wilde, "La sorcière glauque, I thought, savouring the ninetyish phrase" (Memoirs 69), whilst spinning tales of the poet "Lenz."¹³ 2

Perhaps the most suggestive literary reference in the Memoirs, presented humorously but of profound significance to the biographical context of the work,

¹³While the Boyle-Glassco correspondence leaves no doubt that Glassco went to Luxembourg with Bob McAlmon, there is little to encourage the researcher to believe that any such poet as "Lenz" actually existed. It is perhaps another instance of Glassco's sometimes fanciful play with fact; possibly "Lenz" is used metaphorically here, the word having in German a poetic sense of "spring" or "time off." Such a meaning is nicely suggestive of the idyllic atmosphere ascribed by the narrator to the holiday. When gathered in the Lenzplatz to honour the epic poet, literary conversation is interrupted by trays of delicacies: "The pie was followed by a roast of veal with browned potatoes, the veal by chicken croquettes, and these by thin sugared pancakes filled with blackberry jam, while the hock was succeeded by a rosé and then by local champagne" (Memoirs 76). Sitting in the warm sun, lulled by the voice of Madame Lenz-Bessermann, the poet's grand-daughter, reading the Spenserian Stanzas, it is little wonder that soon "Everyone seemed entranced: there was a mindless ecstasy on all faces, flushed with food and wine and sunlight" (77). "Spring" and "time off" indeed! They depart when McAlmon's work is done ("a great relief to hear Bob announce he had finished Being Geniuses Together"); and when the weather changes ("We left the country in a pouring rain") (78). Spring is over.

is that of Hamlet (75-76). An anonymous man is made to rail foolishly at Shakespeare's sacrifice of historic accuracy for the sake of drama. Is this "square-faced man in a blue suit" suggestive of the figure of Archie Glassco, the despised father? He had such a face; he looked rather like Mussolini, a man with a great square jaw. (Personal interview with Cecilie Glassco). This man is the reminder of the threatening presence of Archie Glassco.

John Glassco never escaped his father or the patricidal fantasy that haunted him throughout the 1940s and at least into the 1960s. His nightmares made vivid the horror of death at his own father's hand. During the attacks of panic anxiety that Glassco frequently suffered in his waking hours, he was terrified by homicidal fantasies. He had, he confessed in pain and sorrow in his Journal, always wanted to kill his father. All this, one stresses, was the fantasy of an agonized spirit. While he suffered abominably at his father's hands, John Glassco was the gentlest of men, with children, horses, his pet farm animals, with everyone. As a young man in Paris, he pursued the femme fatale to Majorca, the island being the symbolic place of possible refuge, where he encountered not freedom and bliss, but jealousy and romantic agony; ultimately, in 1931, he succumbed to

near-fatal tuberculosis. The monster, his father, he boxes everywhere in his mind. The guilt and shame he suffered, which rightfully belonged to his abusive parent, festered in him, leading him on to seek the "purification" of self-punishment that is artistically transformed in his pornography. This "rite" is referred to in the Memoirs, but introduced with the greatest delicacy: "Daphne" presents Glassco with a chain-bracelet, "Someone to make you toe the mark" (Memoirs 156). Caridad is portrayed almost as the madonna; she warns Glassco of the fatal consequences of pursuing Mrs. Quayle; she warns of his psychological weaknesses: "you wish to adore your passive self, at the same time as you wish to be rejected by it." She advises him against this affair with Mrs. Quayle by calling upon his self-knowledge: "You should realize it is not this American woman you love--it is her image, which is in turn only an imaginative projection or radiation of your own other self" (Memoirs 184). Yet as his mind understood her words--for indeed the very words are those of the narrator/author--his heart, his psyche, his pent-up need to seek the decadence of punishment, of self-immolation, drove him on to seek the "punishment" he believed he deserved for the "crime" of having been the innocent victim on which his mighty father acted out his lust and hatred. It is,

therefore, in the acting out of the cycle of pleasure and punishment that the character Buffy and the author Glassco become one. The legendary and the corporal are blended, grasped in the "murderous" embrace.

His father, Glassco said, wanted a boy good with a bat and ball, "the ideal English boy." Glassco added, wistfully, that he was good at hockey, cricket, and swimming as a child; it never made any difference. Glassco wrote of this man, in the tragic "A Point of Sky," composed in hospital in 1961 when he was again near death with tuberculosis. This "demon" spoken of was, Glassco told Michael Gnarowski, the figure of his father (Interview Summer 1964):

Who is to say there was never time nor occasion?
Only the demon who stands behind the shoulder,
The dark one, the unanswerable,
Who knows best, who is always right,
The master of salutary denials.

"A Point of Sky"

The harsh, hectoring tone of the McGill Journal, where Glassco has kind words for everyone but himself; the insomnia, the drinking bouts, the cycles of depression; these were voices of the demon-father who taught his son to despise his self and to seek instead some "image," some "Echo" that would at last satisfy the tyrant. John Glassco fought for as long as he could; weakened by tuberculosis in the 1930s, he found

refuge, at least physical refuge, with Graeme. Glassco acknowledged that being with Taylor was, for him, very like being in the presence of the ideal father figure. As late as 1942, when Graeme Taylor was married to Sappho and had been discharged from the army, Glassco wrote of the "feeling of security I have, being with him again--the kind of feeling young children have when they are with their parents" (McGill Journal, 11 August 1942, fol. 85).

Although the relationship with Taylor became painfully difficult--for all his apparent emotional dependence on Graeme, Glassco was the one with the talent, with the considerable inheritance, and indeed with the greater will to work. Glassco was, nevertheless, loyal to the end, nursing Graeme through the agony of his death at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal in 1957, just as he was later to sustain Elma until her body and mind were wasted beyond reclamation in December, 1971. Glassco found peace at last with Marion McCormick who brought Glassco her energy, her friends, and her grandchildren to surround her husband with comfort and with a stimulating family life in his last years. They spent happy winters in the warmth of Mexico, visited Paris together, and lived stylishly in Montreal and at Jamaica Farm at Foster.

She was with him when he suffered his second heart attack and died on 29 January 1981.

Though the legacy of his father's oppression never left Glassco, he had a wife who helped him to bear the nightmares and depressions that dogged him to the end, and to share years of real happiness. David Cobb described them in an article published in The Canadian 21 February 1976: {

He is married again now. His wife is Marion McCormick, a theatre critic and commentator for CBC radio in Montreal whom he met when she came to interview him about his Memoirs. They seem very happy, full of laughter, with a firm appreciation of the things that matter, like bitingly dry martinis, themselves, and the prose of John D. MacDonald. If he has one overriding wish these days, it is that his father were still alive. Archie Glassco, who figured his son to be the fool of the family and did not hesitate to tell him so.

"Yes I wish he were around," says John Glassco. "Just to prove he was wrong."

Glassco had found his "subject"; had written a book of memoirs that were both generally admired and critically praised; and had at last found a companion who was not an image, a fantasy, or a "fatal woman."

Doubtless he had forgotten details in composing the Memoirs--he had no mind for dates and the attempt to put the events into chronological order in the Memoirs is futile; doubtless he exaggerated--that the text suggests and the manuscript, manuscript notes,

and various typed drafts held at the Public Archives confirm; and doubtless there was an impish desire, dandy and aesthete that he was, to lay a dainty trip-wire for those of us who toil at the Canadian literary industry.¹⁴

It was not in libraries, poring over manuscripts that Glassco or Moore found their artistic thrust, but rather in the streets of Paris. In a letter of warning about that very life as an habitué of cafés, T.S. Eliot wrote to Glassco's friend Robert McAlmon; Paris is, Eliot stated, "a strong stimulus, and like most stimulants, incites to rushing about and produces a pleasant illusion of great mental activity rather than

¹⁴Glassco had the last word in the Memoirs: "nothing can be proved about a man until he is dead" (238). Somehow it all seemed so important when I confirmed the dating of the manuscript back in January 1981, but no longer. I recall many of my students, when I taught the Memoirs in 1982-83 were most amused by "Buffy's" antics, picking out the "clues" to the manuscript with which Glassco loaded the Memoirs. I remember one clever young woman who pointed out to the class that Buffy's description of George Moore's appearance sounded very much like a "self-portrait." The greater irony is, of course, that in their later years there was rather a pronounced physical resemblance between these two gentlemen of letters. Particularly striking is the portrait of "George Moore and Lady Cunard" by John Lavery, 1925. This portrait would have been painted about the time Glassco met Moore (c. 1926-28).

Although the two men bore no youthful resemblance whatever, one notes with interest the equivalent drawings of the young artists in Paris: Moore was drawn by Monet as Glassco was drawn by Adolf Dehn. Both young men appear to have expressed the very ideal of the "artist in exile" in the Parisian café.

the solid results of hard work" (Being Geniuses Together 8-9). Perhaps if Buffy had not been so eager to so indulge in "rushing about" the Memoirs might indeed have been completed in the 1920s and early 1930s. The point is that not only did Glassco's headlong rush into hedonism provide the matter for the eventual book, but also that the Memoirs that we now treasure are suggestive of a whole lifetime of thought, action, attitude, joy, and intense suffering.

The Memoirs, although of less artistic significance than the poetry, are the culmination of Glassco's life and work as an artist: they are his last original publication of significance. "I am," he told his friend, the former Preview poet Neufville Shaw, "a one book man" (Personal Interview, Shaw-Whitney 13 October 1984). For all their "extravaganzas," for all his thirst for the "best seller" that would at last prove him "worthy" of his father, in his private writing Glassco never dissembled: he wrote, lest we forget, "for the sake of the work itself, its own existence as a permanent record of some apprehension of truth or beauty, of some essence of despair." When diagnosed as tubercular in 1961, he wrote "the anguish arises now not so much from the blow itself, as from the comparison of the present with the past" (Note-book (odds & ends), March 1961). "Why," he asked

himself, "do I turn away from the recollections of past happiness, as much as from that of sorrow? And why do I seek the actual places where both were felt? Whence the repulsion for one, the attraction of the other?" (Note-book (odds & ends), n.d., early 1962? 19).¹⁵

So Glassco toiled at the Memoirs. On 11 November 1964 he wrote on a postcard to A.J.M. Smith: "MOM is undergoing murderous but salutary revision" (PAC Vol. 14). On 30 March 1965, in a letter to Smith, Glassco proclaimed: "I've finished Memoirs of Montparnasse, and it's now being fair-typed in Knowlton. Shall I send it to you when it's done, so you can see whether you care to relay it to your contact in Scribner's?" (PAC Vol. 14).

¹⁵He took this Note-book with him to Cannes in 1963 on the very trip to France, following his release from hospital, on which he began again to write the Memoirs. It is amusing to see just how frequently Glassco has "raided" this commonplace book to give "speeches" to everyone in the Memoirs from Joyce to Desnos. Lest the dull-minded scholar miss these obvious connections, Glassco has left us a "guide" on the inside of the book's cover: "To use in Memoirs, pp. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8-9, 11, 12, 13, 17"; not to mention a note "To my literary executor" that "These pages were written with a view to eventual posthumous publication." In fact Glassco sent a good deal of this material to Michael Gnarowski some twenty years ago; Gnarowski published several excerpts under the title "Maxims and Moral Reflections," in the little magazine Yes which devoted number fifteen, September 1966, to John Glassco's work.

The Memoirs, after much revision under the editorship of William Toye,¹⁶ appeared in its elegant Oxford University Press first edition launched at the Classic Book Shop on Ste. Catherine Street in Montreal on 28 March 1970. The book that had begun as an "Extract from an Autobiography" in Paris in 1929, and that had successively borne the titles of "The Susceptible Boy," "The Promiscuous Boy," "The Youngest Exile," and "Tender Juvenal" (PAC Vol. 15) finally appeared under the only possible title, the Memoirs of Montparnasse.

Critically, the point is not whether the Memoirs are "true" or are not; the point is whether or not this book is a satisfactory or even a significant contribution to letters. It gracefully integrates and transforms experience, fantasy, description of persons, places and events. Making use of the conventions of the memoir form--everyone it seems from Casanova to George Moore is evoked--Glassco has written a poetic work of prose that satisfies one formally while entertaining one humorously, wittily and often warmly.

¹⁶Toye and Glassco worked over the typescript in a makeshift "office" in the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal (Personal Interview, Toye-Whitney, February, 1983).

The Memoirs encompass memories of all of Glassco's years as a creative writer: the years when he cultivated his poetry and eventually began to publish; the years of translation, perhaps the most elegant translations of French-Canadian literature ever done; the years of his acceptance of his complicated and difficult sexuality; of his development of the erotic novella; and of the Parisian times themselves. Especially they are the Memoirs of the legendary Buffy, the "Echo" of what was, at least in part, of what should have been.

On 4 April 1947 Glassco had written in his Journal:

The past . . . with all its atmospheres of ecstasy, happiness, heartbreak, misery & disgust, clings around every page I have written, on any subject. Well, perhaps I will have to break with that past completely,--or wait until such time as its emotions have become assimilated & even "sublimitable." So time moves on
[JG's ellipsis marks].

It would take fifteen years, the death of Graeme Taylor, the meeting with Elma von Colmar, the second bout with tuberculosis in 1961, the trips back to Paris and the Riviera in 1958, 1959, and 1963, before the assimilation was complete, before he was fully prepared "to impose a narrative form on everything" (Memoirs

4), to make of experience and of re-experience the matter of art.

In the opening pages of the Memoirs the narrator quotes from Keats' Endymion:

Apollo's upward rising fire
Will make each eastern cloud a silvery pyre.

It is in Keats that one finds an eventual reconciliation between reality and imagination. Endymion ends "on the fulfillment of the hero's quest, affirms that divine and human, imagination and reality can be reconciled" (Miyoshi 6).

Wilde and the decadents with whom Glassco was so well acquainted narrowed the focus of the Romantics when they asserted that art was the only reality. For Wilde, literal truth was of no consequence; "the mere ur-self, the born identity" were insufficient (Miyoshi 291). For the decadents "Life experience, the development of self-consciousness is . . . mere matter for the life of art" (291). For the Romantics, art was the fulfillment of life.

For John Glassco, the Buffy of the Memoirs, as for Byron (Mrs. Quayle tells Buffy that he has "a most Birrorhonic melancholy," Memoirs 177), and as for Wilde, "the boundary between life and art in the artist, always difficult to trace, becomes . . . indeterminate to the vanishing point", (Miyoshi x).

In this discussion of the biographical and literary context of the Memoirs, I have presented paradoxes: the paradox of the tragic childhood of Glassco and his stylish and debonair public self; the paradox of the deathly illness of Buffy and his deliciously decadent carryings-on in Paris and Spain; the paradox of a Memoirs so light and fresh in tone and yet forged from a haunted sensibility; it is in these paradoxes that the authorial hand, the legendary figure and the narrative voice become one. The paradox of new birth and its inevitable death, in Keats' words:

For 'twas the morn: Apollo's upward fire
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
 Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
 A melancholy spirit well might win
 Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
 Into the winds (Fogle 33)

The quest was fulfilled; John Glassco had created a synthesis of imagination and reality, a legend of everlasting life, of reconciliation.

Chapter Six:

"The Raptures and Roses of Vice": The Pornographic Writings of John Glassco

No discussion of erotic writing may be undertaken without first defining terms. Put simply, there is no consensus either in the community or in the society at large about the denotative meaning of terms such as "exotica," "pornography" or "obscenity".

In H. Montgomery Hyde's A History of Pornography, a book that was part of Glassco's original library (although not among the books acquired by Queen's University in their purchase of the Glassco collection), and a book that Glassco reviewed in January 1965 for the Canadian Forum, the author states:

To the majority of individuals the word pornography has an ugly sound. A sense of shame is consciously or unconsciously associated with it. Many people are inclined to look round uneasily when they use it and lower their voices lest the children and others should hear. It suggests a guilty secret.

It is generally agreed that the essential characteristic of pornography is its depiction of human sexuality. Therefore, in order to come within the category of pornography, the writing or picture or sculpture must have the power or be intended to act as an aphrodisiac--that is, to excite sexual passions or desires. (1)

Thus according to Hyde, Glassco's erotic writings are pornographic. What then of the question of obscenity? Hyde asserts that all pornography is obscene "in the

sense that Havelock Ellis derived the term obscene from a corruption or modification of the Latin scena and that its literal meaning is 'off the scene' and so what is not normally presented on the stage of life" (2).¹

Hyde deduces, therefore, that all pornographic work is obscene since it is "not normally presented on the stage of life," but that not all obscene matter is pornographic, since much that is obscene tends to arouse feelings of disgust rather than those of sexual excitement in the reader. Unwilling to leave this troublesome problem of definition, Hyde then attempts to confront the question of what is decent or indecent. He concludes, with D.H. Lawrence's essay "Pornography and Obscenity," that "What they [the terms] are depends, as usual, entirely on the individual What is pornography to one man is the laughter of genius to another" (Hyde 2).

In his investigation Hyde presents the comments of the worthies of the United States Government, including those of the notorious Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover: "We know that sex criminals read it . . ." (21), and those of the stature and refinement of Oscar Wilde, who wrote in the Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray: "There is no

¹Hyde is here quoting from Havelock Ellis's More Essays of Love and Virtue (1931), 104.

such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all" (Hyde 25). Wilde was to enlarge on this opinion in 1895 when questioned at his first trial at the Central Criminal Court about this passage in Dorian Gray:

"That expresses your view?" Mr. Edward Carson asked him.

"My view on art, yes." Wilde replied.

"Then, I take it, that no matter how immoral a book may be, if it is well written, it is, in your opinion a good book?"

"Yes, if it were well written so as to produce a sense of beauty, which is the highest sense of which a human being can be capable. If it were badly written it would produce a sense of disgust." (Hyde 25-26)

A review of Glassco's pornographic writing, as well as a careful reading of his essay "The Art of Pornography" would indicate that the texts themselves as well as the authorial intention are in harmony; in short Glassco produced well-written books on sexual themes. His earliest attempts at the writing of pornography, and the McGill Journal indicates that this activity was a preoccupation from at least 1934, is marked by an anxiety that the finished work have an aesthetic value: "I must remember the most important thing: to keep it from being vicious, or nasty, or bad-tempered, or coarse" (McGill Journal, 23 August 1935, fol. 35).

It is necessary, nevertheless, to consider other attempts to define the troublesome terms under

discussion here. A definition of "erotic" which the OED dates from 1651 explains the term as "Of or pertaining to the sexual passion; treating of love; amatory," differentiating the normal from the abnormal as "erotism," pathological sexual excitement. Thus one may regard "erotic" as pertaining to sexual passion, supposedly passion of any kind, although suggesting that passion is not pathological. The same authority defines "pornography" (1864) as "description of the life, manners, etc. of prostitutes and their patrons; hence the expression or suggestion of obscene or unchaste subjects in literature or art." One is hardly further ahead, as one contemplates the usual quandary of what is "obscene" or "unchaste." Current opinion might label, perhaps reluctantly, extra-marital sex as "unchaste," but probably not "obscene." Does such behaviour, or the description of same in writing, constitute "Indecency, lewdness . . . foulness, loathsomeness . . ." as the OED definition of "obscenity" (1608) would suggest? Probably not; current social opinion would likely reserve terms like "foulness, loathsomeness" for generally-acknowledged perversions such as sexual contact with children, rape and sexual assault, and bestiality.

Scholars such as Holman have attempted to develop definitions of particular use to writers and academics.

He notes that erotic elements have been used by such as Ovid, Spenser and D.H. Lawrence, humorously by Chaucer, and "In writers as dissimilar as Baudelaire, Walt Whitman, and William Faulkner, sexual materials are used as controlling Metaphors to state and underscore Themes" (168). Holman provides a working definition of "Erotic Literature" as a "type of writing characterized by treatment of sexual love in more or less explicit detail. . . . [but that does not include] Pornography, which employs sexual material as an end in itself"; and of "Pornography" as writing "designed specifically to arouse sexual lust . . . without any serious or aesthetic intention."

In "The Pornographic Imagination" Susan Sontag argues that there are three pornographies: pornography "as an item in social history"; "as a psychological phenomenon (according to the usual view, symptomatic of sexual deficiency or deformity in both the producer and the consumers)"; and as "a minor but interesting modality or convention within the arts" (Styles of Radical Will 35). The first and third of these "pornographies" interested Glassco as "The Art of Pornography" shows. In this chapter, my intention is to explore the second pornography as a psychological phenomenon, to the extent that I demonstrate the recurring theme of masochism in Glassco's pornography

as, symptomatic of his response to the trauma of his childhood. My second interest is in Glassco's pornography as art. With the exception of Fetish Girl, and its exploitation of male children, Glassco's pornography, by virtue of his command of form and style, is deserving of being considered "art" within the limited terms of Sontag's definition. Glassco's pornography is a revelation of his personality and the sources of his artistic energy. In his oeuvre it is at least as important as the poetry and the Memoirs.

The pornography is an exploration of fantasy. Glassco's pornography is the literary expression of his personal attraction for masochism in his own sex life, an attraction that was rooted in his childhood where he was made to assume the victim's position. Sontag states that pornography, like science fiction is "aiming at disorientation, at psychic dislocation" (47). A sexual obsession, and such was Glassco's personal and artistic attraction towards masochism, is a type of disorientation. He felt compelled to not only act out his masochistic fantasies, but to express them as literature. In creating the mannered world of masochistic pornography, where the "victim" is in fact in control, Glassco attempted to exert control over his memories and over his rage at the absent father.

3

Microlin

The rôle of the victim in masochistic pornography deserves comment. The act of sado-masochistic sex, and its portrayal in pornography, is artifice (in the case of the pornographic work, actually artifice upon artifice). The dominating figure is not "in control." Rather she--and it usually is a woman-- is acting out the fantasy of the "victim." The dominatrix imposes only the amount and severity of punishment desired by the victim. Both are players in an elaborate dramatization of dominance and submission. In the literary expression of this fetich, both players take part in a theatre of sexuality. Sontag says of all pornography that it is "a theatre of types, never of individuals" (51). This statement applies with a special intensity to the portrayal of sado-masochistic sex. In "Fascinating Fascism" Sontag states: ". . . to be involved in sadomasochism is to take part in a sexual theatre, a staging of sexuality. Regulars of sadomasochistic sex are expert costumers and choreographers as well as performers, in a drama that is all the more exciting because it is forbidden to ordinary people. Sadomasochism is to sex what war is to civil life: the magnificent experience" (Under the Sign of Saturn 103). Furthermore the reader of these works plays the rôle of audience to the sexual drama. He is the voyeur, observing the scripted play--sometimes

directly as in Harriet Marwood, Governess, or indirectly through a character voyeur's eyes as in Squire Hardman. I maintain, therefore, that in writing pornography Glassco asserted control: control over the punishing figure who, unlike his father, could be made to administer only as much punishment as the victim craved; and control over women, always threatening to Glassco personally and always portrayed as threatening or predatory in his writing. Susan Griffin postulates that "the pornographer feels humiliated by his own body. For underneath his fantasy of power over the bestial and power over women, we can glimpse a terrible fear" (29). Whether Miss Marwood or Mary Anne, the dominatrix is actually under the control of her creator. Her power is her own only because her creator has given it to her. Like the child who can, in play, construct a world over which he has full authority, permitting only the amount and degree of conflict he wishes to accept, the writer of pornography can create an artificial world where character types will enact sexual acts that please him. Robert J. Stoller presents the view that "as with all perversions, at its [pornography's] heart is a fantasied act of revenge, condensing in itself the subject's sexual life history --his memories and fantasies, traumas, frustrations and joys" (111). Referring specifically to masochism,

Sontag writes that: "What the French call 'the English vice' could . . . be said to be something of an artful affirmation of individuality; the playlet referred, after all, to the subject's own case history" (Saturn 104).

These views of pornography are "amoral. They describe a process but fail to acknowledge its implications. They do not acknowledge the effect of pornography on the reader. Steiner says that "dirty books are maddeningly the same" and that only the "trappings change" ("Night Words" 305). Steiner is no advocate of censorship. He is aware that in addition to the quantities of trash, there is "erotica" that is "above the pulp line": "sexual writing with literary pretensions or genuine claims" (306). The essential purpose of both categories is, however, the same. Steiner writes: "What distinguishes the 'forbidden classic' from under-the-counter delights of Frith Street is, essentially, a matter of semantics, of the level of vocabulary and rhetorical device used to provoke erection" (307). Steiner's concern is not to restrict reader's access to pornography, but to examine the argument that "total frankness . . . cuts deep not only into the true liberty of the writer, but into the diminishing reserves of feeling and imaginative response in our society" (310). Steiner fears that

"there may be deeper affinities than we as yet understand between the 'total freedom' of the uncensored erotic imagination and the total freedom of the sadist" (312). For Steiner there is a disturbing parallel between the emergence of the sadism of the death camps and the "new code of total statement" in the literature in our times. In the death camps all privacy was destroyed. For Steiner, the "new pornographers" of the late twentieth century have not only removed privacy from sexuality but have actually subverted our "last vital privacy: they do our imagining for us" (313). Pornography leaves the reader "less free, less himself" (314). This serious moral charge applies to the same degree to Glassco's pornographic works. The exploitation of children in Fetish Girl, for example, degrades the reader. There is no freedom in "celebrating" the sexual abuse of children. Art cannot be separate from life nor from the moral force that sustains society. Conventions come and go. But the race must protect its vulnerable members: not to do so is to act out the fascist nightmare that haunts Steiner and indeed all of western society. The fact that Glassco did not consider these facts in no way lessens his responsibility. It is not my purpose to condemn Glassco, and I do not do so. I do not impute intention to him where none can be

substantiated. I believe that he was convinced that his pornographic writing was on the side of freedom. I also believe that had he not written pornography it is doubtful that he would have succeeded in producing the amount and quality of work he did produce. Nevertheless, to ignore the moral aspect of pornography seems to be deliberate falsehood. Sontag does so in "The Pornographic Imagination" and thus undercuts her essay. Irving Kristol states the problem in the essay "Is This What We Wanted":

if you believe that no one was ever corrupted by a book, you also have to believe that no one was ever improved by a book (or a play or a movie). You have to believe, in other words, that all art is morally trivial and that consequently, all education is morally irrelevant." (188)

Kristol advances the analogy that bearbaiting and cockfighting were made illegal not only because they are cruel to animals, but because they debase the observers (188). He does not repudiate erotica, however: "pornography differs from erotic art in that its whole purpose is to treat human beings obscenely, to deprive human beings of their specifically human dimension. That is what obscenity is all about" (189). In "Peddling the Pornography of Violence: Further Thoughts on 'Iniquity'" Pamela Hansford Johnson argues

that observing or reading about sexual violence stimulates aggression.

Feminist critics, such as Susan Gubar, confront the moral and social impact of pornography. She is concerned with the direct and indirect effect of contemporary pornography on the safety and well-being of individual women and children, as well as, like Steiner, the broader social implications: "the violence against women we find in so much pornographic art dramatizes the potentially unnerving contradiction between a purportedly neutral formal achievement and a malevolent world view that could harm people, much as do racist and fascist films like D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation or Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will" (731). Although Gubar's argument is primarily occupied with the effects of pornography on women and children, and while she acknowledges the fact that the majority, by far, of the creators and consumers of pornography are men, her concerns are with the harm that violent pornography can and does do to all of society. Even for Sontag, all masochisist pornography is not only theatre but also violent: "a form of gratification that is both violent and indirect, ~~very~~ mental" (Saturn 105).

Beginning with Susan Lurie's thesis that "women possess the whole range of individual powers that the

man identifies with his penis and yet have 'no penis'" (Lurie 166, in Gubar 733), Gubar argues that "the anxieties of men are displaced onto their female doubles: the man without the phallus sees the woman as phallus . . . the man without the mother sees the mother as himself . . . (Gubar 733). In Glassco's pornography the man is "the man without the phallus." Richard, in the Governess books, never attempts intercourse. The principal male figures in Fetish Girl are male children, old men, or young men with child-sized genitals. In Squire Hardman the focus of attention is on the young boys being beaten. Steven Marcus's thesis is that masochistic practice and pornography is essentially pregenital, and contains within it "a pronounced fear of the genitals and severe disturbances of potency" (127). Marcus takes as his text the scenes of masochism from My Secret Life, a work that illustrates that the literature of masochism is a "completely distorted and idealized version of what actually happens" (127). Marcus notes the class bias ("confined to the gentlemanly ranks"), the "confusion of sexual identity," the "ritualistic quality of such behavior," and most important, the sense that "the principal character in such scenes seems to be rehearsing some twisted recollection from early childhood" (127). Sontag notes that: ". . . the

perennial Englishman in a brothel being whipped is recreating an experience. He is paying a whore to act out a piece of theatre with him, to reenact or reevoke the past--experiences of his schooldays or nursery which now hold for him a huge reserve of sexual energy" (Saturn 104). Marcus further states that "roles and role playing" are significant to the act, and that what is being carried out is in fact "a little domestic drama" (127). One additional important observation concerns the woman who is usually the perpetrator of the violence against the willing male victim. Marcus argues that this scenario is purely male fantasy projected onto women: "The elements of this fantasy are, very simply that women instigate this practice, that they perpetuate it, and that they experience, as do the men concerned, a specific and directly felt sexual pleasure from it. There is no evidence in support of this contention . . ." (61).

In summation, not all pornography is trash. Some, like the Governess novels and the novellas of The Fatal Woman aspire to art in their control of form and language. Such pornography is not, however, morally neutral, whether seen as having negative impact on individuals, particularly women and children, or whether regarded as suggesting frightening parallels with the metaphor of evil in the late twentieth

century--the death camps. Glassco's composition of pornography was an essential manifestation of his traumatic childhood. He had to expiate his ghosts of fear, the "pure fear" he speaks of in the McGill Journal, and he attempted to do this through the practice of masochistic sex and the transformation of this experience and its attendant fantasy into the "art" of pornography. This artifice assisted Glassco in distancing himself from the pain of memory by objectification of sexual figures. Sontag says: "Sadomasochism has always been the furthest reach of the sexual experience: when sex becomes most purely sexual, that is, severed from personhood, from relationships, from love" (Sontag 105). Sex that is "severed from personhood, from relationships, from love" has lost its capacity to wound. This protection comes, however, at a great price. The authenticity of sexual experience is sacrificed to the artifice of rôles and theatrical performance. It is essentially hollow and joyless. Despite success and episodes of real happiness and friendship, this hollowness and joylessness was to haunt Glassco to his death.

II

Without doubt Glassco's pornography, including The English Governess (1960), Harriet Marwood, Governess (1967), and Fetish Girl (1972), among many other works, is specifically designed "to arouse sexual lust" and to treat "sexual love in more or less explicit detail." The sexual elements in these works are certainly not mere portions of the "aesthetic, thematic, or moral aspect of the work" (Holman). Indeed in these works of prose the sexual elements are so numerous, so explicit, and so obviously arranged in what one may call a typical pornographic pattern, where the plot is a mere device serving to delay the reader's gratification in order to make it that much more acute, that there can be no equivocation: they are pornographic. In fact, the works appear "designed specifically to arouse sexual lust." Without doubt, Glassco wrote pornography.

At the time that Glassco's pornographic works were published, the society as a whole would have judged them as "prurient in intention" (Holman); indeed the government of France acted on such an assumption in seizing the bulk of the 1959 printing of Glassco's completion of Under the Hill.

Was Glassco commercially motivated in writing his pornography? To some extent yes, as his correspondence regarding Fetish Girl certainly bears out (and which will be discussed further in this chapter). There remains, however, the matter of "without major redeeming elements" (Holman). Here, of course, the critic has no choice but to make a subjective decision. In Glassco's favour are the facts that he handled his material with great skill. His prose is sophisticated and graceful. His intention, if one may impute intention from the tone of the works, is more often playful than vicious. There is an aesthetic pleasure to be had in reading his careful descriptions of rich interiors, his convincing portraits of dominatrix and "unwilling" victim. His mastery of form, particularly well demonstrated in the pastiche of Beardsley's style in Under the Hill, and the versification of Squire Hardman, is satisfying and pleasing in itself. Then there is too the fact that unconventional as the subject matter of Fetish Girl may be, there is a power, a tension, a compulsion, that holds the reader transfixed by the shocking portrayal of evil, the terrible juxtaposition of death by suffocation with the moment of orgasm. These disturbing descriptions are the work of a writer able to manipulate plot, theme, and form to create for the reader a glimpse into the

collective shadow of mankind, a vision of how humankind may desire to kill what it craves.

Glassco's Journal entries frequently record his confrontation with such paradox; on 22 September 1935 he wrote: "my masochism, which is itself but an alternation & opposite of my repulsion at being dominated by anyone, particularly a stupid, smug woman: it is so extraordinary how the repulsion & attraction can co-exist so naturally!" (fol. 45). Not much changed in a decade; on 27 March 1948 he wrote:

Life continues in the same dull round of misery It is only avarice & literary ambition that keep me going now. I wonder how much longer they will operate. Oh yes, I still nurse a few daydreams, romantic and erotic,--but leave them in that condition. My satisfactions of the latter are now, I'm afraid, exclusively solitary, masturbatory: this is not good,--but better than trusting any woman again. (fol. 134)

"Repulsion and attraction" are a recurring motif, in both life and art: "My prose muse is now entirely erotic. Nothing else moves me: the other fires have gone out" (fol. 135).

The "repulsion and attraction" Glassco writes of applies only to women, both his fictional creations and his sexual encounters with women. Although a bisexual who continued to enjoy sexual relations with men even while married to Elma von Colmar, it is only with women, or on the subject of women and their sexuality,

where Glassco reveals his profound ambivalence. He was able to write of his love and longing for Graeme in the most simple and moving terms, as he did on 15 October 1941, as he contemplated Graeme's having gone to war:

It's now three months since Graeme enlisted, and it seems like a year,--until he is back on leave, when it seems that all that time has been an unreal interlude! and how much longer will it be before he comes back again, God only knows,--or if he ever will come back: as I write those last words I am conscious I do not believe he can possibly fail to come back: I cannot face that possibility; I still cling to an inner assurance I have that all happiness is not over for me yet, and that I shall not be left without a soul who cares for me. (fol. 84)

This passage, being as moving as an earlier reverie written 23 August 1935, indicates that Glassco's love for Taylor had not lessened by the 1940s:

We have had the most beautiful summer, Graeme and I, that we have ever had: it is not over yet, but after a month that grew gradually hotter and hotter, and culminated in an entire week's perfect heat, the weather has broken suddenly, and although it is fine today, the coolness in the air and the kind of clouds on the horizon make it seem the beginning of autumn. The days go past now--just a succession of sweets: I have never known such happiness. Even winter, which we intend to spend in the country, doesn't hold any terrors for me. (fol. 35)

Contrast the touching transparency of these words with the writer's description of his sexual contacts with women, contacts frequently initiated through advertise-

ments which Glassco placed in newspapers, contacts that are, in their description, notable for their mechanistic rendering of sex. On 23 August 1934 he wrote: "Have just marked time all today, writing this & sitting around, waiting for the evening & Adrienne. That is bad, I suppose. And now its raining and she may not come!" (fol. 37).

On the following Monday, 26 August, he evaluated the eventual encounter:

After I'd taken Adrienne home on Friday night, and came back myself to the house, I felt so tired that I began to get worried whether I wasn't putting myself under too much strain trying to seduce this virgin. It is the most wearing thing in the world I know: I've only had two virgins before, but they were so fatiguing that I remember the business yet, and I was young and strong then: I remember, too, what a disappointing, wretched, hole-&-corner hugger-mugger the final act was. I began wondering then whether it mightn't be safer to give up the idea altogether, and practically decided to. Now I haven't seen her for two days and--blind goat that I am!--I'm beginning to think that I can't pass up such a beautiful body: I've only to think of her breasts and buttocks and I feel that I must have her. What makes it so difficult to renounce her is the certainty that I can do it: all it takes is time and perseverance--and endurance. Then, after the first three or four rapports, which are bound to be stupid and disgusting, the reward should start. (fol. 38)

This paragraph ends with a holograph note "unrelieved obscenity--destroyed" (some half-page of the Journal has been cut out with a razor); fol.39 continues:

and she feels safer she will allow me what amounts to the final caress. I daresay I could give her the latter tonight,--but the whole trouble is, I find that kind of work altogether too much of a strain: I don't think I could go through another night like the last without perhaps doing myself some injury.

But I don't think I have to: tonight I will not even try to touch her. We'll see how that works. I shall have to be very entertaining, & talk as well as possible about worldly topics & so forth. It will be a dull evening, but easy on me & interesting to see its developments. As well as being much the safer thing for me to do. I actually think it is the right move. This going at a seduction like a game is really the best fun,--as Stendhal's heroes do it:--the only thing was that it is a bit dangerous for me to get worked up & stay unsatisfied: what I must do is be like them--always cool and purposeful!

Again there is a holograph note "Seduction of Adrienne-destroyed Aug. 30."

On 30 April 1943, the writer describes, in similarly materialistic terms, terms that objectify his female sexual partners and barely mask what is an obvious rage against women, yet another sexual adventure:

Well, I have had my love-affair, & it is quite finished with: one of the shortest I ever had. Like most affairs, it is pleasanter in retrospect than it was at the time. The trip to town was dreadful, as were the hours before the assignation: after that it was not so bad. She was most attractive aesthetically, a real Botticelli face, at once pure & depraved, & beautiful little virginal breasts which were remarkably sensitive: what a pity that I should only care for large, firm, protuberant breasts! I

have not handled any of that kind since Christiane's, which were superb. (fol. 97)

The concluding description of this incident, described on the second half of fol. 98 and the whole of fol. 99, was removed by Glassco before the McGill Journal was put up for sale. Nevertheless, the point is made. The deep ambivalence towards women that is revealed in the pornography reflects the sexuality, or more accurately, an important part of the sexuality of the writer.

The Journals that John Glassco kept throughout his adult years confirm that he wrote pornography consistently, as a young man and mature poet. He read pornography (his library now part of the Lorne Pierce Collection at Queen's University attests to his taste); he composed pornographic work; he tried to market these works, and was on occasion successful; he carried out a fascinating epistolary friendship with the writer and academic Geoffrey Wagner based on the subject of flagellation and its practices; he schemed to import pornography into Canada, frequently instructing book merchants to post parcels of erotic works to him as "The Reverend John Glassco" (Le Moyne Interviews); thus on occasion managing to trick customs officers into passing packages of what appeared to be prayer books. Not impossible: John Glassco was a delegate to Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Glassco's interest in erotica exceeds, however, a "naughty" pastime. I believe that an argument can be made that there is a strong possibility that had he not had the satisfaction of writing pornographic work, he could never have accomplished his poetry and non-erotic prose. In short, I assert that rather than being a private enthusiasm, Glassco's attention to pornography was an essential element of his own sexual and creative nature.² A life-long writer, his composition of erotic works was consistent, whereas his writing of poetry and other prose was erratic. This fact in no way reduces the importance of his accomplished verse and elegant prose.

Glassco's McGill Journal, unquestionably the single most revealing unpublished document in public hands, confirms and illustrates not only the position of literature, whether created or experienced, but also the centrality of pornographic prose to Glassco's creative life. The Journal begins on page twenty-four, pages one to twenty-three having been destroyed, one assumes by Glassco himself when he felt impelled to purge his Journal of any "compromising" references when

²Marion McCormick, speaking with admirable candour, told me that her husband's preoccupation with the practice of flagellation in his private life, and his persistence in writing pornography, were two enthusiasms she was unable to share but was able to accept as integral to her husband's life and work.

he and Graeme were being sued by their love "Sappho" who was accusing them of "unnatural practices." On the first page of that Journal, indeed in the first sentence, Glassco refers to the creation of an erotic character:

Unable to do any work today, partly from discouragement and partly from having an ache in my shoulder, which spoilt my night. Graeme came up this afternoon and heartened me considerably about "Rosa". I see now that I must make her out a plain b____. But my enthusiasm seems to have all gone, and I doubt my mere skill in evoking the effects I want. Sometimes it seems so hard.

Feb. 28th 1934
1745 Cedar Ave., Montreal
(fol. 24)

This introductory paragraph, written at his parents' house, sets the tone that colours the whole of this document, and introduces the key ideas that Glassco will return to throughout its leaves: his illness, tuberculosis; his state-of-mind, melancholic; his preoccupation with his lover and friend, Graeme; and his obsession with literature, and particularly pornographic literature, Rosa being a character in such a work-in-progress.

It may be said, therefore, that Glassco wrote pornography that reflected his unorthodox sexual tastes. His own term for his erotic writing was "pornography." The opening words to his essay, "The

Art of Pornography," published in Edge in 1969, state: "Pornography is a form of literary art, and at its best partakes of the condition of art itself and therefore of beauty" (101). He stresses that pornography "is not . . . the ribald or bawdy, whose aim is to evoke laughter; nor the erotic, whose tone is mainly sentimental or lyrical; nor the obscene, with its appeal to impulses of brutality, desecration and revolt" (101). While acknowledging that pornography can "stray into any of these categories," the writer states that the "purpose" of pornography may be defined as "the deliberate attempt, by all the resources of the written word, to stimulate the sexual appetite" (101). Its "proper intent . . . like that of all literature, is simply to please. A writer like Sade, for instance, is not a true pornographer: despite all the force and fertility of his erotic fancy, he belongs to the ranks of philosophers and moralists" (101).

While a writer such as Holman discriminates between types of pornography according to sexual orientation, that of "heterosexual love" being "erotica," while that "dealing with abnormal or deviant sexual practices" being "exotica" (345); Hyde attempts a more thorough differentiation, appropriate to a book-length work, not only tracing the history of pornography, examining the historical concepts of

chastity and gallantry, the question of censorship and the law, but also investigating the differences between what he defines as "erotic pornography" and "the pornography of perversion." Under "Erotic Pornography" Hyde discusses such works of art as the Kama-Sutra and Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure (Fanny Hill), but is not loath to name many of the works of Victorian pornography including the impressively-titled Raped on the Railway: A True Story of a Lady who was first ravished and then flagellated on the Scotch Express (1884) (106). He does not ignore the art of Beardsley or Wilde, and devotes some attention to three "comparatively modern erotic autobiographies" by Edward Sellon, The Ups and Downs of Life (1867), the anonymous My Secret Life (c.1885), and by Frank Harris, My Life and Loves (1925-29) (113).

Under the heading "The Pornography of Perversion," Hyde most surely includes Glassco's enthusiasm, flagellation. Hyde discusses le vice anglais with reference to de Sade, but especially to Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whose Venus in Furs Glassco was first to read in 1934 "(have been reading 'Venus im Pelz' and find it quite stimulating)" (McGill Journal, 5 July 1934, fol. 28D). Kinsey notes that adults are, in general, not "aroused sexually by sado-masochistic stories; only 12 per cent of the women and 22 per cent

of the men in his sampling indicated some response, while just 3 per cent of the women and 10 per cent of the men showed a response that was 'definite' or 'frequent'" (Hyde 23). Nevertheless, much of Hyde's discussion of the "pornography of perversion" discusses this enthusiasm, including that represented by the works of Swinburne including Lesbia Brandon, the unfinished autobiographical novel much admired by Glassco, the discussion of which occupies a goodly portion of the Glassco-Wagner correspondence, and from which novel Glassco quotes at length in the published version of The Art of Pornography (109-110).

Current psychological theory might well tend to reject Hyde's inclusion of homosexual pornography under the heading of "pornography of perversion." One does wonder at this distinction, given that the notorious My Secret Life is included under the more innocuous "erotic pornography," even though the passage from that work quoted by Hyde describes the prelude to a sexual assault on a child of ten years of age (116-117); whereas the descriptions of homosexual pornography are marked by good humour such as his bawdy description of Gilbert and Sullivan's "obscene opera", The Sod's Opera whose characters include "Count Tostoff; the brothers Bollox, 'a pair of hangers on'; and Scrotum, 'a wrinkled old retainer'" (137).

As I have said, Glassco preferred the term "pornography" for his own "aphrodisiac" works. Only once does he refer to "erotica," and that is in reference to the pastiche of Aubrey Beardsley's Under the Hill, when he wrote in the McGill Journal that he had been pleased to realize many of his literary ambitions, including the writing of an "erotic book (Under the Hill)," which he contrasted to a "pornographic book (The English Governess)" (fol. 160). Why he chooses to identify Under the Hill as erotic may, to some extent, be explained by his reference to the erotic in The Art of Pornography as that whose "tone is mainly sentimental or lyrical" (101). In his introduction to Under the Hill Glassco refers to the work as a "romantic novel" (8), one that illustrates Beardsley's "greatest strength, his essential and unabashed reliance on the prodigious inner power of his eroticism, his sense of what makes man's private universe revolve" (12). It may be that for Glassco the erotic in literature was associated not only with prose which was in tone "mainly sentimental or lyrical" but also with works that were, to quote Holman's definition of "romance," "relatively free of the more restrictive aspects of realistic verisimilitude" (387). The extravagant characters, the exotic setting, the passionate sexuality, the mysterious, mythic

circumstances of the story, all these point to what one might call a romance of eroticism, an atmosphere evoked not only in Under the Hill, but in the descriptions of Buffy's obsessive love for Mrs. Quayle³ in the Memoirs:

. . . from the moment I began living with Mrs. Quayle I saw none of my friends and companions: my life was passed in the scented prison of the womb-like apartment in the rue Galilée. Whenever my mistress and I went out it was to the stuffy restaurants and theatres of the Étoile quarter. I never saw Montparnasse again.

It was a life much like the one I had led on the boulevard Beauséjour, with the addition of unlimited alcohol and endless dalliance. I felt at times like Tannhäuser in the Venusberg, except that I had no desire to return to the upper world: I had no Elisabeth to woo or knell me back to the light of common sense, and the allegory of the dead olive staff never occurred to me.
(238)

There is, therefore, in the rarified tone of Under the Hill an echo of the erotic/exotic love affair of the

³I have referred to Beryl Rowland's Birds with Human Souls previously. The quail, as well as representing a "loose woman" (141), was taken in the Old Testament, in the words of the ninth century Archbishop of Mainz, to mean "the pleasures of the body" (141). Jean de Meun in Roman de la Rose is quoted as saying that "Older women were like the more experienced quail who had been almost caught before" (141); the quail was, moreover, "The Egyptian hieroglyph of impurity" (143).

With seeming perversity, not unlike the perversity of Buffy's lover herself, the quail's erotic significance "dates from ancient times, when the bird was a symbol of generation and rebirth. Latona, the goddess who gave birth to Artemis and Apollo at Delos, regarded the bird as her own . . . (141).

young Buffy with the fatal woman, Mrs. Quayle. As Leon Edel has written of Glassco:

His erotic writings thus carry, in the midst of their frivolity, the post-Montparnassian experience. There is surely a distinct relation between Buffy dying and surviving at 24 and his picking up the last writings of Aubrey Beardsley who did die of tuberculosis at 26. Buffy's emotions on discovering Beardsley's unfinished Under the Hill were a kind of reliving of his own reprieve--with the difference that there had been none for the great artist in black and white who revolutionized the art nouveau of the nineties. ("John Glassco (1909-1981) and his Erotic Muse" 110-111)

The McGill Journal leaves no doubt that Glassco never freed himself from either the lure of the fatal woman or the threat of recurring tuberculosis. On 20 October 1946 he had written that each joy or pleasure marked more sharply "an even greater intensity of sadness, to the underlying melancholy of human life, the terrible discrepancies of youth & age, of what hope & fancy contrive as a foil to what is, & to the mockery of laughter that must be laughed face to face with death" (fol. 123). As late as March 1950, when Sappho had left the ménage, Glassco mused in his Journal about a dream he had had of her, her fatal lure, her double identity: "We were walking hand in hand in summer weather up Cote [sic] de [sic] Neiges, she in her straw hat & white dress, & she was telling me once again how she seemed to be two people, two girls, one good & one

evil: that she had been the evil one long enough, & she was coming back to us to be the good one again. Then we cried & kissed & walked on" (fol. 138). On 9 July 1954 he wrote "Why is it I only fall for crazy women and bitches?" (fol. 145).

It is inevitable, therefore, that these controlling and compelling ideas, the "post-Montparnassian experience," were operative in Glassco during the course of his work on Beardsley's unfinished novel, no less than the oppressive presence of Glassco's chronic depression which he describes as "single, uniform, gigantic blankness of despair; but this state of mind--the despair--is really around the corner of one's consciousness all the time,--and the way to it is open constantly" (McGill Journal, 1 January 1944, fol. 109).

In March 1948, Glassco was barely recovered from the pain and exhaustion of a year of bi-polar depression. "I had the worst attack of all ["pure Fear"], which culminated in my hiding my face in my hands & sobbing" (30 June 1947, fol. 129); "tonight I am feeling quite my old self,--gay, tranquil, self-important--(how much this last means!). Oh, if I could only be always this way! The curious thing about this feeling of bien-être is that it is assignable to no cause" (10 November 1947, fol. 132). He was pained by

the death of his beloved Dalmatian dog, Lucy, on 9 January 1947, and recorded that "Life continues in the same dull round of misery" (n.d., [March 1948], fol. 134). He reviewed his prose works, and mentioned Under the Hill for the first time in the McGill Journal in spring of 1948:

As for prose work, I have started so many hares that even the consideration of so many unfinished projects is upsetting. (1) Cheverel Virtue (2) The Stripped Man (just about abandoned); (3) Continuation of Beardsley's "Under the Hill", which amuses me occasionally. My prose muse is now entirely erotic. Nothing else moves me: the other fires have gone out. (fol. 135)⁴

We do not know when Glassco actually began work on his completion of Under the Hill, although he was, evidently, working at the manuscript from time to time early in 1948. In about 1951 he recorded that the book was "bogged down, but only dormant" (fol. 142). On 9 July 1954 he noted that Under the Hill was completed but not yet typed (fol. 144).⁵

⁴The manuscript of "The Accomplishments of Cheverel Virtue [1938?]-1970" is held at the PAC in Vol. 15 of the Glassco papers.

⁵The McGill Collection holds the complete holograph manuscript of Under the Hill, written in fountain pen on fading, fragile paper. It is a most pleasing artifact.

In October 1957 Glassco sent the manuscript to Julian Symons in London; on 23 April 1958 he received a rejection notice:

Dear Mr. Glassco,

I am so sorry that I have had no luck with placing your Under the Hill. I read it, and enjoyed it very much myself; but the publishers to whom I showed it felt, for one reason and another, that it wasn't their cup of tea.

As you request, then, I have to-day sent the manuscript to the Olympia Press. I do hope you have more luck with them. It was an excellent idea of yours, and certainly one that deserves commemoration between covers.

(PAC Vol. 14)

A year later Maurice Girodias of the Olympia Press published Under the Hill. Three-thousand numbered copies of an elegant green watered-silk-covered edition were published in 1959. Success was short-lived: some 1600 copies were seized almost immediately by the French authorities as pornographic. In fact, Under the Hill was used by the French government to attempt to prosecute Girodias in the 1960s. On 22 September 1964 the publisher wrote to Glassco: "Actually I don't think the French authorities can go as far as indicting you for the part you added to Beardsley's book, but it is still a technical possibility" (McGill Collection). Girodias, who was threatened by a possible sentence of four years in prison and a fine of \$100,000, appealed to Glassco for help, and requested that he obtain the

signatures of Canadian artists on a petition designed to embarrass the French government into giving up their prosecution. Glassco organized a petition to André Malraux that was signed by many important Canadians such as Morley Callaghan, Robertson Davies, Ralph Gustafson, Irving Layton, Hugh MacLennan, Alfred Purdy, Malcolm Ross, F.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith and Robert Weaver.

Glassco may have considered the elegant Under the Hill as erotic, but the French government were less sensitive in their judgement. Ultimately, they appeared ridiculous in persecuting this work. However, not everyone in England appreciated Glassco's efforts either. On 7 August 1966, Philip Toynbee published his review, "Pornographic Period Piece" in The Observer Weekend Review:

When he died, at the age of 26, Beardsley was in the middle of writing his own version of the Tannhäuser legend, and bent, it seems, on turning himself into a serious "man of letters". Like so many brilliant men he longed to excel in an alien field. Mr. John Glassco has now restored the unexpurgated version of Beardsley's uncompleted text and added a second half of his own devising. But, as he says, "while it has been possible to finish the story never the drawings."

But Mr. Glassco fails to draw the obvious conclusion from his honest assessment of his own capacities, which is that the drawings are wonderfully, inimitably good while the prose is grotesquely bad, unoriginal and easy to copy. (21)

Geoffrey Wagner, in an undated letter [c.1966] written at Brown's Hotel, London, reported that he had just been to see the Beardsley exhibition at The Victoria and Albert Museum: "All in all, I'd say everything excepting your Under the Hill was present! And this prompts me to tell you that Under the Hill has just been issued here & is stacked almost like hot cakes!" (PAC Vol. 14).⁶ The truth is that Glassco's completion of Beardsley's work is a triumph of belles-lettres, which deftly introduced his passion for flagellation into the text on page 70 of the 1959 edition: "Cosmé joined in the fun, and whispered to Venus that birch discipline might be in order! At this, Tannhauser blushed with excitement, for the idea of an amorous fessée always sent little chills of pleasure and apprehension down his back."

Glassco's delicate reference to his "governess theme" is suggested when Tannhauser, in Rome for his audience with the pope, allows his thoughts to stray to "all those pretty tricks of childhood, his precocious attachment to Mademoiselle Fanfreluche the nursery governess, their merry games at bedtime, the delightful

⁶Wagner would be referring to the first British publication of Under the Hill, that being the Olympia Press Traveller's Companion Series, No. 105, published by The New English Library Limited in 1966. The book was reset for British publication; hence the pagination in this text differs from the Paris 1959 first edition.

caresses which like favourable breezes had urged on the forward season of his youth, all those charming things which had made him such an early and impassioned connoisseur of naughtiness . . . " (107). These straying thoughts culminate in the narrator's description of Tannhäuser's first sexual experience:

His recollections dated forward to his first exploit as a lover, to the act, at once result and retort, which followed on his first birching by his English governess--the summary ravishment of that spinster who, too surprised to resist, or cry out, had yielded her guarded treasure with something close to complaisance. He smiled as he recelled [*sic*] her burning cheeks, the downcast eyes behind her steel spectacles, her air of confusion and délice. (108)⁷

Edel has suggested that Glassco's completion of Under the Hill was made possible by the writer's "empathy" for the "macabre English artist": "In Buffy, there seems to have been in the experience, a way of proclaiming his own survival and the permanence of art, through a reliance on fantasy" ("John Glassco and his Erotic Muse", 112). If this is so, then the act of completing Beardsley's work was only one more instance in which Glassco proclaimed his survival through such

⁷The printing error "recelled" which should, of course, be "recalled" was corrected in the British edition of Under the Hill.

The reader will note as well that Tannhäuser is printed without the umlaut in the 1959 edition.

fantasy. Given the evidence of published texts, and of papers accessible to the scholar, there was no time when John Glassco was not preoccupied with the rendering of sexual fantasy into art.

During his lifetime Glassco made no secret of the fact that his father was a sadist and his mother a society girl with small interest in her children. It was the servants in the Glassco home who gave the children the care and love they so clearly needed. Cecilie Glassco remembered in particular a housekeeper to whom Buffy was deeply attached. The role of the "English governess" suggested in Under the Hill and developed into Glassco's markedly successful The English Governess and Harriet Marwood, Governess, was fictional. What was not fictional was the experiential basis for the artistic rendering of the experience of masochism.

The literary inspiration for these two pornographic novels is a curiosity published in Paris in 1913, La Gouvernante by Aimé van Rod.⁸ A cheaply-

⁸Among the papers that make up the McGill Journal there is one unnumbered sheet (referred to by me in Appendix A as fol. 106A) dated "Oct. 1964" that includes the following: "p.76. [of McGill Journal] La Gouvernante was the inspiration, five years later, for writing The English Governess." The "five years later" referred to by Glassco would date the composition of Governess at sometime in 1943, given that the La Gouvernante entry is dated 22 March 1938 (fol. 76). There is no indication in the McGill Journal that

produced paperback, this pornographic novel is the model for Glassco's best known pornographic novel, Harriet Marwood, Governess. La Gouvernante tells the story of an English governess, Miss Humphreys, who is hired to instruct a young boy of thirteen. The opening page of the text identifies the hero who lives in London near All Souls Church: "James Lowell avait treize ans lorsque mourut sa mère." James is described: "C'est un petit garçon un peu insignifiant . . . " [7]. Compare these brief passages to selected passages from the opening of Harriet Marwood:⁹

Glassco had begun Governess in 1943. He was working on Philip Eugène (eventually The Black Helmet), which he completed on 14 November 1943 (fol. 103), and beginning to develop another pornographic novel, one bearing no resemblance to Governess:

I have another book projected, something more ambitious than Philip, less escapist & cut off, less "private-worldly". I have nothing more than the vaguest idea of what the action is to be, but the theme & the method of narration are clear: it is to be an account, told through a journal (& perhaps also letters), of a man (about 30) who at the opening of the book is living in his own, closed, private, voluptuous world--a world of fantasy which he has nevertheless brought to a semblance of reality by the arrangements of his household: he lives alone with his former nurse, as a kind of pretended invalid . . . engaged in a mild form of transvestism & exhibitionism before her . . . she is a large, strong, efficient [woman]. (fol. 95)

⁹All quotations are taken from Harriet Marwood, Governess published under Glassco's own name by General Publishing in 1976.

Richard Belsize Lovel was fourteen years old when his mother died. He was even then a rather insignificant boy (5)

In London's Great Portland Street, not far from All Soul's Church, there is a row of gloomy mansions For here, more than fifty years ago . . . there blossomed the romance of Richard Lovel and Harriet Marwood (3)

Like that of the young hero of La Gouvernante, Richard Lovel's family seat was originally said to be located "near Christchurch" in Hampshire.

The essential outline of the plot--a sadistic but beautiful governess inflicts severe corporal punishment on her young pupil with the clear purpose of satisfying her own sexual preferences while developing an appropriately masochistic young male whom she will eventually make her husband--is the same in both novels. The subjugation of the young male is symbolized in Harriet by Richard's taking his wife's name: "Here, then, is your petition to have your name changed by act of deed poll to Richard Marwood. A pretty name, is it not?" (222). Richard's reply is enthusiastic: "'To me, it is the loveliest name in the world,' he said as he signed the paper" (222). On his governess's instructions he is sterilized before their marriage; needless to say there can be no room for children in a relationship where one partner must

remain forever a burlesque of the child: dependent, chastised, humiliated:

"I must tell you, my dear, that we shall have no children. I do not wish it."

His heart leapt up joyfully. "Why, Harriet--of--of course not. I had never thought of it, and--and really, I do not wish for children either. It shall be as you say."

She smiled indulgently. "I am glad to hear you say so, Richard. But to ensure there shall be none, we must take proper measures." She paused.

He laid his head on her knees. "I--I know nothing of these matters, Harriet. But I am willing to do as--as you bid me . . ."

. . . . "You must submit to an operation"

He trembled, burying his face still more deeply in her lap. "Oh Harriet", he whispered, "will--will it hurt--much?" (223)

As Harriet tells her whimpering husband-to-be: "And you, Richard, ~~will~~ then be doubly dear to me, to love and to cherish--both as husband and child" (226). Once married and passing their honeymoon "in the absolute seclusion of the house at Christchurch," Harriet surveys her creation and savours her absolute victory:

She smiled in the semi-darkness. The promised goal had been reached, her cup was full at last: she enjoyed the entire possession and control of the man whom she loved with all that mixture of tenderness and severity which marked her nature. He was indeed, she thought, such as she had made him: a creature dependent on her, body and soul, the plaything of her humours and caprice, the helpless, beloved and obedient instrument of her desires A vision of the future unrolled itself before her in a sudden blaze of beauty,--the vision of the

husband whose devotion would never weaken, whose disposition would keep him her willing slave forever.

. . . and as she drifted off into slumber her hand reached out to the bedside table and touched the little whip . . . caressing for an instant this symbol of her victory, this talisman of her present joy, this guarantee of her felicity in all the years to come. (231-232)

(This complete domination of one person by another, exemplified in Richard's reaching toward his beloved Harriet and "commingling his agony and rapture in an embrace which was a sheer ecstasy" (219), is thematically identical to La Gouvernante. While I have explained that the plots of the two novels are highly similar, significant events have been rearranged. In Glassco's own copy of La Gouvernante he has marked turning points in the plot, examples being: "the house full of howling; then seaside" (165); "seaside" (172); "Honeymoon piece. B.'s ardours. Return to Christchurch where the punishment-room has been fitted up" (181). In Harriet, the seaside incident is occasioned by a trip to Bournemouth where Richard is to visit a Mrs. Barrington and her daughter, Alicia, who "greeted him with all the affection and vivacity of their earlier meeting" (188). Richard is delighted to find that Harriet has "engaged a bathing-machine immediately beside the Barringtons' own" (194).

Richard's pleasure is somewhat dimmed by Harriet's insistence that he wear a bathing costume that exposes his buttocks, and don "a bathing-cap of thick white rubber, of the style which fastens under the chin" (195). This detail, original to Harriet, is a reflection of Glassco's own rubber fetich,¹⁰ and is enlarged upon and combined with the obsessive flagellation and humiliation in the climax to chapter six of the novel where Harriet takes Richard into the bathing-machine while Alicia and her friends listen in horror to "low tones and the governess's voice and the youth's almost inaudible reply; then . . . the sharp report of whipcord on naked flesh . . ." (199). The beating over, Richard emerges to Alicia's disgusted reaction:

she received, like a slap in the face, the spectacle of the young man she had meant to make her husband, the spectacle of Richard Lovel . . . his head low, his face still streaked with tears and still twisted with pain, sobbing, trembling, displaying a pair of loins that were swollen, crisscrossed with deep scarlet welts and still quivering from the efforts of his sinister guardian. (200)

The full impact of his humiliation penetrates Richard's mind as he stands shamed before Alicia and her friends:

¹⁰In the Autobiographical Sketch (1961) Glassco writes that he was aware of being made sexually excited at the age of six by the smell and feel of a rubber bathing cap he was required to wear to his swimming lessons at the baths near his school.

Richard stood before her in silence, gasping with the intensity of his misery. And then suddenly, added to his awareness of the marks on his loins, to his recollection of the cries which he had been unable to stifle, he was conscious of the real humiliation of the costume he was wearing,--the childish display of his bathing trunks, the ignominy of the rubber bathing cap. Putting his face in his hands, he burst into a flood of tears. (200)

Another plot variation between La Gouvernante and Harriet concerns the "Honeymoon piece," to quote Glassco's marginalia. In La Gouvernante, Miss Humphreys and James Lowell are married, take their wedding trip, then return to "Christchurch where the punishment-room has been fitted up" (Glassco's holograph comments, La Gouvernante 181). In Harriet, Miss Marwood and Richard go abroad to holiday in France at a château; where they are to be attended by two servants, Berthe and Angèle, who become participants in the boy's discipline. Subsequently, Harriet and Richard spend an idyllic year in travel: "like a long enchanted voyage overseas forever calm and beneath a sun that shone endlessly" (152). Their return to Christchurch, after a short visit to the "discomfort and gloom" of London, is described in terms of romantic harmony of nature and mood:

The day of the journey to Christchurch marked the visible beginning of spring. The sun was shining in a blue sky variegated with great white clouds, the air was soft, and the countryside, seen from the windows of the

train, was putting on its first and freshest green. Richard felt like one just released from prison. (165)

In a nice irony Richard is, of course, headed into his own gilded prison: "Everything had been altered; furniture, curtains, rugs and paper He remained open-mouthed before the revelation of taste and luxury 'Oh Harriet,' he whispered, pressing her hand, 'it is lovely . . .'" (165). Upstairs, Richard finds his own room transformed from its original "monastic bareness" to a chamber of luxury. Richard's new-found delight is soon cut short when he is forced to put on the punishment "harness of his boyhood" (182) and lie "face downwards on the bed" (182-183) to await his whipping, a punishment for masturbation. Christchurch has been transformed, but only so as to accentuate the perverse contrast between the security of the luxurious house and furnishings and the harsh tyranny of the dominatrix.

There can be little doubt, then, that Glassco borrowed heavily from the French novel of 1913. Not only had he owned the book, obviously read it, annotated the text in his own hand, but indicated in the McGill Journal that he had read La Gouvernante as early as 22 March 1938: "I received an erotic book from Paris about a week ago, La Gouvernante, not at all badly done, & frankly excitative & I was amazed and

appalled to see how completely it gave expression to the same erotic situations I had already projected: everything is the same--I might have written it myself in a fit of industry" (fol. 76).

While Glassco had claimed inspiration from other works in the writing of Harriet, he never did acknowledge publicly his debt to La Gouvernante. In the Preface to Harriet the author writes that in his search for an appropriate style for his pornographic novel "I found that the finest model I could take was Frances Trollope . . ." [vii]. In a letter written to Geoffrey Wagner on 26 October 1966 Glassco states: "I drew on Sadlier's Fanny by Gaslight for The English Governess--the look and smell of London in the 1880's, and Harriet's costumes" (PAC Vol. 4). (While I shall discuss The English Governess separately, Glassco often claimed the two novels were versions of the same book. On 19 April 1967 he wrote to Wagner that Harriet was a "diffuse and diluted version of The English Governess" [PAC Vol. 4]).¹¹

¹¹Michael Sadlier's novel is one that the author claims integrates much that is factual. In the author's Note he writes:

The institutions and scenes presented as characteristic of London night-life at the dates in question, are purely fictitious as regards locality and detailed description. But little is made to occur which, in some form or somewhere, did not actually take place. Similarly one or two of the

In fact, there is substantial evidence that at least one of these two closely related works was actually written by Glassco and his first wife. It is evident from the Glassco papers that Elma shared his interest in pornography. It was first suggested to me by Ralph and Betty Gustafson that the Glasscos collaborated on Harriet. During the 1960s, when the Gustafsons saw a good deal of the Glasscos, the couple claimed that they had indeed co-authored Harriet Marwood, Governess (Gustafson Interview, 12 October 1984).

characters, in themselves imaginary, have life-stories borrowed or blended from those of real people. The manner of speech and the slang used are as far as possible in period

. [v]

It is possible that Glassco did draw on Sadlier, although my review of this book did not suggest any dramatic similarities. Certainly the life of London is vividly described, much is made of the description of women's clothing, and there is one reference to flagellation when Fanny, on her own in London, changes her name to Kitty Cairns and "fell in with a Nepaulese [sic] Rajah--a man of fabulous wealth and sadistic tastes--who took her to Mother Stewart's School of Flagellation, just off Wardour Street" (301). This long novel (491 pages) is written in an unintentionally lugubrious style, and is a female picaresque. I can see no relation between this work and either Harriet Marwood, Governess or The English Governess.

As for Glassco's reference to Mrs. Trollope, it has the quality of a passing remark. His papers hold no references to corroborate the statement. It is perhaps of interest that the Trollope work the author mentions in the Preface to Harriet is Domestic Manners of the Americans published in England by Mrs. Trollope in 1832, some fifty years before the period of the 1880s Glassco had sought to evoke in Harriet.

The Queen's University Glassco Collection holds neither Sadlier's nor Trollope's novels.

There is evidence to support this story told to the Gustafsons. In the four files devoted to the "Correspondence Olympia Press & New English Library" (PAC Vol. 13), there are several letters between Glassco and Maurice Girodias. In a letter dated 7 June 1967, Glassco refers to Harriet as "a very piffling book--a product of my nonage. You will note that the lady on the dust-jacket (though well-constructed) has the countenance of a mental defective. A rare piece of symbolism this." On 20 June 1967 he wrote again to the publisher (now located in New York, following his court case and his bankruptcy in Paris in 1964-65): "A copy of the ineffable Harriet Marwood, Governess is going to you today by land mail. I had forgotten just how bad this book was, and I thank you again for encouraging Elma and myself to convert it into The English Governess back in 1959." In a letter from Girodias to Glassco dated 11 August 1967, the publisher refers to "the earlier version of the book under the title Harriet Marwood, Governess."¹² Early in the next year, on 11 January 1968 Glassco wrote:

¹²The McGill Collection holds a set of galleys of Harriet. The material is identified by Glassco (holograph): "These are the original galleys printed for The Jack Woodford Press in 1959 (only extant copy) [s.] John Glassco 20/iv/67[.] This novel composed Feb.-May 1958, at Foster by John Glassco."

As I told you in Paris last spring, I sold him [Aaron Shapiro] the U.S. bookrights (only), outright, for \$600.00 in 1966. You see, I had foolishly destroyed the manuscript [of Harriet Marwood, Governess] in Paris after Elma and I had converted it into The English Governess in 1959; and he owned the only set of galleys printed almost ten years earlier.

In the Preface to the 1976 edition of Harriet Glassco claims that The English Governess was merely the original title of Harriet Marwood, Governess; in fact, while the two novels have strong resemblances they are two quite different works. Further, he states that The English Governess was composed in 1954-55. While this is possible, there is no indication in the McGill Journal that Glassco was at work on such a work, at least one so named. On 11 April 1949 Glassco wrote that "A Firm Hand, a real livre d'une main, still amuses me occasionally, & may be finished this winter" (fol. 142). On 27 October 1952, he wrote that "A Firm Hand, my masochistic novel, all written except for the last two chapters. This is rubbish, but written for a public" (fol. 143). By 9 December 1954 he could record that "I also sent A Firm Hand to the Woodford Press: from the kind of outfit they seem to be, I am not too likely to see the MS. again,--but does it really matter? (fol. 147). Glassco was too pessimistic about this book; on 4 March 1956 he wrote that his book "Whipping Boy (formerly called A Firm Hand)" had been

"bought outright by Woodford Press for \$300.00" (fol. 150).¹³ No publication identified as Whipping Boy or A Firm Hand is to be found either in the Queen's Glassco Collection or listed in Fraser Sutherland's bibliography, and it will be remembered that Sutherland had full access to Glassco's library and papers when he was able to spend several days in Glassco's study at Jamaica Farm reviewing the writer's books and documents. Moreover, Sutherland was able to conduct his review before any of the Glassco library had been sold in small lots. (These facts were explained to me by Mrs. John Glassco in April 1982).

In addition to personal matters, and some discussion of local politics, throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s Glassco recorded the progress of his reading and writing in his Journal. Poems are discussed, books mulled over, and other pornographic

¹³It is possible that Whipping Boy (A Firm Hand) was the original version of Harriet, given that both MS were sent to The Jack Woodford Press in the 1950s. This is, however, conjecture.

On 22 March 1966 Glassco wrote to his friend Milton Kastello, a sometime companion from days in Paris c. 1928-1931:

I can't publish The E. Governess myself! Girodias owns the copyright. But I sold a much longer and tepid version called Whipping Boy to a man called Shapiro of New York the other day This little book may keep me good indefinitely; people seem to like it, perhaps because it has such a simple plot and happy ending! (PAC Vol. 13)

work first praised then damned, following Glassco's usual pattern of creation, elation, and rejection of his art. He was continually concerned with his manuscript of Cheverel Virtue. On 29 April 1948 he wrote of this erotic work he had been composing since 1938, the full title of which is The Accomplishments of Cheverel Virtue:

--About 10,000 words of Cheverel Virtue done. The book ought to be at least 5 times that,--and so, at my rate of writing it might be finished in another 5 years! Why do I write this kind of book? It has even less chance of being published than 'Adonis', and would simply not be read if it were. Well, I can honestly say about this work that it is being written for myself,---that is, for another 'myself' to read some day in the future.--And there are times, when I suddenly see it finished & as the whole I mean it to be, when I recover an instant of my lost habit of enthusiasm, and am then closest to content, for a half-hour or so.--And I would rather write ('have written', is the way I think of it) a book like this than any of the scores of 'brilliant', 'experimental', & so forth, novels now appearing every week. Cheverel, at least, has distinction; it's written not for a wide, ephemeral audience, but for a narrow (oh, so narrow), permanent one. I would rather have written, say Nerciat's Montrose, than all the works of Galsworthy. Just as I am still prouder of having written 'Adonis'--no, prouder is not the word, but let it stand--than I would of having written the complete works of some fashionable intellectual like Paul Goodman,--or even of some pseudo-intellectual like Sartre.

There: & now I will try to grind out a few hundred words of Cheverel.--The difficulty of writing this book is that I

would much rather dream it, in all its humorous & erotic perfection! (fol. 136)¹⁴

One can readily deduce that while Glassco was much occupied in writing pornography during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, there is no reference in his Journal to either The English Governess or Harriet Marwood, Governess, other than that, in the final entry to the McGill Journal, already referred to in this dissertation, when, on 24 March 1964 the author records

¹⁴The MS. of this work is held at PAC, Vol. 15. The holograph notes for the MS. are marked "(written ca. 1938) done in 18th-century style. Abandoned 1939." The theme is a familiar one for Glassco, the flogging and debasement of a child, in this instance a boy of ten years, after which punishment the child is taken into "Nanny's" bed, Nanny being in this case a Scottish woman of the name Mrs. Nambie. A sample from page 5 of the TS will give a reader a good general idea of the style of this novel:

having first heated herself by whipping me, she then took me to bed, where I was obliged to gratify her with caresses of a nature hardly to be described I grew to accept the duty, and without entering into particulars, I may say that I was become, before my twelfth year, as expert as any French Monsieur in the communication of lively, though not solid satisfaction.

Soon a French governess, Madame Labiche, is engaged to take over responsibility for the boy. A Lesbian relationship develops between the women, the boy is caught "spying," and is punished by the new governess who is only too eager to participate in the various birchings, canings and floggings. The child is harshly punished for becoming sexually aroused. In short, the plot and theme are, with variations, similar to Glassco's other works of flagellatory pornography.

The "Adonis" referred to in this quotation is another pornographic work mentioned in the McGill Journal. I am unaware of any evidence of an extant manuscript.

that he has indeed written "one good work of pornography," that being The English Governess (fol. 160).

It would seem, therefore, most unlikely that Glassco wrote Harriet "in the comparatively short period of four months, finishing it on March 4th, 1955" as he writes in the Preface [v]. The author's claim, in the same Preface, that he had been inspired to create Harriet while, early in 1954, he found himself "reading Eulenburg's important pre-Freudian study Sadismus und Masochismus 1898," subsequently beginning to "cast about feverishly for these 'educational' [i.e. masochistic] novels" is not corroborated in any documents I have consulted.¹⁵ I have already stated that Glassco had read La Gouvernante, the very model of such "educational" novels, in 1938, and was himself writing this type of literature at least from the time of his recovery from tuberculosis in 1935. In short, one is unconvinced about the veracity of the author's statements in the Preface to Harriet Marwood, Governess.

It is impossible to prove whether Harriet was written before The English Governess as Glassco claims

¹⁵Glassco's library at Queen's includes Albert Eulenburg's Algolagnia (New York: The New Era, 1934) trans. Harold Kent; the collection does not include, however, Sadismus und Masochismus.

and his correspondence with Girodias suggests. The evidence, which seems quite convincing, is that Harriet was written with the participation of Elma, sometime after their meeting in 1956, and modeled quite clearly on La Gouvernante. Elma, unlike Glassco's second wife, was interested in pornography, and encouraged his work in this genre. The Glassco Collection at Queen's includes twenty-eight pages of photocopied holograph corrections identified as "John Glassco: From 'The English Governess' (1958) (3000 words)." Although not yet married, John Glassco and Elma von Colmar were living together in 1958, both in Foster and in Paris, where presumably they collaborated on the Governess novel. This whole discussion is further complicated by the fact that one is unable to confirm whether the titles here used, Harriet referring to the longer work, Governess to the shorter, are consistent. Without extant manuscripts, and given Glassco's rather highly developed tendency towards mendacity about his oeuvre, the scholar's task is, at best, challenging. His own statement on the matter was expressed in a letter to the New York book-dealer J.B. Rund dated 23 March 1970:

Maurice Girodias is right. I am the author of both the Olympia Press The English Governess and the Grove Press Harriet Marwood. The latter was the original version, written in 1955, while the former was a 'stepped-up' version (done partly with tongue in cheek!) specially made for Olympia.

Press in 1960, the original having proved unsaleable My intention [in Harriet] was to produce a work of flagellation which would be warm, cosy, domestic, even sentimental, and reserved in the Victorian manner. Having looked in vain for such a work, I decided to write it myself. (PAC Vol. 14)

Rund was, eventually, to sell his copy of the Grove edition of Harriet, as the following excerpts from a letter, sent to Glassco on 18 April 1974 from David Lass, Cataloguer for English at Trinity College Library, Dublin, attests:

The British Library has the 1967 copy, [Grove, Harriet Marwood] which has the unique distinction of having belonged originally to Mr. Jeffrey Rund of New York, including your own dedication to him and one of your letters to Mr. Rund, pasted into the inside front cover of flyleaf.

The first of these letters, dated March 13th 1970, states that the Grove Press Harriet Marwood, was the original version, written in 1955, whereas The English Governess was a stepped up version specially made for Olympia Press in 1960, the original having proved unsaleable.

This appears to contradict the account given in the Dictionary of Contemporary Poets [which states that The English Governess was first published in Paris by Olympia Press, then reprinted in expurgated form as Harriet Marwood, Governess in New York, Grove 1967].

I would tend to agree with Mr. Jeffrey Rund's pencilled notes, on the rear corner stating his opinion that "this is one of the best written (if not the best written) erotic works of this century in English.

. . . .

You certainly succeed in illustrating the growth of the pleasurable sensations associated with flagellation, which is a common theme of Victorian erotica, as well as that of being the 'helpless victim of the furious rage of a beautiful woman' as Swinburne stated in "The Whippingham Papers" London 1886.

. . . .

[Harriet Marwood], recalled certain passages in Swinburne's Lesbia Brandon, I might almost say influences, particularly in the growth of the sado-masochistic relationship between Bertie and his tutor Denham, & between Bertie and his elder sister Lesbia Brandon. (PAC Vol.13)

What of the book that is known as The English Governess, the "edition" of Harriet that Glassco usually referred to as the "dirty version"? It does appear that this book was first published by Girodias's Ophelia Press in Paris in 1960 under the pseudonym "Miles Underwood," a name which Glassco claimed to have "dreamed up on an hour's notice to meet a printer's deadline in Paris in 1959. It signifies a man who would be under by miles and miles. A 'docile' type, à la Justice Weekly" (Letter to Milton Kastello, 4 May 1967, PAC Vol. 13). The edition held in the Glassco Papers at the Public Archives of Canada is the 1969

issue by the Parisian Ophelia Press, printed from the 1960 plates.¹⁶

Richard Lovel is the young hero of The English Governess, although the narrator tells us that the lad was called "Smuggy" at school "in recognition of his sexual prowess at the nightly sessions of onanism in the dormitory, where he displayed a singular felicity in producing repeated erection and orgasm" (10). For his talents, young Smuggy is expelled from school, and sent home to his father who had been, heretofore, enjoying the company of his mistress Kate, "an Irish woman of great beauty though humble extraction" (11). The happy couple decide to hire a governess for Richard, so that they may get on with their preferred pleasures, particularly anal intercourse, a pastime Mr. Lovel introduced to Kate when she was a child of twelve "out of consideration for her virginity" (13).

Before long however, Smuggy has taken up masturbation once again, for which transgression Miss Marwood, his governess, is obliged to begin administering the spankings which are a feature of the novel from about page 46 onwards. Mr. Lovel is pleased

¹⁶The printing information on page 189 of The English Governess is given as: "Printed by Imprimerie Georges Frère, Tourcoing/June 1960/Dépôt légal: 2^e trimestre 1960." All quotations in this dissertation are taken from this edition.

to observe that Kate is sexually aroused by the sound of the thrashings and Richard's resultant screams of pain, providing all concerned with a "veritable ecstasy of pain, humiliation and rapture" (68).

Miss Marwood soon takes young Richard to live in seclusion (save for the servants) at Christchurch, where she gleefully contemplates her plans: "And how thoroughly I shall corrupt him, how deeply will make him love me before I'm through!" (76). To this end, Harriet has Richard fitted for a leather harness to be worn during his frequent beatings. His apparatus is acquired just in time, as Harriet soon finds Richard licking her shoes then masturbating into them. Her reaction is quick and pleasurable: she whips him and experiences orgasm while doing so.

Richard thus well cared-for in the country, Mr. Lovel is prepared to take up life abroad; he and Kate set up house in a Mediterranean villa, a home they share with a Black girl of sixteen (Louise), a Turkish boy of fourteen (Ali), and a "statuesque middle-aged German woman, a former masseuse" (Lottchen) (157). This is a household of enormous sexual vitality and variety, their bliss being disturbed not at all by receiving a telegram from Richard saying: "Harriet and I being married today. Wish me joy, Richard" (160).

Back in England Harriet sets out the ground rules for the marriage to the compliant Richard: "For you must realise that in this marriage of ours it is I who will rule, and you who will obey,--above all in the matter of our most intimate connections" (165). Richard not only accepts this marriage contract, but enthusiastically performs cunnilingus on Harriet; for his trouble he receives a satisfactory whipping, then willingly resumes his oral love-making.

The honeymoon passed at Christchurch, Harriet is assured that she "had made of him a finished libertine, a connoisseur of every kind of delight to be enjoyed with a woman" (178). Within a short span of time, Richard is begging "in low and passionate tones," for the whip which "he now craved with every nerve in his body" (184). Harriet has now achieved her goal: "And how thoroughly I shall corrupt him, how deeply I will make him love me before I'm through!" The novel draws to a close in her moment of absolute victory:

She smiled in the semi-darkness. The promised goal had been reached, her cup was full at last: she enjoyed the entire possession and control of the man whom she loved with all that mixture of tenderness and cruelty which marked her nature. He was indeed, she thought, such as she had made him: a creature dependent on her body and soul, the plaything of her humours and caprice, the helpless, beloved and obedient instrument of her desires (185)

A good deal shorter than Harriet (some 70,000 words), The English Governess is about 45,000 words in length and as this brief plot outline suggests, both more varied and more lively than Harriet. The self-centred sexual marathons of Mr. Lovel, Kate, and their attendants are detailed but relieved by an almost humorous good cheer. In short, The English Governess, while thoroughly pornographic, is less obsessive, less fixated on the perversion of masochism. There is something of the freshness and vigour of healthy sexuality. This is not to suggest that Governess is in any way "wholesome"; masturbating in shoes is not a common preoccupation one would think; but it does have a spirit that is bawdy and lively. In contrast, Harriet is the very model of that world of exhausted aestheticism and exoticism that is the mark of the fatal woman. Praz asserts that in the literature of the fatal woman the lover is usually a youth and maintains a passive attitude; he is, moreover, obscure and inferior either in condition or in physical exuberance to the woman (215). Praz further states that this fatal woman comes to full flower in England through Gautier's disciple, Swinburne, where the obsession is expressed through a complex mixture of adoration and terror (229). In Harriet the passivity of Richard is exemplified in the scene where, costumed

for the beach, he turns to catch his reflection in a mirror: "The figure that he saw reflected was, except in the matter of breasts, almost indistinguishable from that of a girl" (196). Not only is Harriet his dominatrix, she has virtually extinguished his sexual identity. He has no name, no purpose, no job, no rôle in the world but to be her slave: "'Yes, dear boy,' she said softly, stroking his hair, 'henceforth it will be, as always, just you and I'" (203).

The exuberance that marks at least some passages of The English Governess is missing utterly from Harriet. There are no other sexual encounters, nothing to distract from the claustrophobic development of the perverse creation of the "perfect" sado-masochistic relationship, where in the face of debauchery absolute control is the ideal.

Harriet was carried to the height of pleasure by this exercise. The clear whistling of the cane, the shrieking of the boy, and the sight of the helpless flesh undergoing its torture, made her blood seethe in her veins. She would have liked to continue the punishment--ah, for ever!--but her good sense and self-possession, which in the midst of her wildest excesses never deserted her, restrained her.
(40)

The "perfection" thus expressed in Harriet Marwood, Governess is the utterly private, absolutely self-contained love of the whipped boy and his beautiful, controlling dominatrix, an idea discussed by Glassco in

a letter to his friend Geoffrey Wagner on 10 December 1966:

Your ideas on 'sadism' jibe with mine. Civilized sadism (we must find another word for it: Denhamism [refers to Denham in Swinburne's Lesbia Brandon] comes to mind, but would doubtless be confused with the recent fetichism for denim trousers) has of course nothing to do with whips, blood, tortures, etc. I have an idea the real sadist feels he is expressing the most intense form of love, and his attitude and acts of domination (only symbolised by the infliction of punishment) are conceived by him as being indications of a deep and protective regard, and moreover as actually affording a moral (not a masochistic or even sexually toned) pleasure to him vis-à-vis. The ideal partner sought by the sadist would thus be someone who craves the security and assurance of absolutely boundless love and finds the proof of it in despotic, possessive behaviour: for her, or him, the motto or epigraph is "Whom God loves, he chastises", and the more, the more. A kind of absolute idealism. (PAC Vol. 4)

Glassco expressed similar ideas in a letter to Wagner dated 7 December 1972:

Your aljolagnia book sounds great. The subject is so extensive, and really crucial these days. And so damned mysterious, after all. Or perhaps I have no analytic faculty . . . I can only see it in poetic terms, as I groped after it in my poem "The Crows", as

The retreat into erotic reverie
The dream of Arthur
That dark Avilion where there is no death

Locked in each other's loving arms . . .
(PAC Vol.4)

The most important literary correspondence in Glassco's papers, important in that it is extensive, fluent, honest, and almost entirely devoted to the discussion of erotic literature, is that between John Glassco and Geoffrey Wagner. The two men met only once, over dinner at the University Club in New York City on 25 February 1977, Glassco's wife having arranged the trip and driven her husband to New York. (Such excursions were typical of the sorts of comforts arranged by Mrs. Glassco for her husband's pleasure, no doubt helping to compensate for earlier disappointments such as Glassco's having had to cancel an engagement in 1967.) Glassco had written to Wagner on 20 February 1967 to explain the reasons for his change in plans:

My wife [Elma] was suddenly taken seriously ill and hospitalised by ambulance in the middle of the night. Intravenous feeding, blood-transfusions and oxygen just saved her. She is out of danger now, but convalescence will be long I am still badly shaken. (PAC, Vol. 4)

Wagner was, at the time of the epistolary friendship, 1966-1977, an academic at the City University of New York, an old Etonian, a writer of considerable reputation, author of Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) among other works, and husband to a notable painter, Colleen Browning. Wagner began the

correspondence with a holograph letter of 10 January 1966: "I am a proud owner of Under the Hill and would like to congratulate you on it as much, as Beardsley did you ever read my Lake Lovers? The Observer seemed to like (and understand it) Alas, there is so little genuinely tasteful & authentic in this field today"

Glassco replied promptly; on the 14th of January, he commented on Beardsley:

Beardsley's own interest in flagellation is indicated only by his frontispiece to John Davidson's Earl Lavender and by an untitled fragment of a short horned satyr whipping a rather broad-based female who is tied very elegantly to a pillar--the last possibly done after Carracci.

In the same letter, Glassco instituted a discussion of Swinburne. This writer, and in particular his Lesbia Brandon, was of such interest to these two highly literate men drawn together by their particularly interest in pornography, particularly flagellatory erotica, that hardly a letter passed between them without some reference to Swinburne. Thus a vigorous correspondence began, one both literate and literary. While the basis of their friendship was a passionate fondness for flagellatory literature, their shared interests, reflecting their intelligence, artistic

gifts and urbanity, went far beyond this shared "perversity."

On 7 February 1966 Glassco, again in discussion of Swinburne, introduced the concept of absolute power exerted on one hand and embraced on the other: "the real beauty of that psycho-sexual situation as a form of love." A month later, on 7 March 1966 Glassco discussed The Rodiad and referred to his plans for Squire Hardman (although in later correspondence he forgot that he had told Wagner that he was composing the Squire and trotted out the fiction about the book having been composed by George Colman. The truth emerged eventually, and neither party in the correspondence seemed concerned about this little riddle). In fact Wagner was most taken by Squire Hardman, and later (19 March 1972) asked for a copy for a friend expected from England:

Could I buy another copy of Squire Hardman from you, please, and I do mean buy. My own, no. 2, was specially bound and Iris Murdoch (who drinks in this stuff, you know, and saw the epigraph to The Prefects) is coming over and wants a copy. I should like to give her one.¹⁸

¹⁸The reference to The Prefects by P.N. Dedeaux (New York: Taurus, 1970) is to a presentation copy of this erotic novel to John Glassco from Geoffrey Wagner "Florent 'Squire Hardman'!" (The John Glassco Collection, Queen's University, Kingston). P.N. Dedeaux is a pseudonym for Wagner.

Naturally, Glassco was flattered and replied on 24 March 1972:

No, you cannot buy a copy of Squire Hardman! I have 4 copies left, and they are just taking up room, and anyway it would be a pleasure to present one to Iris Murdoch, through you, with a chaste inscription to her in my flowing hand. Would it be acceptable to her to have it this way? I don't wish to presume, naturally"

In September 1975, Glassco received a kindly reply from Murdoch:

Squire Hardman has come. Thank you very much. I am not an expert, but it seems to me extremely good. It was opened by the censor, but when he saw that it was just a dull learned eighteenth century poem he closed it up again! . . . I think the production is delightful. I would love to read it to an elderly bibliophile friend, but perhaps had better not. Thank you! It is a venerable poem. My very best wishes to you--perhaps we shall meet one day. [s.] Iris Murdoch (PAC Vol. 13)

This document, a poem of 1320 lines composed in heroic couplets, was begun about 1952 and published in 1967. It has received little critical attention, owing no doubt to the fact that only fifty copies were printed, at Glassco's own expense, by Gaudet Printing of Waterloo, Quebec. The exception to this neglect is Michael Darling's "John Glassco's Squire Hardman: a Poem and its Contexts," which examines the poem "as part of a continuing literary hoax begun in nineteenth-century England . . . as a document in the history of

flagellative literature . . . as a poem that finds its natural place in the Glassco canon" (21). Darling reminds his reader that this work shows Glassco in familiar roles: first, as perpetrator of hoaxes, claiming that Squire was written by George Colman the Younger (1762-1836), "a popular playwright and poet in his day"; and secondly, as deviser of mock-scholarly introductions. More originally, Darling explains that Glassco's Squire is modelled on the edition of The Rodiad, specifically on "the third and final printing recorded in the National Union Catalogue," that being "the Cayme Press pamphlet of 1927, with a preface by Yvon Nicolas" (22). Further, Darling states that "Glassco deliberately set out to imitate the Cayme Press Rodiad in his design of the title-page of Squire Hardman. In the Glassco Papers [in the McGill Collection] is a mock-up title-page of Squire Hardman with the author's pencilled note at the top of the page: 'Imitate title of "The Rodiad" as far as possible" (22). Darling claims that "Glassco knew perfectly well that The Rodiad had not been written by [George] Colman" (22), justifying his assertion by quoting a letter Glassco had written to him, dated 21 January 1979: "This poem [Squire] is my own, and only foisted on Colman just as The Rodiad was by Moxon. Poor Colman" Darling notes that "Glassco here

confuses Moxon with Hotten, who had replaced Moxon as Swinburne's publisher following the outcry over Poems and Ballads" (30).

Possibly Glassco did know that The Rodiad had been composed by Colman, at least he did by 1979. It would appear that he was unaware of that fact in 1952 when he recorded in the McGill Journal that "I have an erotic poem, Squire Hardman, in heroic couplets, half-written--inspired by Colman's Rodiad. It is quite good so far" (fol. 143). On 9 July 1954, in a summing-up entry where the author reviewed his work, Glassco noted that "Squire Hardman finished (it's quite good: I must have it printed this fall)" (fol. 144). In fact the book was not published until 1967.

In addition to describing the details of the poem's composition and its possible literary antecedents, Darling observes that, apart from the fact that the poet of Squire is a more accomplished writer than that of The Rodiad, the essential difference between the two works is that in The Rodiad the beatings are administered by a man, whereas in Squire the punishing figure is a woman. This is, Darling continues, "by far the most common scenario in flagellant writing. The fantasy of being dominated by

a woman in an elaborate ritual of crime and punishment is the essence of flagellant pornography" (24).¹⁹

This mock-heroic on the pattern of Pope opens with the traditional invocation to the muse; it is not, however, the muse of poetry who is invoked, but rather she of "Domestic Discipline":

HAIL, goddess of the stern and bended brow,
Revered and worshiped, yet unnam'd till now
Ev'n in this land where Thou hast most acclaim,
And where the rites conducive to Thy fame
Have grown to be a kind of national game,--
Hail, dear Domestic Discipline, the nurse
Of Albion's fame (for better or for worse)
And cast a fav'ring spell upon my verse!
And Ye, the votaries of her Deity,
Her lovely priestesses, where'er ye be,
Whether in castle, cottage, boarding school,
Nursery or workhouse, Ye that bear the rule
O'er British youth and British backsides: hail,
You strait-laced Tyrants of head and tail! (1)

The heroine of this poem is "One pre-eminent in the multitude / Of members of your whipping Sisterhood" (2), a woman born Mary Anne Lashley but since ten years the wife of Squire Hardman. The reader is invited to accompany the Squire as voyeur, an idea much enlarged

¹⁹Darling's principal source for the theory of flagellant pornography is Stephen Marcus's The Other Victorians. Darling relates that Marcus "argues that the flagellant fantasy is a homosexual one" (30). Darling quotes Marcus in noting that "the entire immense literature of flagellation produced during the Victorian period . . . represents a kind of last-ditch compromise with and defence against homosexuality" (260).

in the unpublished Major Blueberry, when the narrator suggests that:

Imagine to yourself a Guest, therefore,
In the same house, and one dividing door
Betwixt his chamber and the children's room,-
A Bachelor of fortune, one to whom
Such sounds as from th'adjoining chamber come
Are music sweeter than the heavenly spheres':
He stops, enraptured by the cries he hears,
His heart in's mouth, his whole soul in his ears:
Each whistling stroke, each howl and plea and sob,
Make his blood boil, his very being throb;
For he, by taste and moral judgement both,
Favours the drastic governance of youth:
The study of the whip was, to his mind,
The "properest study" of all womankind,
And woman's proper sphere--a boy's behind. (5)

The narration traces the Squire's meeting with the young governess, Miss Lashley, and his determination to have her for his own; in a parody of the quest, he stalks her in the garden, finds her, and rhapsodizes over her: "O blessed hour when first I knew my Dear!"

(9) The squire proposes marriage to this "queen of Flagellants" (12).²⁰ In what is, however, a variation on the pattern of Harriet Marwood, Governess and The English Governess, it is the woman who is unable to bear children, rather than she who demands that her

²⁰The copy of Squire Hardman held at the PAC (Vol. 6) shows "queen of flagellants"; this copy has been corrected in Glassco's hand and marked, holograph, "Author's copy, rec'd April 3, 1967/March 7 1967, first day of printing/with corrections by author--and two illustrations by Felipe Core which were not used. [s.] J.G." All quotations from Squire Hardman are taken from this copy.

victim/lover be sterilized. In responding to the Squire's offer of marriage, Mary Anne replies:

"Yet ere I answer,--ah, I must refer
 "To your ambition of a family, Sir:
 "Did I not so, I should be false indeed
 "Both to your trust and my own simple creed;
 "For let me tell you, Sir, I cannot breed--
 (14)

To this unhappy news, the Squire responds with glee:
 "My bliss, indeed, was now without alloy" (14). The Squire, like the Governess in Harriet and Governess, wants no children; he addresses Mary Anne: "My dear Miss Lashley--soon to be my Bride!-- / . . . Know your misfortune makes you twice as dear!" (15) and explains that:

"To breed was never part of my intent,
 "And when I spoke of family cares, I meant
 "No more than that our household should be grac'd
 "By a few boys beneath your guidance plac'd:
 "Let them be workhouse foundlings,--two or three
 "Tight youngsters pick'd for bloom and bonhomie,
 "Whose wholesome discipline and due correction
 "Should be entirely under your direction." (15)

When Mary Anne accepts his proposal, the Squire at last realizes his ambition of "matrimonial paradise": "Of seeing that divine phenomenon, / A wife and governess roll'd into one!" (15); an ambition shared equally by Miss Lashley: "Both Wife and Governess,--ah, blessed dream / Of double rapture in a single scheme!" (16). Soon married, the happy couple set about securing the

means for "the joys ahead / When whipping sports should ready us for bed" (16); that means being satisfied by a visit to the workhouse: "The workhouse visited, the papers sign'd / And three fine bastards to our tender care / Committed, with a deferential air" (17).

The Squire and his Lady settle into domestic bliss: "From that day forward all was sheer delight, / With whipping morning, afternoon and night" (18). While it is Mary Anne who inflicts the beatings on the children, the Squire is an enthusiastic if passive participant:

But now 'tis time the real game began,
The sport that warms the English gentleman
To amorous play,--and in a twinkling, see
How Tom is stretched across my good right knee,
His trembling legs close gripp'd between my thighs,
His hands secur'd in mine as in a vise:
When Mary whisks his shirt up to his waist,
How more expertly could a boy be plac'd?
I smile to see her raise the strap, for who
Has now a better vantage-point and view
O' the' spheres of operation than I do? (25).

It is at this point in Squire that disconcerting autobiographical suggestions intrude on what has been, in the words of Glassco's preface to the poem, "a powerful, livid and high-spirited piece of erotic verse" [ix]. An eight-year-old child, Bob, is introduced: "Another ev'ning, and 'tis Bobby's turn; / For certain, every eight-year-old must learn / The salutary influence of pain" (27). "Bob" was the name

of one of two imaginary sons, "Jim" being the other, invented by Archie Glassco to bedevil his true sons, David and John. Cobb confirms that Archie Glassco was a sadist who appeared to enjoy the anticipation of punishing his sons nearly as much as the act itself, an opinion held by Cecilie Glassco as well. Cobb writes that "Sometimes the beatings, with inventive cruelty, were scheduled over three days" (8). If no fault could be found, one could, it appears, be created in the Glassco household: "David, quite an athlete, would be thrashed if he didn't measure up to his father's visions of excellence in athletics", whereas John "was not only good at sports, he was extremely bright at school. His father therefore let John know, early on, that in his eyes he was the fool of the family. No matter how well either son did, both understood it would never be good enough" (Cobb 8). It would appear that Mrs. Glassco did nothing to protect her sons. It is possible, if Glassco's perception of his mother's behaviour as related in the Autobiographical Sketch is accurate, that Beatrice Glassco gained some sexual satisfaction from the punishments meted out to her sons by her husband. In the "Sketch" Glassco writes that he doubts that his mother was fully aware of the sexual nature of her passive complicity in the beatings.

There is a passage in Squire, where Squire Hardman relates his pleasure in tormenting "Bob" by first setting him tasks beyond his child-strength and ability, by then observing the boy's growing apprehension at the prospect of punishment "deserved" by his inevitable failure, and finally by his delighted observation of the beating of the child by Mary Anne:

At last, with low'ring brow, I bid him sit
 And work some problem well beyond his wit,
 Or find the answer to a monstrous sum
 Whose figures stretch from here to kingdom come.
 --Then comes the sport (of pleasures not the least)
 Which serves as appetizer to the feast:
 Delightful game! to watch a lad essay
 Some hopeless task you've set him, to survey
 The fix'd and furrow'd brow, the anxious air
 With which he brings his little pow'rs to bear,
 And as they flag, to note the trembling limbs,
 The cheek that flushes and the eye that brims;
 To mark how well the moist and quivering lip
 Bespeaks his mounting terror of the whip,
 And how the very fear of flogging serves
 To dull his wits by harrowing up his nerves!

(27-28)

Mary Anne, having observed this terrorizing and humiliating of Bob is soon ready to play her part: "All ready for her favourite exercise" (29). The Squire seizes the paper on which the frightened child has attempted his sums; the man's reaction is predictable: "--Why, what's the meaning of this silly scrawl? / Is this what you've to show me? Is this all?" (29). The terrified child, obeying the Squire's orders, takes down his breeches:

He whimpers and obeys; then trembling-tense,
 Awaits in a fine fever of suspense
 The moment when his caning shall commence.
 But Mary, mistress of the flogging art
 In all its branches, knows the proper part
 Played by a culprit's sense of blows to come,
 And still defers the onslaught on his b--m:
 Four times the whistling rattan cuts the air
 A nail's breadth from that cow'ring derrière,
 And each delusive stroke, with threat'ning sound
 Makes the affrighted flesh leap and rebound,--
 A sight at once so pleasant and so droll,
 I cannot choose but laugh, upon my soul;
 When all at once, and with no farther warning,
 The cane makes contact with the seat of learning
 In strokes so rapid, brisk and sure of aim,
 Th'astonished skin is suddenly aflame
 Almost before 'tis conscious of the same! (31)

This passage is, to quote Glassco's preface, "elegantly vicious." Not even the rollicking rhythm and ludicrous employment of the heroic couplet can quite mask the darkening tone. Darling, in choosing to discuss Squire in other than biographical terms, says that he does "not wish to speculate on the nature of Glassco's upbringing" (30); nevertheless he feels impelled to acknowledge that some "early memories" echo in Glassco's work, those to which the author "alludes in the preface to Harriet Marwood, Governess" (30).

Another biographical reverberation occurs in the description of the beating of the "eldest lad," Dick. Dick is a child of spirit who attempts to stand up to the tyrant Squire. John Glassco was described to me in these terms by his sisters-in-law Cecilie Glassco and Amy Glassco, and by his niece, Diana Cumming. He was

beaten, abused and insulted by his father for his pains. In Squire, the narrator states:

For Dick has spirit, and I love, by Gad,
To see he's neither milksop nor poltroon:
Indeed, I've seen him flogg'd into a swoon,
His skin from waist to ankles strip'd and
 swoln,
Ere he'd admit to having lied or stolen--
When he was innocent! I love to see
Such indications of Integrity,
And how a stubborn will can match the power
Of a good horsewhip laid on for an hour.
The boy, God bless him, has a temper too,
Which even the fear of whipcord can't subdue,

....

For how comely 'tis and how refreshing
To cap a youngster's tantrum with a thrashing,
To raise his choler by your ridicule,
And then exasperate the little fool
Until his sullen silence or his rage
Brings down the punishment that fits his age!
(32-33)

Presented here as fantasy, these descriptions, if stripped of their form, would portray the degradation of the child whose innocence is corrupted before he encounters experience. The boy Dick is so firmly enmeshed in this evil web, that no matter what he does or says, there is no escape. These are the Squire's words:

Thus by degrees I activate his bile
With cutting comment and sarcastic smile,
Till, grown at once both angry and dismayed,
He speaks,--and there's occasion ready made.
"What's that you say, Sir!" I inquire at once;
I turn his explanations to affronts,
Then lead him on to make some statement rash:
Whate'er he answers, he must have the lash;

While if he holds his tongue, 'tis all the same
 (Silent or speaking, he must lose the game):
 (33-34)

Dick must endure even a more suffering until
 "th'exhausted culprit hangs at last, / Flogg'd to the
 most exacting Husband's taste" (37). The pain of the
 boys feed the sexual appetites of both the Squire and
 Mary Anne; he can say "I live, indeed, an enviable
 life" (38) and enjoy the respect of all: "And thus
 throughout the neighbourhood I've won / The excellent
 regard of everyone / As the best husband underneath the
 sun" (39).

Dick grows to young manhood, seeking out a career
 as a "drummer-boy": "Meaning to serve his Country and
 his King / By making a good cat-o'-nine tails sing,--"
 (41). Dick is well prepared for his choice of life
 for, as the Squire would tell us: "For to what
 business was he better train'd / And for what work is
 he so well equipp'd? / The taste for whipping comes
 from being whipped" (41).

Having sent Dick out into the world, the Squire's
 mind fixes on "a yearning towards the Infantile: / The
 image of a chit of three or four, / Arrayed in tucker,
 bib and pinafore, / Has haunted me for the past month
 and more" (43). His mind maddened by thoughts of
 "plump posteriors and baby thighs," the Squire
 confesses:

Oh, how I long to see one ta'en in hand
 By Mary Anne, and made to understand
 The causes and effects of discipline
 Applied in season to his infant skin! (43)

Not any child will do. The babe must be a boy; the Squire's sexual interest is in immature males only. Further, his delight is made more intense by the subterfuge of obtaining a small boy conceived by himself and Polly, a peasant girl. Needless to say, Mary Anne is unaware that the Squire's relationship to the boy is one of parent and child. Recalling the child Joseph's birth, the Squire relates in tones of moralizing hypocrisy:

She bore a handsome boy, it was to me
 A source of satisfaction doubly sweet
 To turn her and her bastard into the street.
 Since then her progress to the common sewer
 Was (as I had expected) swift and sure:
 A fine example of the classic pattern
 Of wanton metamorphos'd into slattern. (48)

The Squire has his way, takes little Joseph from Polly and installs the boy in his household where Mary Anne will see to it that "My bastard gets the thrashing of his life" (54). Now fulfilled, the Squire pauses over his tea to "plunge in Philosophic reverie." He sees in himself the force of destiny: "Design'd by Fate to fill a Tyrant's rôle / Aye, every Amateur of whipping sport / Was born a man of the despotic sort, / (55). In the concluding lines of the poem, the Squire

observes that the impulses of the "despotic sort" can be contained only in the domestic constraint he enjoys:

One meant to be the scourge of humankind
 Had not his inclinations been confin'd
 Within domestic bounds where, Lord of all,
 He still can be a Phalaris--in small.
 --Well, that's the part that I'm content to play:
 I ask no other, more extended sway
 Than o'er the infant skins I love to flay:
 Give me but urchins, and good whips and canes,
 And let Ambition addle other brains! (55)

The words of the Squire, uttered in the contentment he feels lost in a brown study over teatime, his attention diverted to those "sounds come flashing thro' the air" which remind him, most pleasantly, that:

. . . Mary's at her task, ev'n now,
 Of teaching Tom and Bobby something new
 Thro' application of a good bamboo,--
 A welcome noise, from which I can conclude
 My darling's in a proper flogging mood (54)

are only too evocative of those addressed by Glassco to his own father in the unpublished poem "Sonnet" ("To my Father"), composed in 1932, a generation before the Squire was written:

Thick Shoulders thou thrasher of children

Wake! Wake! thou leaden man!

What not? (Sleeps tight, gusset-trouser'd, tight
 as he can)

Ah well, thou hast lost life, nothing's left to
 wait

For:--Yet would thou might'st grow less
 scarebabe, less elate,

Less sleeper, more weeper, more remorseful, more
 immortal Man!

With learning all's too late, long late,--ay all
 too late.

There is a strange parallel in this poem, that Glassco should have used the verse form employed by Gerard Manley Hopkins to praise his God, to call up the pain inflicted by his demon-father who "set himself to become / Great God to a little child" ("The Whole Hog" in The Deficit Made Flesh).

My interpretation of Squire Hardman concentrates less on the poetic devices such as Glassco's use of puns, or his manipulation of incident for humorously bathetic effect as he does in the envoi when addressing the "Genius of Flagellation," or on his dexterity with the heroic couplet, and his sustained tone of cheerfulness deliberately incongruous to the content, and more on the dark ground of the poem. I have done this, not to suggest that Glassco's poetic accomplishment cannot be read as an "elegantly vicious" work quite independent of the author's own experience, but to indicate that it is the autobiographical elements that darkens the tone and presents us, in Glassco's words in his Introduction to Squire Hardman, with the fact that "we are faced with a wantonness which is hardly masked at all" (vii).

The figure of the Squire, superficially the man "like other Debauchees" (56), and the artistic rendering of Archie Glassco, superficially the "fine upstanding fellow, a good husband, devoted father, salt

of the earth" (Cobb 8) meet and become one in the tragically-evil parent portrayed in "The Whole Hog":

To be the Absolute to someone else:
Figure the concitations of the demon
That drove him to this! Like a hunted beast,
Like a starving man, like a falling stone,
He followed his blind will to its end in nature,
Projected himself into infinity
And silvered a looking-glass in his son's eye.

In the letter to Wagner (24 March 1972) earlier mentioned, Glassco discussed another erotic work en train: "I am . . . at present writing a rather ambitious pornographic book, The Memoirs of Major Blueberry, whose episodes cover all the known aberrations, as seen through the sympathetic eyes of the good major, a sophisticated and eclectic voyeur." This book never saw publication, although in a letter dated 16 May 1970 Glassco wrote that, while he had given up on Major Blueberry he had "sketch[ed] out the dialogue for a phonograph record (3 women's voices, one boy's, and all kinds of whacking noises 'off') to be called, The Governess." Faced with the difficulties of production of such a disk, its marketing, not to mention possible difficulties concerning subject matter, Glassco left another idea unrealized.²¹

²¹The MS of "Major Blueberry" is held at the Public Archives of Canada. It describes the voyeuristic adventures of one Major Blueberry (who the author first called "Actaeon", in reference no doubt to the myth described by Graves in The Greek Myths, Volume One):

III.

For all his many false starts, as typical of the pornography as of his other creative work, Glassco persisted with his writing. Throughout the course of his correspondence with Geoffrey Wagner, Glassco continued to derive and develop his ideas on eroticism in literature. As I suggested earlier in this chapter, these ideas are among the earliest considerations of literature included in the McGill Journal, taking second place only to the poetry.

On "March 6th" [1934] Glassco, ill in bed with fever, recorded that his poem "'A Child in the House' came back from 'American Mercury' My poetry seems very trivial, cheap stuff" (fol. 24). Despite such disappointments, and persistent doubts about his own poetic gifts, he persevered: reading verse, writing, and encouraging Graeme's efforts as well. One can only marvel at Glassco's courage, given his grave illness and given the fact that in April 1934 he

Actaeon, son of Aristaeus, stood leaning against a rock near Orchomenus when he happened to see Artemis bathing in a stream not far off, and stayed to watch. Lest he should afterwards dare boast to his companions that she had displayed herself naked in his presence, she changed him into a stag and, with his own pack of fifty hounds, tore him to pieces. (84-85)

underwent further surgery. Despite his own pain and his own efforts to understand the poetic genre, both as discriminating reader and as developing writer, Glassco was ever generous toward Graeme Taylor: "loving him so much, I should like to see him recognized" (fol. 28B).

By mid-June Glassco was ensconced at Baie d'Urfé where he was able to write in some comfort (Graeme had fixed up a little lap table for the invalid); Glassco began to write masochistic works: "The Way Back" and "The Three Captains" (fol. 28C). As important as the writing of pornography came to be to Glassco, the effort to produce works that satisfied him aesthetically was wearing. He noted that dreadful fears were aroused in him by the writing of "The Way Back"; "dreadful imaginings" plagued him once he put out the light; he entered a period of steady deterioration: "I began to be frightened about everything I had the most vile feeling of nausea all day long I am still wondering whether this was the effect of mental disturbance or something wrong with my physical condition" (fol. 28C).

In August 1935 he had read Venus in Furs (later "translated" by Glassco and published in an elegant limited edition by Blackfish Press 1977); Glassco's characteristically prolonged process of artistic development was typical not only of Memoirs but indeed

of virtually all his significant works of prose and poetry. Again, typically, Glassco was inspired and encouraged by his reading to continue his own writing; by 23 August 1935 he had finished thirty-four pages of "The Way Back" and commented "I must remember the most important thing: to keep it from being vicious, or nasty, or bad-tempered or coarse" (fol. 35).

By October 1935 Glassco had finished The Three Captains and resolved to take up work on The Way Back once more. In an entry in his Journal dated 8 January 1936, Glassco wrote that over the past two months he had been concentrating on The Way Back. At about the same time he noted that:

I was turning over my old papers and came across about 30 pages of Philip Eugene Roman, that I wrote in French back in 1930: it was absolutely worthless stuff,--but carefully written, and I thought it sounded rather well in English translation Then the idea came to me to combine it with The Way Back,--that is, turn the W-B into a third personal narrative--omniscient from the old diary form, and write it throughout in the style of the translation of Philip Eugene, giving it out as a translation, which part of it would be so that it wouldn't be such a great deceit . . . (fol. 51)

In summer 1936 Glassco was still toiling: "As for Philip Eugene, I still believe in it,--as a finished work; but it is hard work grinding away at translation & revision of work I did when I was about twenty. What a lot of nonsense I did write in those days!*"

[Glassco added in margin the note "*Conan's Fig--what tripe!"] (fol. 59). On 28 March 1943 Glassco recorded that "Philip is almost finished." Later that same day he wrote "I must have that fictive, masochistic self alive to finish Philip" (fol. 95). On 16 September 1943 Glassco noted that "Philip (the name is changed now to En Arrière) is really finished" (fol. 99).

In late September 1943 Glassco threw off feelings of discouragement, and fired by an intense desire to please Graeme by publishing work ~~of~~ substance, particularly a work that would be seen as successful by the world at large, he resumed work on Philip with fresh energy: "what an incentive to finish Philip, properly & at once!" (fol. 102). By 15 November 1943 Glassco entered in his Journal that "Philip Eugene was finished yesterday & sent today to the Longmans Green Contest" (fol. 103). On 17 December En Arrière was returned from Toronto as "unsuitable" for consideration by Longmans Green.

Some three years later, in a long summing-up entry dated "March 27th, 1946" and written at Foster--Glassco, having just sold for \$30,000 the White Mansion at Knowlton that he had originally purchased with an inheritance received from the estate of his maternal grandfather and where he and Graeme had moved in January 1937, --wrote:

Three chapters of Off the Map ("In Arrears" new title) were published by 1st Statement, a Montreal 'little magazine,'--and attracted absolutely no attention. The completed & definitely & finally revised MS. is in my desk at this moment, and I haven't the heart to send the poor thing away again. My best story, 'The Pigtail Man,' was refused last week by Partisan Review. (fol. 116)

One observes, from this brief outline, certain facts: first, that in spite of ill health and recurrent bouts of depression and self-doubt Glassco was first and always a writer; secondly, that his tendency to dissemble about the dating and the circumstances of composition of his work began early in his career: En Arrière (under its various titles) was only in small part a translation and was in fact written not between 1935 and 1938 as claimed, but rather between 1934 and 1943; thirdly, that he was a perfectionist in his writing, spending years on revisions; fourthly, partly as a consequence of his perfectionism, he frequently kept completed works to himself for years before publication. "Philip," for example, ultimately appeared as "The Black Helmet" in The Fatal Woman only in 1974. "The Pigtail Man" was finally published in the Hanukkah 1973 number of Jewish Dialog, a quarterly published in Toronto under the editorship of Joe Rosenblatt and Barbara Finch, with Irving Layton as principal Advisory Editor.

Before further consideration of later works, it is worthwhile to discuss the correspondence that developed between Glassco and the editor of First Statement, John Sutherland. Their letters are literate, frank, full of interest, and help to illuminate Glassco's views on eroticism and pornographic literature in the days before he had become an important and recognized writer in Canada.

On 2 December [1943?] Sutherland writes to Glassco that he has read Frogmore en arrière (yet another variant of what would become "Helmet"); he found it to be "a very good book The best parts are those describing Frogmore's affair with the housekeeper." Alas, Sutherland concludes that he cannot risk publishing this material: "I know from bitter experience how conservative the Canadian public is"

In July 1944 Glassco and Sutherland were again corresponding about the delicate matter of censorship. Sutherland was forced to suggest further cuts to the submitted story, while Glassco protested that he had already chosen to submit the milder portions of the work-in-progress. By 24 July, Sutherland advised Glassco that the problems had been smoothed out, and difficulties got round in spite of the legal opinion given earlier: "Mr. A.M. Klein has given his legal

opinion that it would not pass the censor" (n.d., McGill Collection). Frogmore en arriere did appear in August 1944 in First Statement, number eight.

Thus the writer and the editor began their lively correspondence. On 5 February 1945, Sutherland writes that he will come down to Knowlton in spring "providing Narizzano can commandeer his Cadillac"; as well as acknowledging the "selection from your Friend's novel" for the April issue, and passing on some advice:

The logical thing for you and Mr. Taylor to do--though for some obvious reasons I wouldn't urge you to do it--is to buy yourselves a press and start another literary magazine. You would certainly be as well justified as the rest of us.

On 13 October 1945 Sutherland wrote to Glassco on the new Northern Review stationery, identifying himself as managing editor, and the board as F.R. Scott, A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, Patrick Anderson, A.J.M. Smith, R.G. Simpson, Audrey Aikman and Neufville Shaw; regional editors were P.K. Page, Dorothy Livesay, James Wreford and Ralph Gustafson. Sutherland encouraged Glassco to come back up to Montreal and get involved in the poetry scene there. While Sutherland was encouraging about Taylor's work, his main concern was the new magazine:

We have been busy with plans for the new magazine, which is now to be called Northern

Review, and is appearing at the beginning of December. We postponed the date in order to make certain improvements in the contents and format: we are going to include reproductions and so on.

On 22 December 1950, Sutherland wrote to Glassco to reject "The Pigtail Man" for Northern Review: "fascinating . . . high degree of polish . . . we cannot agree on what you are trying to say What do you mean?" Glassco's reply, dated 28 December 1950, was quick and sharp:

Pigtail Man is not 'about' anything at all: it is about its own component parts, its rhythms, its arrangement--like all abstractionist art. (This concern with elegance of form accounts for the possibly too-painstaking rendering of 'texture' of conversation, and for the concentration on rhythm throughout the whole story: I mean to correct this.)

Sutherland replied the next day:

You virtually deprive yourself of an audience, by insisting as you do on the importance of a technical tour de force, and it seems to me that you want to encourage the critical at the expense of the creative faculty. Surely the extraordinary emphasis on analysis in art today, and the draining away of creative energies into critical work, is an unfortunate thing, and will do permanent damage if it is not eventually corrected.

We do not, unfortunately, know Glassco's response to this scolding, if indeed he did reply. Sutherland was, after all, only an editor, albeit an

extraordinarily good one; Glassco was the artist who had to pursue his own creative and imaginative course, whether that course brought him an "audience" or not. Sutherland was, however, certainly correct about the troubles Glassco would have in publication. "Frogmore" eventually became the novella Mairobert, before its final transformation into "The Black Helmet" published in The Fatal Woman in 1974. . . A gestation of forty some years is rather long, even by Glassco's standards. Among the publishers who rejected it in its various versions were Knopf, McClelland and Stewart, Olympia Press (Paris), Andre Deutsch (London), and the Ryerson Press, from whose editor, John Webster Grant, Glassco received on 30 November 1960, a very terse reply indeed: "There is a great deal of good writing in Mairobert. Despite this, we cannot convince ourselves that we would be successful in publishing this. I suspect this sounds better in French than it does in English" (McGill Collection).

One anonymous reader's report of Mairobert, a typescript of five pages dated 31 March 1959 and held in the McGill Collection, begins with the doom-laden words: "This story is morbid enough to stop a clock, but presumably the author had some other intention and I must admit that after much cogitation I still cannot see what it was." The reader objects to Philip

Mairobert's "diseased imagination" and the presence of "a couple of stagey sadists"; he notes that "it is as though a pocket in the natural air of the time and place had been created for the occasion and then filled with a sort of delayed literary stink from Europe a stifling concentration of the stale breath of Romance and Decadence" (1).

The reader strains to give Mairobert the benefit of the doubt, wondering if the novella is actually "a social criticism of literature," but concludes that "For me, however, it remains a baffling and depressing piece of work." The reader's verdict is that the work appeals only as an object perhaps interesting to the few who might find it "intellectually admirable or challenging." He finds it emotionally cold and concludes that "It is not pornography, it is not entertainment; it is analytical and inventive but not, I think creative" (5). These words echo the sentiments voiced by Sutherland a decade earlier.

Perhaps the reader for McClelland and Stewart comes near the mark when he writes that "This is a strange, strange book the history of the 'fatal woman' in literature." He comments on "Philip's strange obsessed attitude, his sense of aimlessness and rootlessness," curious given that "Philip, after all, is supposed to be striving desperately to recapture

some buried and forgotten experiences" (McGill Collection).

The reader has come very near to the essence of these writings; note what Glassco says of himself in his Preface to The Fatal Woman:

"the way of Axel" is not determined as he [Wilson] suggests, by any deliberate choice but, as I know, by the writer's own limitations, above all by the lack of psychological insight that makes him incapable of creating any character that is not some aspect of himself (iii)²²

To some degree Glassco's comment is merely typical of the dismissal of self and talent that occurs and recurs throughout his Journals. On another level it is a frank self-analysis. As I have demonstrated in my discussion of the biographical context of the Memoirs, Glassco was never free of a neurotic self-absorption that served as a protective shield against the plague of memory. Existing "in the climate of mastery and

²²Glassco has already, in this Preface, quoted from Edmund Wilson's Axel's Castle as follows:

There are in our contemporary society, for writers who are unable to interest themselves in it either by studying it scientifically, by attempting to reform it or by satirizing it, only two alternative courses to follow, Axel's or Rimbaud's. If one chooses the first of these, the way of Axel, one shuts oneself up in one's own private world, cultivating one's fantasies, encouraging one's private manias, ultimately preferring one's absurdist chimeras to the most astonishing contemporary realities. (iii)

submission," seeking "an ideal of security, restraint and repose," Mairobert, "this little onanist," confides in his journal that:

At last I am beginning to re-establish contact with my past, to live once again as I did when I was happy. Tonight, in this rain, more than ever. Indoors, the atmosphere of boyhood has been thickening around me with the saturation of the air itself. It has been raining for days now, and the memories have been creeping out from everywhere to tease me. ("The Black Helmet" The Fatal Woman 41)

Mairobert, daring to "visualize the schoolroom" where he had been controlled by Miss Marwood, shivers "deliciously as I remember" Her remembered presence is the complement of my own Hers is the almost anonymous figure which dominates the portrait of this boyhood self of mine . . ." (42). Tormented, he cries out "Oh, I must try to remember!"; yet finds no comfort: "one can never return to sorrow or joy, to pain or delight, except in fancy: the scene kills" (44). At this, his most vulnerable, the sadistic housekeeper, Adrienne, tells him: "The past is past. Your governess is gone" (44), draws him to her in a passionate embrace "uniting their bodies in the very moment of the spasm that shook him with an ejaculation like an oath" (45). This is Adrienne's moment of victory: "'Ah,' she cried, 'you are a man

after all!' She broke into harsh, prolonged laughter" (45).

Mairobert continues his lethargic existence, fear and dreams his only companions; he drifts into reveries of his boyhood with Miss Marwood: "We exist long ago. The house is beautiful again, the gardens have only a studied idleness, a disorder barely kept in order" (53). Not only time and space are blurred, but even Mairobert's identity is fluid. The house is hung with mirrors, but the reflections are confusing; who does Mairobert see, himself, Miss Marwood, Adrienne? And who is himself? He recalls a "house of vice" in Paris, a house different from that where his mother lies dying in the same city: "when I sat at the toilet-table in negligée and let the two women dress my hair and apply the cosmetics--watching the gentle blurring of contours, the freshening of tones and contrasts, the whole reorganization of my face as a delicious feminine counterpoint . . ." (20). Subsequently debauched by the women, Mairobert savours his reverie of himself as "a poor damsel whose perverted rape filled me with a sweet and sombre gloating . . ." (20). He sees then "in the mirror on the brothel wall" both the "sense of a double vision of oneself" and the "third self--the spectator, the seer, and his vision is the most complete of all, the most artistic, the keenest" (21).

The ultimate experience is the passive observation of self (or rather, one's selves). The voyeur is the ultimate romantic, the triumphant "sick man"; the "romantic artist, sick unto death, has become the true psychic hermaphrodite" (34). Thus in "The Black Helmet" there is a complete romantic inversion of reality: Mairobert exists in a fog of contradictory "awful, apathetic liberty" (46). His dreams are studies in frightening and hopeless ambiguity: "it is now I who reach out my hand to a lover and clasp it with the same terror and despair, who scan that lover's face for comfort and read in it only my own earlier uncertainty and helplessness" (56).²³

²³Transvestism is a recurring motif in Glassco's pornography. Richard, in the Governess novels, is fetishistically displayed in revealing bathing costumes in a formulaic scene where "a frightened, pathetic, defenseless boy-man finds himself, through no fault of his own, trapped by powerful, dangerously beautiful women, who bully and humiliate him" (Stoller 112). Transvestism is more overt in the character of Mairobert. Again typically of transvestite pornography, "the male is never transformed into a female. He remains male; what is attacked is his masculinity" (Stoller 117). The experience of transvestism "is a bisexual one, for not only is the transvestite making contact fetishistically (safely, indirectly) with women's skin (taking the woman as a heterosexual object), he is also putting it on (taking the woman as an object with whom to identify)" (Stoller 121).

Glassco was bisexual, but to my knowledge did not practise transvestism. He did have a portrait of an uncle in his sitting room in his house in Foster. Uncle was turned out in bonnet and nineteenth-century woman's dress for the occasion of sitting for his portrait.

As the novella draws to its conclusion, Lavigne (Adrienne's brother) announces, "It's high time for the rape" (57). In what approaches parody, a furious storm blows, reducing the house to a Gothic castle where water "poured from the shattered slate roof in sheets, overflowing the gutters, streaming down walls and windows, seeping through the rotted sills to soak the wallpaper and mix with the floor-dust in black pools" (57). A confused Mairobert wakened by the storm makes his way to Miss Marwood's room where he mistakes Adrienne for his governess; mocking him, she rapes him: "Her sex gripped him like the oiled fist of a wrestler Closing his eyes, he gave a stifled cry as if his life were escaping him" (58).

Calmly, over the unconscious body, Adrienne and Lavigne plan Mairobert's death for the spring. Mairobert awakes in a trusting ecstasy "Perhaps I will never die!" (60), content in his realization that "what happens is of no importance: I've found that the world called real, the world outside this place is a sham . . ." (59). A great chain link fence rises on the border of the estate, the mauve afternoons and snows of December close in, securing Mairobert in the certainty of happiness, and Adrienne in the certainty that spring will bring his ultimate release. Adrienne is the Artemis figure to whom, Glassco wrote, Mairobert is

devoted, to "the virgin who knows no mercy--and possesses & is killed by her" (MS notes for "The Devoted," yet another title for "Mairobert," ultimately "The Black Helmet," fol.5, Vol. 15, PAC). The published version has retained the cloistered atmosphere, but eliminated certain specific detail, as this passage demonstrates:

Keep final whipping and coitus scene, but end with his ecstatic orgasm, not death. Diana [Adrienne] has assumed Miss Marwood's features completely by this time. Follow this by the final entry in his Journal, relating their walk in the woods and their coming on the great fence already half-buried in snow. His ecstasy & ignorance of his death in the spring. "I am going to be happy for the rest of my life." (fol. 4)

The version from the early 1960s has endings yet more strongly perverse:

Conclusion: "A clipping from the newspaper." The body of a young man about 25 years of age, recently identified as that of Philip Mairobert, was found at an early hour yesterday morning on the pavement outside the Merchants' Exchange Building on St Origère St. He had apparently leaped from the roof. It is believed he was a member of the family which at one time owned this building, long a Montreal landmark, but which has recently been slated for demolition and replacement by a higher and more modern structure. (McGill Collection, "Mairobert," 103)

Another rejected ending reads:

"I cannot be the lover of any woman." "Then you must go." "Where can I go?" "That is

not my affair. But come, I cannot believe that you are unable to love. Shall we not try?" Then she whips him, exciting him so that he is able to commit fornication with her--during which act he dies. ("Mairobert" 103)

In each of these examples, Mairobert will die once full sexual union is consummated: either during the act of coitus, or, as in the published version, some months hence. Mairobert is thus the realized victim of the fatal woman who is both his destroyer and yet his only link to life and sexuality. The price he pays, willingly, is the sacrifice of the remnants of his identity, his freedom of movement, and ultimately his life. Sexual union, the coming of spring, these symbols of renewal are, in the inverted world of "The Black Helmet," the marks of death; Philip Mairobert's only happiness is the days left to him in the snow-bound season of death in "a land quiet and rigid under its dazzling shroud . . ." (61).

If "The Black Helmet" portrays the fatal woman in the fullness of her compelling and destructive power, the second novella of The Fatal Woman, "The Fulfilled Destiny of Electra," chronicles the development of such a creature. Sophie, the beautiful young daughter of Inger, lives with her mother and her mother's lover, Kine, whom Sophie addresses as "Uncle Charles." Inger has deliberately groomed Sophie to the role of

temptress, including having allowed Kine to overhear the girl being whipped, an experience he found arousing. Once, to her mother's rage and horror, the girl has permitted herself to be sexually attacked by Topp, a "peasant," a "man of mud," who is the local mail-man, Inger pushes the girl into Kine's arms. Kine is, however, unable to achieve orgasm with Sophie: "the shape of her lips still set in a form of rejection which could no longer arouse him to any vicious joy centred in her helplessness" (99). Rejecting the girl, he takes the mother. In full sexual possession of both women, he is afraid: "Perhaps, he thought, I had better leave this place, these women. Is it not time I left, before I fall in love with Sophie all over again? Yes, all over again, for she is now a woman and is growing more dangerous every day" (102). Indeed this is so, the turn of events resulting in Kine's being shot by the police, but only after his having discovered Topp and Sophie having intercourse (an act of deliberate self-debasement on her part) and his having beaten the peasant in what Kine believes to be "my one virtuous action": "How many men can say that they have at last slaked the lust of their anger to the full, have translated into action the violence and fire within them?" (108).

Sophie and Inger, victorious, contemplate their future: "Why, we will see the world together, my dear" Inger assures her daughter. Again, a man has been destroyed by sexuality; even a vigorous man like Kine is ultimately portrayed as helpless before the power of the fatal woman.²⁴ Although Kine does not fit the portrait of the youthful lover described by Praz as passive, obscure, inferior, he is susceptible

²⁴In the McGill Journal, Glassco has made several entries describing sexual liaisons with women. These encounters were by no means love affairs; Glassco's interest in his partners was exclusively erotic. In all cases, no matter how satisfying the experience had been, he would be deeply conflicted about the apparent tension between the sexual pleasure he had enjoyed and the fears for his well-being such pleasure engendered. For example, in 1935 he had been involved with the woman known as Adrienne, his "virgin mistress," whom he felt he had "fairly well trained now: she sees what I want from her" (fol. 44). When Glassco concluded this association in the fall of 1935, he wrote in the McGill Journal on 22 September:

It was strange, but that night and last night, I had the feeling that [the affair] wasn't finished--for me: in other words, that the affair had done my health a good deal of harm, perhaps irreparable harm it is a sense that there is a fitness of things which orders that I shall be punished for taking that kind of pleasure I hope, I hope it is nothing but idle presentment, but I am afraid I suppose I should try to analyse the feeling: but all I can decide is that it seems bound up with my masochism (fol. 45)

These comments go beyond any guilt for having used another human being, and touch upon what was for Glassco the paradox: the lure of the fatal woman and his fear of her power to destroy him.

nonetheless. The hero has, however, undergone a complete transformation from his initial portrait in "The Monster," a novella derived, like "The Black Helmet," from the original Frogmore. The McGill Collection holds a typescript of some forty-five pages, dated "Knowlton 1935 - 1938." The typescript includes a meditation of the male experience of being whipped by a woman:

plangent sharpness of physical pain which ushered in a period of unalloyed discomfort; even the most expert technique could not intermit or abridge this exasperating phase one closed one's eyes and succumbed to the subtly increased pain as it became pleasure of a transcendent keenness, entering at last what must have been the bacchantic ecstasy, of religious flagellants like Maria Madalena dei Pazzi or Elizabeth of Genton, who, their hands bound behind them, had cried out with the inspired monotony of the tongues of the convent scourges themselves, "O love, O eternal love. O love, love, love!", by which time one's very flesh had taken the perverse contagion, offering itself with obtrusive immodesty, echoing, in this casting-off of the instinctive, immemorial fear of pain, the brain's complete abandonment of common sense. (82-83)²⁵

The extraordinary contrast between the earlier and later versions of "The Fulfilled Destiny of Electra," express a world view of perversity, of a deliberate

²⁵G.G. Scott's Dominant Woman states that the beaten man's capacity for pain increases with his sexual arousal. The dominatrix and the victim can experiment with "limits" of pain and humiliation (188), although the control remains with the "victim."

retreat from the "normal" into a dream or fantasy that suggests the "validity of private worlds beyond the possible" (Woodcock, "Private Fantasies," 116). Woodcock comments most insightfully not only on the decadent works included in The Fatal Woman, but on Glassco's work more generally:

When I try to find a word to define adequately the novellas that make up The Fatal Woman, it is palimpsest that comes immediately to my mind, and I think it can be more easily justified than other alternatives. Parody indeed is there, but only as an element, and pastiche conveys too mechanical a process of arranging borrowed fragments. Palimpsest, with its concurrent image of taking something that already exists, partly erasing it, and then writing in fresh material that blends plausibly with the original and becomes a new work in its own right, is nearer to the process one senses at work. It is characteristic of the whole school of writers with whom Glassco here associates himself that they abandoned the romantic obsession with originality, realizing that in the world of private fantasy the patterns and dominant figures are few and archetypal, the movement is hieratic, the end is a stasis of action resembling that of Keats's "Grecian Urn". The task, as Frank Davey said of Glassco's completion of Aubrey Beardsley's Under the Hill, is a "metamorphosis of life into 'pure form' and of sexuality into rigidly stylized forms"; it is not the content but the form that changes, since each time we dream of the same archetypal figure his disguise is different. (117)

From the example I have quoted from "The Monster," one can at once observe how thoroughly this particular palimpsest has been reworked, having abandoned the

essay-like tone so rarely successfully incorporated into the novel (or novella) form, having reduced the amount of sexual description and thus having created an effect more dramatically successful when sexual encounters are actually described.

Glassco's papers reveal that he craved to write a novel of which he might be proud. He considered The Fatal Woman to be this novel, albeit one that disappointed him. The third of the novellas, "Lust in Action," an inverted utopia in which, in Woodcock's words, "women have taken over the earth and have subdued men, who are automatically castrated at the age of twenty" (118)²⁶ is the weakest of these three short works; the novella seems a rather petulant misogynist statement. The distance that the author succeeds in maintaining in "The Black Helmet" and "Electra" is diminished. A rage at women, rather than a fascination with the fatal woman as type, begins to seep through, revealing a very real terror of women in the author himself; Glassco did admit that he had swum in "a sea of erotic obsession, fears and nightmares" for most of his life: "I've always had them," he says. "The fear

²⁶"Lust in Action," like the other novellas of The Fatal Woman, has a "history." Under the title "Outrage," Glassco had submitted the work to Tamarack; it was rejected by Robert Weaver in a letter dated 17 March 1971 (PAC Vol. 15).

of women, the fear of poverty and, of course, the fear of death'" (Clark. 10). In most of Glassco's pornographic work that fear, a strong destructive impulse, was turned inward on the self, finding "expression in masochism and the sense of guilt" (Freud 5). In his pornography of flagellation, and of the fatal woman, Glassco was expressing not only sexual obsession but a displaced rage, rage against the abusive father who kept him prisoner in "the slimy little cove" ("Helmet" 26), who forced him to "sublimate my furies" (12), and who is described in "Helmet" in the character of the nasty bailiff Lavigne: "his face and bald forehead gleamed as if with oil; the lips were small and curled downwards, the chin was massive and cleft" (6). "There are," Philip Mairebert says "some faces I cannot endure" (14). Lest the reader think I go too far in associating narrator and author, let him consider this passage from the McGill Journal, written 8 January 1936 when Glassco was writing The Way Back:

The only way I can work on the book is when I am sexually pretty excited, and then tone down the excitement as much as I can later;-- an odd way of doing any book! I can really say that it's been written primarily for my own libidinous satisfaction: there isn't an incident in it that isn't peculiarly exciting to me and perhaps to me alone. I am even going to have Miss Osborne wearing a black rubber cap that fastens under the chin in a bathing scene, and will try to arrange that

4

Microlith

Philip is whipped by her while she has it on,--details which can't interest anybody else. (fol. 52)²⁷

I quote this passage to underline that while Glassco was attempting to create a work of art, a work that he hoped would be a "unique & extraordinary & really good book,-- the kind of thing by which it seems a mediocrity like myself alone can be remembered in future years,--just by virtue of its strangeness, its limited appeal, & all the care I shall have given to it" (fol. 52), the book would be an expression of his own emotional, sexual and psychological nature at least as much as it was the product of his artistic sense. The work was so "unintellectual" in its derivation that on 1 February 1936 the author was to write: "I don't seem to be able to settle on a definite plan for Philip Eugene, which is really absurd--having about half the scenes in a book written without knowing even the general idea the book is to convey! I sit around & rack my brains for the 'lesson' I mean to expound,--or rather the form it is to take,--and nothing comes" (fol. 53). Philip Eugene, and its various versions,

²⁷In masochistic sex "leather is usually associated with strength, power, and pain But rubber is more sensual and linked to bondage, because it's tight and grips the skin" (Scott 191).

combinations, and rewritings, were, the conscious, literate expression of Glassco's psycho-sexual make-up.

By extension, the rage against women expressed in the later "Lust in Action" is as important in understanding Glassco's nature and his biography as to an understanding of the work. Freud observed that the relation of the boy to the father was "ambivalent"; Glassco's relation to his own father was that of venomous hatred (he would not permit the man's photograph in his house). Glassco manifested a pronounced bisexuality, a "constitutional factor" that Freud suggested prompted the child "to deflect in the direction of effeminacy, to put oneself in the place of the mother and take over her part as the object of the father's love. Only fear of castration makes this also impossible. The child understands that he must suffer castration if he wants to be loved by the father as a woman" (9). As Freud goes on to explain in the essay "Dostoevsky and Parricide":

If the father was hard, violent, and cruel, the superego takes these characteristics from him, and in its relation to the ego, the passivity which was supposed to have been repressed re-establishes itself. The superego has become sadistic, the ego becomes masochistic, that is to say, fundamentally passive like a woman. The ego has a great craving for punishment, which is partly provided by fate and partly finds satisfaction in ill-treatment by the superego (consciousness of guilt). Every punishment is at bottom castration, and, as such, a

fulfillment of the old passive attitude to the father. Even fate is ultimately only a later father projection. (10-11)

While Freud is discussing his fictive interpretation of the circumstances of Dostoevsky's life, the violent father, the bisexuality, the extraordinary sense of guilt (manifest in Glassco in his unmerciful self-criticism in his Journals), and the masochistic conduct, are all symptoms and behaviours one observes in Glassco's oeuvre and his life. The details of the biography confirm and illuminate the truth to be found in the works themselves. Thus "Lust in Action" may be superficially dismissed as the minor effort of a tiresome misogynist, or more properly understood as an expression of authorial rage against the brutal father; an artistic rendering of the sort of horrifying agony described in the McGill Journal on 15 December 1957, Glassco's forty-eighth birthday:

The attack began as soon as I entered the house. Absolute horror, feelings of compulsion to commit homicide--on anyone, and Elma was alone in the house with me. (I have had this before, with Marion, and even with Graeme). This time, terrible. Symptoms: Sheer terror over what I might do--strangulation, stabbing, braining: attempt to tell myself I could not really do so, unavailing. It is what I might, and physically could, do. The Imp of the Perverse. (Other symptoms and feelings in 'Deliverance.') Claustrophobia: I want to undraw the curtains, open the windows, even in the middle of winter.

What is worst is the conviction I am going mad, and must be restrained before I kill someone. N.B. Only when I am alone with someone: two others has no effect.

Then I feel I must be alone. Only then am I safe against the compulsion. Had to ask Elma to leave Saturday morning. Thank god. When she was gone half the terror vanished: there was no one to kill.

Symptoms: Indescribable horror and tension. Perfect command of limbs, vision etc. Only when tension mounts a nervous jerking of the hands and legs, desperate courting of tears to relieve tension, no use. N.B. Terrible nervous susceptibility to the slightest sound even someone clearing the throat goes through me like a knife.

Obsession at such times: to commit suicide--but how?

A waking nightmare: Prayer is some help. Remember to pray. Wherever and whoever God is, he will help. (fol. 156)

This frightful description of a man in agony is an expression of hatred and overwhelming rage directed against the self. Glassco's father was, at this point, dead; his younger son had attended the funeral.. But the nightmare memory was not dead: like Dostoevsky Glassco had wanted to destroy his wicked father, but could not do so; Dostoevsky's thwarted rage was expressed partly through his "deathlike seizures," Glassco's through his attacks of panic hysteria, extreme anxiety, recurrent clinical depression, and the acting out of and artistic description of masochistic sexual practices. In an essay, "The Pornographer as Artist," Glassco wrote, most revealingly:

For the pornographer's task is not only to give pleasure, like any artist, but to recognize psychosexuality under all its aspects, and thus present another facet of the artist's aspiration to reveal, to testify, to validate every path to the enchanted country which man may discover in solitude. (3, PAC Vol. 17)

* The three tales of the Fatal Woman were of enormous importance to Glassco. He wanted not only to write them, but also to have them read and appreciated by a public. He wrote of his unpublished stories and tales, what he called "a crazy mixed bag," in a letter to A.J.M. Smith on 15 January 1962. Glassco told Smith, whom he trusted implicitly as an editor:

These are not bits and pieces: they are the best work in prose I have done in the past ten years, and except for the novella (Mairobert) I've given none of them a proper chance with any editor. Mairobert, by the way, has been rejected thirty-two times since it was written back in 1945. I'll bet that's a record! (McGill Collection)

IV

While I have stressed the biographical connection, which I believe to be profoundly conclusive, between Glassco's psychosexual being and his writing of pornography, he was an artist and wished his work to be read and understood by an appreciative audience for its own sake as art, as romance in Praz's terms of "the interruption of equilibrium" (8). Glassco sought, in

his pornographic writing not only to express his own sexuality, not only to create prose of distinction, but also to disturb that equilibrium that passes for bourgeois normalcy: to rouse the imagination to a questioning of the limits of reality, of sexuality, of rôles, of rebellion.

The pornographic work that most aggressively, although not most effectively, forces those limits is Fetish Girl (1972). Among all of Glassco's published pornography, only this novel is of questionable literary value. In The Dyer's Hand, W.H. Auden has written

One sign that a book has literary value is that it can be read a number of different ways. Vice versa, the proof that pornography has no literary value is that, if one attempts to read it in any other way than as a sexual stimulus, to read it, say, as a psychological case-history of the author's sexual fantasies, one is bored to tears. (4)

It is difficult to see Fetish Girl as having worth other than, in Auden's words, as a "sexual stimulus." This is a novel of considerable power, but it is the power that holds the reader not by the force of art, but by the exploitation of obscenity. It is, in Steiner's word, trash. In this work, Glassco gave free rein to his enthusiasm for rubber fetichism. He wrote openly of the novel's orientation in a letter to a British literary agent, Brian Atkinson, on 27 November

1974: "This is a rather special thing, being the only literate book expressly written for rubber fetichists. It sold very well in the States, and with a more indicative title like, say, The Latex Crowd, it might do even better in the U.K. where this predilection is quite rampant" (PAC Vol. 12).

The plot is little more than a description of sexual encounters enhanced by the looking at, touching, sniffing, and wearing of rubber clothing and caps. The male characters either are incapable of normal intercourse on account of their inadequate genitals, or are interested only in the fondling of little boys. The women, all rubber fetichists, are gratified in lesbian encounters that feature suffocation to the point of near-death. In short, the novel is a catalogue of perversion that some might find of sexual interest, but which has no apparent literary value.

An excerpt from The Fetish Girl first appeared in Northern Journey (1971), a little magazine edited by Fraser Sutherland and Terrance MacCormick. This excerpt, also called "Fetish Girl" was ascribed to a Sylvia Bayer, one of Glassco's pseudonyms. "Sylvia Bayer" is pictured in an amusing feature of this issue of Northern Journey called "Collect Canadian Writers Cards!!". These cards, picturing, among others, Earle Birney, John Metcalf, John Glassco and Al Purdy,

include as "Sylvia Bayer" a photograph of Glassco's first wife, Elma. "Sylvia" describes herself: " . . . I have been writing since I was eight, but my poetry was all birds and flowers and my stories all waltzes, heartbreak and moonlight. After doing stints as interior decorator, swimming instructress and interpreter . . . I started writing this kind of thing six years ago . . ." (n.p.). Not having full access to Glassco's diaries for this period, it is difficult to fathom how or why he would have permitted the use of Elma's photograph in a way that surely would have humiliated her had she been well enough to understand (she died in December 1971). In summation, both this incident and the publication of Fetish Girl fail to show Glassco at his best either as man or as artist.²⁸

The final pornographic work to be considered, and that only briefly, is one that wages a successful assault on the limits of reality, sexuality and rôles, partly through the device of presenting the work as exotic, oriental, and therefore by definition outside the confines of our society's expected behaviour; I refer to The Temple of Pederasty, described by the

²⁸The only critical attention that Fetish Girl has received is a spoof "academic" article, "Sylvia Bayer and the Search for Rubber" by Fraser Sutherland. Sutherland treats the novel with tongue in cheek, doubtless a sensible decision.

author as "my Japanese fairy stories, very nice, a delightful mélange of sex and sentiment, of sodomy and cherry-blossoms. Dainty is the adjective" (letter to Milton Douglas (Kastello), 4 March 1970, PAC Vol. 13). The details of how Glassco assumed the "role" of "translator," the name Hideki Okada being yet one more of the author's pseudonyms, is well explained in Edel's "John Glassco and his Erotic Muse" and need not be repeated here. What is of interest is the degree to which Glassco the artist was able to render with such pleasing skill these homosexual tales, certainly pornographic, which so daintily, to use his own term, manifest his own sometime homosexual orientation and interest. The Glassco Collection at Queen's University holds a presentation copy of Quaint Stories of the Samurais dated Paris 1928, indicating Glassco's long familiarity with works of this sort. Indeed it is likely that this work was a source for Temple as Fraser Sutherland has suggested (53). Whatever the source, or sources, Glassco has made the material his own in this collage, by means of his "prodigious inner power of eroticism" (Edel 112).

Once the customs officers got hold of the Temple they declared it immoral (even today the Public Archives of Canada will not permit the photocopying of any pages from this work). It is, in fact, a piece of

light-hearted writing that is, to quote Glassco's own "The Art of Pornography": "that kind of aphrodisiac writing which, no matter to what sexual disposition or vagary it is addressed, neither bores or repels a literate reader of dissimilar sexual orientation" (101). In this same essay, Glassco quotes from his own collage, introducing the passages with a sólemn and utterly mendacious preamble:

For the best homosexual pornography we must turn to the work of 17th century Japan [It] reached its point of perfection in the collages superimposed on the work of the great novelist Ihara Saikaku (1640-1693), whose stories, written in verse, were the delight of many generations of sophisticated readers. Saikaku's own warmth, taste and delicacy are best displayed in the tales of feudal Japan at the period when great political encouragement was given to the institution of the samurai-hood with its code of homosexuality and exaggerated personal honour, and when the vocation of the celibate Buddhist priest was also expected to compromise an exclusive preoccupation with the charms of young men. The anonymous pornographic collages are almost contemporary with the originals, and blend perfectly with them. An anthology of the best of these curious tales appeared in a beautiful and slightly archaic English translation by Hideki Okada in Paris in 1928.²⁹

²⁹This quotation, slightly fuller than the similar passage in the published essay, is taken from the typescript of "The Art of Pornography" held at the PAC, Vol. 5.

On the subject of Ihara Saikaku, Shuichi Kato writes in A History of Japanese Literature that Saikaku was an Osaka townsman, a comparative rarity at a time when "there were very few authors who did not come from a samurai background . . ." (13).

The author's preface to the Temple is a fine example of Glassco's mock-serious style:

But while the stories themselves, even by Japanese standards, are highly idealistic in tone and feeling, the background is thoroughly naturalistic: neither author or collagiste was presenting a daydream of a distant epoch, but the real manners and customs of the generation immediately preceding his own. For this was a period when pederasty was indeed the accepted mode of sexuality in all the upper ranks of society: the daimyo or feudal lords, as well as the priests and samurai, were given to it almost exclusively--the practice being officially encouraged as part of the imperial policy of strengthening the esprit de corps of the warrior caste . . . in many cities the more expensive male brothels outnumbered the female. (5-6)

The tales themselves are highly romantic and mannered stories of homosexual love between men, either samurais or priests, and their page-boys. The only sour note is a recurrence of the disdain for women expressed in the most abrupt terms:

Nowadays our eyes are constantly offended by women with the old-fashioned floating coiffure or up-to-date nageshimada,² scented with plum-flower oil, with soft fragile loins, smooth -plucked vulvas and tongues no bigger or stronger than a kitten's. Dear Reader, these beauties are only for the pleasure of old men, whose members are so soft and falling they must be grasped and shampooed in the female womb before they can dribble out their little budget of worthless seed; indeed, women are only for the pleasures of love in a land where there is not one pretty boy or graceful young man.

²A special style of upswept coiffure popular in the author's time.

(Preface 16)

Not only the Preface, but the tales themselves deplore the sexual inadequacy of women, as this quotation from "The Love-Tryst of a Boy's Soul" will show:

In a spring meadow, where tender young grasses flourished and put forth their pretty white flowers, two persons were standing in beautiful and tasteful dresses. They were picking the flowers of the spring grasses. They wore deeply-shaded hats.

A most elegant middle-aged man stood watching their graceful figures. He could not see their faces and was wondering who the beautiful young lads could be Then from the picnic tent nearby an old maid-servant appeared and called to them, 'Dear young ladies, Miss Ofuji and Miss Oyoshi!' The old man was very greatly disappointed to find out they were only women. And he wrung his hands. This will give you some idea of his exquisite taste in love. (129-130)

Nevertheless, the tales are more concerned with demonstrating the sexual allure of page-boys than denigrating the sexuality of women. A passage from "The Three Lovers" is typical of the lyrical descriptions of pederasty with which the book is replete:

There was a page-boy named Ukyo Itani who belonged to a certain lord in Yedo. He was very cultured and exceedingly handsome. His breast was white and soft as a dove's, his member was graceful both in repose and erection, and his virgin anus was as

sensitive as a well-strung harp to the fingers. He was only fifteen years old, and he dazzled onlookers' eyes with his beauty.
(79)

This pornographic curiosity is enhanced by black and white "wood-cut" drawings, done exactly to Glassco's specifications by Philip Core; these drawings, though plainer in style than the erotic drawings typical of Japanese pillow books, are both erotic and beautiful. Morse Peckham, in his Art and Pornography, points out that to Western eyes "the initial most astonishing feature of Japanese pornography" is "the enormous size and energetic rendition of the penis" (278). A glance at Bowie's Studies in Erotic Art will confirm this predilection in Japanese pornography. The Core drawings in Temple are, however, not of this "school" of graphic art. The emphasis is surely genital, but the facial expressions, drapery, the placement of the hands, all these details seem in proportion. The drawings are, in fact, a "westernized" version of Japanese figurative pornography, just as Glassco's rendering of the tales is a "westernized" portrayal of homosexual love in what is to us an exotic setting.

Although some of these tales are sad, and the style is deliberately and highly artificial, the stories are successful: daring but not without

delicacy, expressing impulses of love as well as of lust. In this work, now very rare, Glassco has expressed in art the ideas he expressed intellectually in the brief "The Pornographer as Artist":

Like the poet and the prostitute, he must follow the course laid down by Molière, exploiting his gift . . . first for his own pleasure, then for his friends, and finally for money. But the first stage is always the most important. Of all the practitioners of literature, he remains perhaps the most devoted since he is, above all things, a purveyor of pleasure. But he operates in a narrow groove, constantly reconciling the demands of his genre, which are aphrodisiac, with those of art, which are aesthetic. One thing only he knows: the aim to stimulate is paramount and must transcend all others. He is thus working in a literary vacuum. (1)

V

In conclusion then, one may begin to grasp the significance of pornography to Glassco as man and artist. Above all, the success of The Temple of Pederasty aside, his abiding interest was in the exploration of the sado-masochistic relationship, both in life and art. Glassco saw sadism and masochism as "two sides of the same coin," as he described the phenomenon in "The Crows":

Absolute power and absolute submission
Locked in each other's loving arms.

Leon Edel maintains that in the preface to the translation of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's Venus in Pelz Glassco was "himself" (114). In that preface, Glassco writes, in the concluding paragraph, one suspects as much about himself as about Sacher-Masoch:

Only now when the sexual aberration which he illustrated not only in his writing but in his life has been exhaustively examined and plumbed, can we begin to appreciate the real sources of energy which he tapped, and to understand that the explosion of these forces of a reversed sadism which he recorded with such ingenuous élan was, like the experiments of the mediaeval alchemists, an oblique revelation of another and still more valuable process--the creative process itself. (xi)

In his pornography Glassco is creating a world of romantic fantasy where the individual is free from the constraints of convention, from the limitations of time and matter, and from adult responsibility. The price to be paid is, however, high. It is sterility. The protagonists, whether Mary Anne and the Squire or Richard and Miss Marwood, specifically deny their biological capacity to reproduce. When children, or adolescents are present, as in Fetish Girl or The Temple of Pederasty, they are sex objects, not symbols of future hope to be protected and cultivated. Barbara Fass, in discussing Beardsley's Story of Venus and Tannhäuser, notes the importance of Glassco's

contribution to the Tannhäuser legend, and furthermore links his completion to a broader tradition:

it is Glassco's section . . . that introduces a feature in the Tannhäuser legend which proved crucial to its psychological impact on the nineteenth-century writers who made use of it. Glassco's Tannhäuser, languishing in the Venusberg, bored with its pleasures, searching for something to give meaning to his existence, announces to Venus that he thinks it would be well for them to have a child. No children, she responds, are born in the Venusberg; it is against the rules. The sterility of the other world, perhaps rendered too literally by Glassco, was impressed on writer after writer otherwise attracted to its allure. (193-194)

The "himself" that Edel refers to, the Glassco who was fuelled by the energy of exploring his own masochism to write not only pornography but poetry and other prose as well, was also confined in that sterility that runs through all his pornography and marks the relationship of Buffy and Mrs. Quayle in the Memoirs. Her leather bedroom symbolizes her power over him. In Fass's terms she is the lovely fairy who will lead her man to doom; her love brings ecstasy but danger, too. In escaping her, the man is free from her spell, but his loss of her portends his death (Fass 73). In the Memoirs Buffy does not die, but is brought to the edge. Buffy in the Memoirs and John Glassco in life barely survived the encounter with the fatal woman. As again Fass notes: "most stories concerning La Belle Dame Sans Merci end

with the defeat of the hero, who cannot reconcile his conflicts, and with the triumphs of Philistinism or other hostile forces" (172).

In Glassco's pornography women are objects to be feared. Men crave submission to women and find sterility or death at their hands. In works where women are absent, such as Temple, they are despised. There is no reconciliation of the sexual dynamic of male and female in either the pornography or the Memoirs. Moments of pleasure and ecstasy are countered by images of loss, sterility or death. The words of Glassco's McGill Journal echo in the mind, words that express the intense craving for masochistic sex with women, heard against a ground note of fear that his health will be damaged. Sex and death were closely related in John Glassco's mind, and appear as the duality that determines and directs the pornography he wrote.

Chapter Seven:

The Right Time and Place: John Glassco as Translator

John Glassco evinced an interest in and an aptitude for language from his earliest years. As a schoolboy, his French was adequate to his being able to take the lead role of Monsieur Perrichon in Bishop's College School's production of Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon, presented in the autumn term of 1923 when the young Buffy was aged thirteen (he would turn fourteen on 15 December 1923). Philip Eugene, Roman, was Glassco's earliest pornographic fragment, written "in French back in 1930." He studied German at McGill, but since the classes were held early in the day he was less than regular in attendance, failing the subject in second year and being required to repeat the course (Interview, 30 June 1970, Marion McCormick Collection, Sound Archives PAC). Evidently, his German was rudimentary; the Queen's Collection includes the 1928 anonymous translation of Venus in Furs, the book signed "John Glassco, Feb. 1, 1930," and heavily marked, in pencil, with holograph notations. The evidence is that Glassco's own Venus in Furs was more a remaking of extant translations, supplemented by extensive research, and relied only to a small degree on his knowledge of the original language of Venus im Pelz.

Glassco was, however, more of a Latin scholar. When Clive Harcourt Carruthers, Professor Emeritus of Classical Languages and Literature at McGill University, published his Alicia in Terra Mirabili in 1964, Glassco wrote him a letter of congratulations, to remind the professor that he had studied under him at McGill, and that the course "in Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius . . . was one of the great pleasures of my junior year" (Queen's Collection). It was Propertius who most appealed to the young Glassco and he claimed to have fallen "permanently under the influence" of the Latin poet.

Glassco's interest in translation was evident as early as 1934. On 28 March of that year, depressed over the continuing misery of tuberculosis, the thought of death his frequent companion, distressed in contemplation of separation from Graeme ("I am tormented by imaginings of him at my death-bed, where I see the pain in his eyes, and all the details of a protracted dying"); he, sharply self-critical as usual, nevertheless tried to persist in his art: "I have done practically no work since I last wrote in this journal, except a translation of Catullus' 'Dirge for Sparrow,' which cost me endless pains, and is not yet even quite finished" (McGill Journal fol. 25).

During his long and miserable convalescence from the first bout with tuberculosis in the 1930s, Glassco persisted only in his love for Graeme and his attempts to develop and refine his writing. During these trying times, the discipline of translation appealed to him and gave direction to his efforts to develop his talent.

Among his papers held at the Public Archives of Canada are two early efforts: "Propertius, Eleg. VII, Bk. IV" marked "unfinished, Baie d'Urfé--1936," and a manuscript, "Fragment of translation from Propertius ca. 1935" (Vol. 1). Such translations were, however, but a small part of his literary efforts in these early years; his creative energies were taken up with pornography and poetry.

It was some twenty years later that Glassco's interest in the art of translation was piqued by a letter from F.R. Scott, dated 3 November 1957: "Since you like Garneau, may I suggest you read his journal published by Beauchemin? There's a translation for you!" On the copy of this letter there is a note in Glassco's hand: "(This letter sparked the translations of the Journal,--JG)" (McGill Collection).

Glassco met Anne Hébert, the beautiful cousin of de Saint-Denys Garneau at a cocktail party at the Scotts' Westmount home in 1958; she had been gracious

enough to send him, subsequent to their meeting, an inscribed copy of her Le Tombeau des rois: "Pour Monsieur John Glassco, avec mon cordial hommage [s.] Anne Hébert." Glassco used this book in the preparation of his translation of a selection of Hébert's poems, five of which he published in The Canadian Forum in October 1959, permission being granted by Hébert to Glassco in a letter dated 4 September 1959 (PAC Vol.9).

It was, however, the work of Garneau which caught and held Glassco's attention. He published his first translations of the poet's verse in The Fiddlehead in Spring, 1958, thus launching a process that would culminate in the eventual publication of the Complete Poems of Saint Denys Garneau, translated by John Glassco, in 1975.

After his tentative early translations of the five poems published in Fiddlehead, Glassco was soon occupied in his attempt to translate the Journal, prepared for publication by Robert Elie and Jean Le Moyne and issued by Beauchemin in 1954.

The translation of the Garneau Journal was the disciplined task that Glassco seemed to need. In November 1956, his own Journal entries record an existence of desolation: "It is almost impossible to entertain hope about anything--about success,

creativity, better things to come It is harder and harder for me to set myself to work. Each time I try, I see the completed failure, the rejection by the world" (fol. 152). His plays, Byron's Goose and The Augean Stable were rejected; Graeme was dying; even old age seemed to be creeping on: "My eyes are failing slightly, & my hands have developed a tremor which makes writing uncomfortable" (fol. 152-153). In spite of his pleasure at the publication of "Deserted Buildings Under Shefford Mountain" in The Canadian Forum, and the meeting of "a new mistress--a Russian girl who is really very fond of me and with whom I have an ideal sexual relationship," he was downcast at having refused the Liberal party nomination in Brome County: "Feeling my chances were nil, I declined--mainly on Graeme's insistence that I do so The party then picked another candidate--who won!" (fol. 153). In late November Glassco wrote of feeling utterly rejected by the local social set: "Why should I feel so hurt at no longer being asked to parties--at being excluded? . . . What frightens me is that I am now entirely alone . . . I feel close to tears--tears of humiliation, anger & fatigue" (fol. 154).

The discipline of translation, the rigorous task of re-forming form, was the very sort of creative challenge Glassco needed for 1958. He published an

excerpt from Garneau's Journal, "The Dimensions of Longing" in Tamarack in the summer of 1958. By spring of 1959, Glassco had completed a translation of the Journal and submitted the manuscript to Macmillan. On 30 April Kildare Dobbs wrote to explain their rejection of the "translation of Saint-Denis-Garneau's [sic] Journal":

I am sorry to say that we have decided it isn't for us. You have done what appears to us a fine job of translation, but we cannot persuade ourselves of the importance of the original. And certainly we can't believe that it would commend itself to many readers.

This is not a question of our being afraid of anything. "literary" or "avant garde". We feel that Garneau's mal de siècle [sic] has occurred in the wrong siècle; and to the reader who comes at his Journal without preconceptions he has neither interest nor charm. (McGill Collection)

In spite of this wrong-headed assessment of Garneau's place in Canadian letters, not to mention the implication that the translator was at the very least a fool to even consider that the reading public could be interested in this unique book, Glassco kept his resolve to publish. On 20 July 1959 F.R. Scott, holidaying at North Hatley, wrote to Glassco on the eve of Buffy's and Elma's departure for Paris:

I am glad that you say you intend to finish Garneau's Journal. I should feel as frustrated as you would be if this work were not completed after all the initial effort. You produce the MS and I will take it upon

myself to find the publisher. We shall help to civilise this country despite all the barriers raised by the Establishment.
(McGill Collection)

Although busy in Paris with the preparations for publication of The English Governess, Glassco took time to write to Jacques Maritain, then at Princeton University, to request that he write a Preface or an Introduction for the Journal (McGill Collection, 27 September 1959). This was a most reasonable request since Maritain had respected the initiatives taken by the La Relève group, of which de Saint-Denys Garneau was a leading member, in the 1930s Montreal.

Maritain was unable to comply with Glassco's request; a secretary replied on 15 October explaining that "Unfortunately his family has been plagued by illness for months, and his doctor forbids him any additional work." Probably because Maritain's refusal was so cordial, Glassco was able to approach him again, this time on 19 May 1961, from his sick-bed at the Royal Edward Laurentian Hospital. Glassco's letter was routed onwards to Kolsheim (Bas-Rhin), whence he received another reply from Maritain's secretary, this letter dated 8 July 1961. Again, Professor Maritain was forced to decline the invitation to introduce the translation of the Journal; his secretary wrote: "Since his wife's death last November he has been devoting

himself to putting in order her papers and his here in France, and working with the Petits Frères de Jésus. He simply has no time to spare" (McGill Collection).

In any case, Glassco had sent a copy of the manuscript to McClelland and Stewart, appended to a "Translator's Note" dated "Paris, 1960." The reader's report prepared for McClelland and Stewart is a model of thoroughness. The reader notes that "Nearly two years ago [Summer 1958], extracts translated from the Journal by Mr. Glassco appeared in the Tamarack Review (Issue Eight, pages 17-35)." Aware of the difficulty of the task undertaken by Glassco, the reader is no less aware of its importance:

Interest in Saint-Denys Garneau has been growing in recent years. An English translation of the Journal would doubtless be welcomed in Canadian literary circles, and I should not be surprised if in the course of time it were to achieve a measure of popularity. As self-revelation it has a rare quality that could appeal to many readers who do not share Garneau's intense concern with the arts or with religious belief; the intensity itself is attractive, as was Van Gogh's, and the tragedy of Garneau's early death enhances the appeal of the journal as a human document. (McGill Collection)

In spite of a most favourable report, the reader raises a good many questions about the quality of the translation, and suggests that Glassco might wish to apply "some further scrutiny" to the manuscript. Upon his return to Foster from Paris, Glassco was to do that

very thing. Realizing that he needed expert consultation to render Garneau's Journal effectively, he took it upon himself to write to Jean Le Moyne, Garneau's closest friend during the latter's brief lifetime, and a summer neighbour of Glassco in the Townships. Although not yet a Governor-General's award winner, that honour would be his for the publication of Convergences in 1961, Le Moyne was long established as a distinguished man of letters, writer, editor, translator and script writer. He had been, moreover, de Saint-Denys Garneau's most intimate friend, and remembered not only the tragic figure of the 1940s, but the handsome, talented, mischievous young poet and painter of the 1930s.¹

Glassco, being aware of this crucial association between Le Moyne and Garneau,² approached Le Moyne in a letter dated 18 July 1960:

About a fortnight ago I discovered that we had been neighbours for many years without being aware of it, and I called at your summer residence on Brome Lake where I

¹I wish to acknowledge my great debt to the Honourable Jean Le Moyne for his kindness to me in granting me a series of interviews between April 1986 and May 1987. Any knowledge of or insight into the details of the life of Garneau, as well as the descriptions of the process of translation developed through the Glassco-Le Moyne collaboration, I owe to Senator Le Moyne. He spoke frankly about Garneau and Glassco, but always with the greatest affection and respect.

discussed briefly with Madame Le Moyne the subject of the English translation I have made of the Journal of Saint-Denys Garneau.

I know only too well the difficulties inherent in this great work, and that my translation may have missed certain nuances; and as I would like the final English version to be as close to perfection as possible, I should very much like to consult you, as the person best qualified in this field, on a number of passages to which I feel I have not done entire justice.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity of discussing these passages with you personally, and would like to call on you in Bondville for this purpose during some week-end when you could spare the time. Will you let me know if this is possible? I am free every week-end this summer except that of July 31st, which is the date of the Foster Horse Show in which I still take an active interest.²

Somehow this letter went astray in the post, so Glassco wrote again on 6 August, enclosing a copy of the 18 July letter and adding that:

I do hope I will have an opportunity of seeing you. Since my first letter I have heard from Mr. McClelland that McClelland & Stewart will publish the translation of the Journal this autumn if they receive assistance from the Canada Council which is almost certain to be given.

This time the post office delivered the letter, Jean Le Moyne responded to Glassco's request, and their fruitful process of collaboration began in the late

²The bulk of the Glassco-Le Moyne correspondence is held at the PAC in Vol. 1. Any exceptions to this designation will be noted in the text.

summer of 1960 and continued into the fall of that year. Although Glassco was not at all strong, it was in the autumn of 1960 that he contracted the chest cold which resulted in the recurrence of tuberculosis, that blighted the whole of 1961, he realized at once the significance of the opportunity of working with Le Moyne. Le Moyne brought to the task not only personal recollections and affections, but the skills of a professional and the perceptions of one who knew the strengths and weaknesses of Quebec, both politically and artistically:

Autodidacte, membre fondateur du groupe la Relève (1934), où il publie de nombreux articles, il collabore à plusieurs périodiques, tels la Nouvelle Relève, les Cahiers d'Action catholique, la Revue dominicaine, Cité libre, Notre Temps, le Devoir, la Presse, le Journal musical canadien, les Cahiers du cinéma, The Tamarack Review, les Écrits du Canada français.
(Laurent Mailhot)

In the summer of 1960, began Le Moyne's drives from his summer home, a log house situated on the south-west corner of the lake at Bondville, over to Glassco's white farmhouse in the village of Foster. Although Glassco's typical working pattern was to sleep late, fortify himself well with martinis, then write well into the night, the régime with Le Moyne was of a different nature. Arriving at Foster in the afternoon, the energetic Le Moyne would soon be settled to the

task at hand. When down from Montreal on holiday, Le Moyne would motor over two or even three times a week to work, beginning the task in mid-afternoon and often persisting to dusk. Elma would serve cucumber sandwiches and tea in the late afternoon; if the day were hot the men might enjoy a cool glass of beer. The atmosphere was amiable, serious, even genteel. The actual working sessions were intense and tiring, wearing to both participants and emotionally draining to Le Moyne. As autumn drew in and he was spending his weekdays at l'Office national du film du Canada in Montreal, Le Moyne would give over part of his Saturdays to the collaboration, driving over in the late morning and remaining into the afternoon. As the intensity of the experience of "reliving" the memory of his beloved friend grew, Le Moyne would frequently be forced to draw his automobile to the verge of the road on the trip back to Bondville, so overcome with grief and nausea he was unable to handle his car until he had re-established his emotional equilibrium. This was the price Le Moyne was willing to pay to assist in the translation of the Journal.

Le Moyne recalls that, seated at the working table with Glassco's draft of the Journal between them, they would conduct their sessions in English, meticulously examining the text word by word, phrase by phrase.

This process was made somewhat difficult by the fact that Glassco's command of spoken French, while sufficient for social intercourse, fell short of the deep grasp of nuance unique to the cultivated native speaker. Le Moyne relates that Glassco "understood everything"; he had full comprehension of denotated meaning, yet had a certain limitation in comprehending connotation. This resulted in his, at times, "missing entirely" the precise meaning of a passage in the Journal. Glassco would listen attentively to all suggestions and criticisms, then voice his own interpretation, sometimes to be cut off by Le Moyne: "'No,' I'd tell him, 'stop here, you don't have it.' Then I'd give him the hermeneutics, the interpretation, so he could reinterpret the phrase or passage into English."

On 14 October 1960, Glassco wrote to Le Moyne that "Robert Weaver of Tamarack Review in Toronto has just accepted the seven translated extracts of the Journal I sent them on September 29th." He sought Le Moyne's advice on a title for the extracts as well as his assistance in undertaking the publication of "a small group of Garneau's poems from Les Solitudes" for Tamarack; "I would like," he wrote, "very much to do these poems in collaboration with you." Unfortunately, Le Moyne was fully occupied and could not agree to

Glassco's suggestion. On 4 January 1961 Le Moyne wrote from Montreal:

J'ai relu je ne sais combien de fois votre dernière lettre et je me suis heurté à une résistance insurmontable quant au choix de poèmes à traduire et quant à un titre pour les extraits du Journal. Robert Elie, Jeanne Lapointe et moi, nous avons consacré à Garneau deux émissions de notre série à la TV: elles m'ont été extrêmement pénibles, douloureuses. Pour l'heure je ne discerne plus rien dans l'oeuvre de Garneau; elle ne correspond plus à rien de ce qui m'habite et j'en suis écoeuré. Ça passera. Il le faudra bien, puisqu'il me reste à préparer la correspondance!

A fortnight later, 19 January, Glassco was able to pass on the good news that "I have just heard from McClelland & Stewart today that they 'have received the grant from Canada Council in aid of the translation of the Garneau Journal', and that they 'can now plan for fall publication.'"

Throughout these months, Le Moyne would from time to time meet with Robert Elie to discuss the translation of the Journal of their mutual friend, for Elie too shared the memories of Le Manoir Juchereau-Duchesnay at Sainte-Catherine. On 14 March 1961, Le Moyne wrote to Glassco that Elie "I hope he told you, was much impressed" by the translations. Le Moyne added that he and Elie intended "to go to Foster and this we should be able to do in a week or so." The offer came, however, too late. That month saw Glassco

in hospital in Montreal for the beginning of the long treatment for tuberculosis that would stretch to December 1961. Unaware of the crisis in Glassco's health, on 14 April Le Moyne wrote again: "Voici les solutions de vos difficultés au meilleur de notre connaissance, à Robert Elie et moi". This letter contains three typed pages of corrections. These and all the previous suggestions made by Le Moyne, were integrated into the final draft of the translation of the Journal. (The typescript of the Journal held in the McGill Collection contains fourteen pages of detailed corrections to the original manuscript drafted by Glassco.)

The effect of the recurrence of tuberculosis was devastating to Glassco. Yet he managed, in spite of the misery of illness and the fever generated by this deadly disease, to carry on with his literary work, although he wrote that "the heavy drugs I am being given every day" were interfering with his powers of concentration (letter to Le Moyne from the Royal Edward Laurentian Hospital, 22 April 1961).

On 16 April he wrote to Elma asking her to "send me Garneau's 'Poésies Complètes' (the copy that has been scribbled with drafts of translation)" as well as

his file of work sheets on the translation of poetry.³
 In spite of a breathing capacity of 54%, he wrote to
 Elma rather cheerfully on 30 April:

I've finished Garneau's Journal! At
 last! and last night I finished the Index.
 Now it is set to go off to Miss Pratt by May
 8th. I only hope they get a good man to do
 the Introduction. Probably not: but I don't
 much care any longer; anyway I realise this
 matter is beyond my control now as the book
 is being brought out more or less under the
 auspices of the Canada Council. But if the
 Introduction is too weak or stupid I will put
 myself on record with the Council as
 disapproving of it and see if Frank Scott can
 do anything about it. After all the
 translation is dedicated to him!

On 8 May Glassco wrote that: "I at last fixed the last
 trouble spot in Garneau's Journal and it is all packed
 and ready to go off to Toronto on Monday. I am glad to
 see the last of this opus." His cheer was short-lived;
 on 20 May he wrote to Elma that "I've just learned that
 my sputum-test taken on the 16th gave a positive
 result. I will be here probably for a year longer."
 As usual, Glassco managed to overcome the latest set-
 back, and bravely carried on with his work, requested
 one last look at the Garneau poems for Tamarack (letter
 23 June) and related, on 30 July, the good news that

³This quotation from Glassco's correspondence with
 Elma von Colmar is taken from the letters held in the
 McGill Collection. All subsequent references to this
 correspondence are from the same source.

the CBC were interested in the Journal for a radio broadcast:

Herb Steinhouse wrote and asked me to do a half-hour radio script on the Garneau Journal translation. A series of selections connected by comment and biography. I've heard this kind of thing on CBC before, and I guess I can do it. The actual selections to be read by an actor, the narrator to be myself. At first I thought I would pass up the actual voice narration, then just lately I've been thinking why the hell not, if it's too bad they will get another narrator, and anyway I think I can do as well as some of their toneless wonders in the studio. What I'd like for the actor would be some French Canadian who can speak almost perfect English. An English actor putting on a fake Frenchy accent would be terrible. I'll try to get some kind of assurance from Steinhouse on this before I go ahead. Also what the pay is for this kind of script is. I'm pretty well sick of working for nothing--I mean this translating and scripting and so on: creative work, well, you don't expect or really require payment for that: it is its own reward and always has been. But this other stuff, no.

Much occupied with other writing, Glassco returned to the subject of the Journal in a letter to Elma on 18 October 1961:

Frank Scott has just telephoned and asked me if I would consent to having Gilles Marcotte do the Introduction to the Garneau Journal, and naturally I said yes: Marcotte is one of the leading critics in Quebec, not of the old crusty out-dated school but not too young, and he wrote the original preface of the 1st edition of the Journal in French. I couldn't have thought of anyone better among the French; as for the English, the fact of my being practically imprisoned here has made it impossible for me to get in

contact with any of them. Marcotte is going to write an introduction of Garneau specially for the English-speaking public, about 3,000 words, and I'm either to translate it or correct it if he does it in English. You certainly have to hand it to Frank: he really gets things done. And Marcotte is of course a real Garneau worshipper, so the introduction will be very sympathetic. This is a great load off my mind, and I am writing to Miss Pratt this evening to tell her the news; lately she has been pressing for news of the introduction, and saying how much they want to begin printing this year,--but we know what that means.

Although Glassco had originally hoped to have Northrop Frye compose the Introduction, he was clearly delighted at Marcotte's involvement, and once again the pace of work on the Journal accelerated. On 23 November he wrote to Elma that Miss Pratt of McClelland and Stewart had written to say that they were drawing up the contract for the Journal ~~and asking~~ if I had yet obtained permission to publish." This innocuous statement was the prelude to months of correspondence and negotiations among Madame Pauline La Roque (Garneau's sister), his two brothers, Beauchemin, Glassco, and McClelland and Stewart. Only when Le Moyne was to intervene in 1962 could the matter be settled. (As late as 11 March 1962 Glassco wrote to Le Moyne that "if I had been faced with this Beauchemin-Garneau muddle in 1958, I would never have made the translation at all!"). In the meantime, Glassco

pressed on with translating Marcotte's Introduction.

On 29 November he wrote to Elma:

I started in translating Marcotte's Introduction last night: it is really just a stupid chore, but not unpleasant, because it makes no demands on one's creativity. It is a first-class piece of work, just what we needed, profound and yet arranged like a good critical article, like the ones in the Literary Figaro and put together with a nice professional touch. But I will need the big dictionary, and as I'll be here for almost two weeks yet I should have it: I want to get this chore done before Christmas.

On 5 December Glassco was on tenterhooks, awaiting the results of the tomogram to be taken that week, but quite optimistic about the likelihood of being discharged from the sanatorium; he wrote about meeting Elma in Montreal: "Darling I don't know what you're going to have first thing in Montreal, but for me it's going to be a champagne cocktail, and then another one. And then half a dozen oysters, and then some kind of sole I think . . .", and about the progress of the work on the Introduction: "I don't think I'll have time to finish my translation of Marcotte's Introduction before leaving here. But I'll have the first draft done. And then I will do the radio script, chiefly for the reason that it will pay about \$250.00." On 9 December Glassco wrote that "I've done the first draft of Marcotte's Introduction. Not a bad piece of work; not profound,

but good and very topical and well adapted to a large audience. It needs a lot of smoothing yet."

Nevertheless, The Journal of Saint-Denys-Garneau was published by McClelland and Stewart in 1962, and was welcomed by the critics with enthusiasm. In general the unique qualities of Garneau's work were at once appreciated, while Glassco's translation was praised; the review in the Ottawa Journal states: "Mr. John Glassco's translation passes the supreme test of translations: one doesn't notice it" ("The Search for Perfection" by J.W.G., 2 March 1963). Louis Dudek reviewed the work most positively in The Montreal Star on 23 March 1963:

"Whoever has not encountered Renoir is ignorant of the world's joy," says Saint-Denys-Garneau in his Journal. We could apply the same remark to Saint-Denys-Garneau himself. And in this book it is a joy we owe to John Glassco, Canadian poet, who has given us a painstaking and conscientious translation of the famous Journal.

The book is truly an artistic and contemplative experience of the first order.

(6)

Obviously, Glassco's first foray into a work of sustained and significant translation had been successful. While doubtless F.R. Scott's suggestion that he tackle the Journal was a crucial factor (the suggestion coming, moreover, at an appropriate time in Glassco's career), and while the collaboration of Jean

Le Moyne helped transform Glassco's draft into the exemplary book the translated Journal became, there was more to this process than the sum of Glassco's efforts, Scott's encouragement, and Le Moyne's collaboration.

In an interview granted to Dan Karon of The Sherbrooke Daily Record Glassco said:

My interest in Garneau stems from my sense of identity with his own spiritual and poetic experience, that of a French Jansenist Catholic and of an English Pelagian [sic] Protestant I thought that this is myself with all my purely secular guilt, inadequacy and terror. For me it was a shock of self recognition at the deepest level. (5)

Glassco had expressed a somewhat similar idea in the Intimate Journal 1965-69: "Who understands himself? I have thought to find myself in Montaigne, Pepys, Rousseau, Garneau (the last most of all), but this is not I" (4).

These statements of self-revelation sit oddly beside comments such as those made to Elma that seem to denigrate the creative aspect of translation: "I'm pretty well sick of working for nothing--I mean this translating and scripting and so on: creative work . . . it is its own reward and always has been" (23 June 1961); and on 29 November 1961: "I started in translating Marcotte's Introduction last night: it is really just a stupid chore, but not unpleasant because it makes no demands on one's creativity."

First, one must put these negative comments in context. The June 1961 letter was written at a time when Glassco's tuberculosis was still active, and when he was fully aware that no healing of his lung cavity had taken place. He was discouraged, frankly fearful that he might never escape the sanatorium at all. In the November letter, although in much better health and nearing his discharge from the Ste-Agathe hospital, he was far from certain that he would in fact be freed from that dreadful place. Common sense too must tell us that the translation of Marcotte's admirable Introduction was surely a task that, requiring skill and attention, was not "creative" in the sense that it need draw on Glassco's artistic energies. Against these facts must be set Glassco's statements, both public and private: "My interest in Garneau stems from my sense of identity with his own spiritual and poetic experience a shock of recognition at the deepest level" and "I have thought to find myself in Montaigne, Pepys, Rousseau, Garneau (the last most of all)." Regarding his public words, it is worth remembering that Glassco was frequently candid, even shockingly so, in the interviews he granted; take for example, Flavia Morrison's "The Writer Obsessed" published in The Montreal Star 25 September 1966 (D4): "Glassco's father 'was an unconscious sadist. From the

earliest I can remember, using any pretext, he would beat me and my brother.'" Such candor contrasts remarkably with his well-known tendency to prevaricate about the inspirations for and dates of composition of many of his published works. In short, I suggest that Glassco's statements to Karon are to be taken seriously, as seriously as his private writings in the *Intimate Journal*: one notes that the authors he names--Montaigne, Pepys, Rousseau and Garneau--were writers highly-revered for their confessional writings, essays, diaries, or journals where the exploration of their own character is central to their artistic concerns; certainly no less so than was Glassco's in the Memoirs most overtly, and in the pornography more covertly. I believe that the journal form attracted Glassco; he was a life-long keeper of diaries himself. He greatly admired the Goncourts' Journal, and was reading them in translation in the 1960s even while hatching his own Memoirs. His admiration for Moore's autobiographical works is well-known and has been discussed elsewhere in this dissertation. Given then that Glassco found the journal form appealing, one must ask why he found that of Garneau so particularly captivating. What was that "shock of recognition"? First, there are patterns of experience shared by Garneau and Glassco that are of more than passing interest. One might well regard

each, at least as young men, as typical of the upper-middle-class urban life in Quebec, as lived among the English on the one hand and the French on the other. Both came from families that had distinguished themselves, Glassco's on St. James Street, Garneau's in the military, judiciary and the artistic life of Quebec. Both were educated at notable private schools and early manifested precocious artistic talent. Both were unusually handsome youths, although Garneau was the more socially successful, cutting a dashing figure in Montreal society. Both suffered, early in life, from debilitating illnesses that clouded their futures. Each was exposed to a significant cultural event that was of profound importance in his artistic growth. For Garneau, that event occurred in 1936. In October 1936 he wrote to Jean Le Moyne, from his parents' home at Sainte-Catherine, that his painting was progressing well:

Je travaille ici arduement, [sic] constamment et avec succès. Ma technique matérielle s'améliore en sorte que je me sens beaucoup plus libre, et non toujours empêché par tous les petits problèmes du métier. J'ai beaucoup plus de facilité. Ces jours-ci, je ponds une toile à presque tous les jours et il est rare que je fasse un ratage complet, comme cela arrivait auparavant quatre fois sur cinq. Et comme je suis en plein entrain et que je voudrais bien présenter quelque chose au salon du printemps, l'an prochain, pour «faire croire au monde», comme dit la chanson, que je ne travaille pas inutilement (j'en suis

maintenant convaincu), pour montrer que je «réussis», et que je pourrai peut-être me «tailler une situation» dans la peinture, comme le rat qui vivait dans un fromage; moi dans une croûte. (Elie et al: Lettres à ses amis 240-241)

He continued, in the same letter, eager for news of the upcoming exhibition of Modernist painters to be shown at the Scott Gallery in Montreal:

Cependant, je ne puis pas manquer de voir du Derain, du Matisse et du Picasso, parce que c'est pour moi une occasion unique et que cela m'apportera probablement beaucoup: il faut que je les connaisse. Téléphone donc chez Scott et sache jusqu'à quelle date dure l'exposition. Je tâcherai de m'arranger pour que tout soit au mieux: rester le plus longtemps ici sans manquer l'exposition. Je te presse parce que s'il y a une «excursion» pour la thanksgiving, je me rendrai en train à beaucoup meilleur marché Tu recevras cette lettre jeudi matin probablement. En me répondant aussitôt, je recevrais ta lettre probablement vendredi matin et me rendrais à Montréal vendredi ou samedi. (241)

Plans made, Garneau again wrote joyfully to Le Moyne in October 1936, and described his plans for the Montreal visit:

Nous pourrons ensuite aller voir l'exposition Muhlstock, puis échouer chez Scott. J'apporterai armes et bagages, c'est à dire pinceaux et musique et nous pourrons avoir aussitôt des auditions de Schubert, Bach, Mozart, etc. (242)

'Garneau admired Muhlstock (who was many years later to sketch a portrait of Glassco); his most

The Scott exhibition, the first major exhibition of French Modernists in Montreal, transfixed Garneau. For the two months that the paintings were on display, Garneau visited the gallery daily, drinking in the Picassos, the Matisses, the greatest modernist works that the young man had seen. Viewing these works transformed Garneau's perception of painting, and of poetry as well. It was after the exposure to modernism in painting that his own verse blossomed into the innovation of poetic modernism in French Canada. (In the December 1936 number of La Relève Garneau published "Peintres français à la galerie Scott"; this review is reprinted in Brault and Lacroix (283-288)). It was, moreover, in this very number of the magazine that Garneau published his first La Relève poems. Earlier poetry submitted to the editors had been rejected as derivative and lacking in contemporary form and spirit.⁵

If the Scott exhibition marked a turning point for Garneau, Paris represented the equivalent experience for Glassco. Paris did not, however, affect Garneau

important piece of criticism of the Montreal painter was "Chroniques des beaux-arts: Louis Muhlstock," first published in La Relève in January 1936, and reprinted in Brault and Lacroix (281-283).

⁵The poems printed in La Relève for December 1936 (2e cahier, 3e série) were "Saules," "Les Pins," and "Accompagnement" (55-57).

well. Within a year of the Scott, Garneau had travelled to France in company with Le Moyne (he remained there only three weeks before returning to Quebec), and had begun his ultimate decline into the silence and illness which would culminate in his death in October 1943. In contrast, the exposure to the wider world of cosmopolitan society and the forces of modernism that Paris represented was a watershed for Glassco. Yet he too succumbed to illness and to a withdrawal from society that was as deliberate as that of Garneau's: deliberate to the extent that there was in each man a vulnerability that forbade his full participation in life. In Garneau that vulnerability expressed itself most obviously in his aesthetic and religious responses. For example, when in Paris with Jean Le Moyne in 1937, Garneau found himself unable to remain in the great cathedral of Notre Dame. He felt "crushed" by its grandeur, and unable to retain his composure in the presence of this monument to art and beauty, constructed in the name of God. This acuteness of response was surely an aspect of the gifts that permitted his extraordinary manipulation of language, his expression of the "gaze" in his water-colours, his absolute understanding of and appreciation for music (he was so dedicated to this art that on one occasion he and Le Moyne sat together from ten o'clock of an

evening until six the next morning listening to Schubert's Ninth Symphony and Beethoven's Seventh). This exquisite sensibility, so rare a gift, seemed almost beyond his strength. When this delicacy was threatened, as it was, by a loving but frequently uncomprehending family, by a tormented idealization of women that was obliterated by a careless girl, and by the destroying dualism of French-Canadian Roman Catholicism, the man's health and peace-of-mind were finished. This tragedy is expressed in the opening words of Jean Le Moyne's essay, "Saint-Denys-Garneau, témoin de son temps":

Je ne peux pas parler de Saint-Denys-Garneau sans colère. Car on l'a tué. Sa mort a été un assassinat longuement préparé--je ne dis pas prémédité, parce que nous ne saurions faire l'honneur de la conscience à ceux qui l'ont empêché de vivre. (Convergences 219)

Le Moyne further maintains that the terrible alienation of French-Canadian life was fully internalized and expressed by Garneau: "Telle est la profondeur vitale de l'aliénation canadienne-française dont Saint-Denys-Garneau est mort après en avoir été la plus haute conscience" (226).

Just as Glassco's talent, although of true significance, does not approach the depth of Garneau's, so neither does Glassco's "purely secular grief" carry within it the reverberations of spiritual angst and

national alienation which underlie Garneau's ontological despair. Yet Glassco's own personal tragedy--the tormented childhood, the thwarted and misdirected talent of his silent years c. 1930-1958, the confused and frequently agonized sexuality--all speak of an "excessive inner dislocation," a phrase Garneau used about himself that meant, in Marcotte's words, "an internal splitting, and an inability to reintegrate himself" ("Introduction", The Journal of Saint-Denys-Garneau 12). In Glassco this "inner dislocation" resulted surely from his past, the past that haunted his nightmares until his very death. He had no unshakable vision of self: his brutal self-criticism, his habit of self-deprecation in speech, his wandering from lover to lover, his foolish and unnecessary fabrications about his work; these are powerful indications of that fragmented ego, that "inner dislocation" that sought to find wholeness in others, especially, as he tells us, in Garneau, but found, inevitably, "this is not I."

Glassco sought sanctuary in his rural retreat, as did Garneau. One must ask, however, at what point does such a sanctuary become in fact a prison? Does there not come a time when one has dislocated oneself not only from place, that is to say from society, but from time itself? Life becomes a rite of alienation that

one must perpetuate. The act of social rejection becomes its own justification; one acts out then a ceremony, a dance to one's own pain. At that point one has made of one's own home a prison and is oneself the jailer. This became the actual fate of Garneau. Garneau's transformation of the Manoir from sanctuary to prison is expressed in the metaphor of winter in Glassco's translation, "A Sealed House," in the Complete Poems:

I think of the desolation of winter
Through the long days of solitude
In the dead house

. . . .

I think of the loneliness of winter
Alone
In a sealed house. (50-51)⁶

To a lesser degree, this fate was Glassco's too, but one that he was to expiate through his art. In fancy, he was Mairobert, secure in his slavish love of Adrienne, smiling in contentment as the fence rose round the estate, unaware that this barrier as surely confined him and signified his impending death as it appeared to signify a sanctuary for their love.

⁶From Poésies complètes, "Maison Fermée":

Je songe à la désolation de l'hiver
Aux longues journées de solitude
Dans la maison morte--

Je songe à la désolation de l'hiver
Seul
Dans une maison fermée. (68-69)

It was this perversity, this desperate flight from pain into a time and space removed, that was for Glassco "the shock of self-recognition at the deepest level." Both poets fled to a place of safety that became a prison. Paradoxically, for Garneau this flight brought the ultimate prison, the grave, and the ultimate sanctuary, eternity. In the words of Robert Elie's poem "In Memoriam" published in the December 1944 issue of La Nouvelle Relève dedicated "Hommage à De Saint-Denys Garneau":

Dans la nuit sans étoile
 Problématique, sans joie mal assurée
 Sans pas de joie qui retentit à nos côtés
 Il remet son âme entre les mains du Père. (513)

Glassco was spared the untimely death suffered by Garneau. Yet in 1957, as the McGill Journal so clearly manifests, Glassco was barely alive: haunted by homicidal fantasies, plagued by nightmares, exhausted by the ordeal of Graeme's death, discouraged utterly by the apparent failure of his life's work, he scraped up his courage to resolve:

I must be happy--and I have a natural disposition to happiness. I've always known that--in solitude.
 Yes, solitude.
 If Elma causes me any more emotional trouble that is the end for her as well. I want nothing but peace.
 I must have peace to do my work.
 Enough suffering. (28 November 1957, fol. 155)

Soon after this Glassco began to translate the Journal of the poet of The Solitudes. It was, in part, the disciplin~~g~~ of this work that injected needed purpose into Glassco's life, that helped him to approach and achieve the dozen years of his life, 1958-1970, when he accomplished his finest work. It is doubtless true that this translation, at this particular time, was crucial to Glassco's regaining his creative energy. This work nourished him and provided a reflection of himself that painful still, gave comfort. Indeed, in the words of Elie's "In Memoriam": "Sur terre, notre ami chante et danse par pitié." Glassco too comprehended that compassion. He lacked the experience and spiritual depth to grasp Garneau's religious agonies; he did, however, know the darkness of the soul and the heart of the artist. These he captured in his translation, and therein eased his own "excessive inner dislocation."

II

Whatever his faint denials may have been, translation was for Glassco an art. On 12 January 1966 he wrote to A.J.M. Smith: "I am swinging around to a conception of translation as a re-making, as it was with Florio, Dryden, Urquhart-Motteux and Pound: fidelis per infidelitatum (or, adultery, for art's

sake)" (PAC Vol. 14). Unlike F.R. Scott who strove for the most literal, while yet literate, translation, Glassco's approach was, as he states in his Introduction to the edition of Quebec verse, The Poetry of French Canada in Translation: to "give the English reader his first extended view of the beauties, development and direction of the poetry itself" (xvii). In short, Glassco was seeking not only to manifest "the ideas and progression of a poem," but to make apparent that to translate was to reveal "mercilessly" the "temper and complexion of the poet himself" (xx-xxi). He was acutely aware of the inherent difficulties in translation, particularly in translation of poetry, aware that the "loss" incurred to the original could be, in fact, not only a "depreciation," but even a "betrayal" of the original. Still, Glassco was unwilling to follow Pound's direction to "'make it new', that is, to misread the text in a fit of inspired illiteracy and make another poem altogether" (xxi). In this Introduction, Glassco expresses his credo not as mere translator, but as poet-translator:

The poet, as Saint-Denys-Garneau found, is aware sooner or later that in pursuing his vocation he is exposing, depreciating and betraying himself, and finally failing to express the reality of his experience, but this does not stop him from writing poetry. In the same way the devoted translator of poetry will not be balked: he is possessed by the necessity of making a translation--in the

old religious sense of a convergence or assumption, as of Enoch or Elijah--of the vision of reality he has received from a poem, and of communicating his experience to those of another tongue; and when he wholly succeeds, as he sometimes does, the sense of achievement is that of poetic creation itself. (xxi-xxii)

In short, Glassco is saying that the translator, "when he wholly succeeds," is "possessed" by his need to translate just as the poet is "possessed" by his need to compose verse; in both cases, the result can be that "sense of achievement" that is "of poetic creation itself." Surely this statement illustrates the important creative role that translation came to represent in Glassco's literary life. An examination of the poet-translator-editor's papers (for Glassco played these three roles in The Poetry of French Canada in Translation) reveals the most painstaking attention to task. The Glassco Papers at the Public Archives of Canada contain no fewer than thirteen files of correspondence and working drafts related to the publication of this anthology of translation. Glassco began work on this book in 1965; it was published in 1970 and represents prodigious effort and accomplishment. There were few translations that were not carefully edited and many that were entirely rewritten by Glassco. There were some, such as the work of Gwladys V. Downes, for which Glassco had the

highest regard; he corresponded with Downes on the subject of translation, between 15 November 1965 and 23 October 1969, fifty-six letters passing between them. This was the degree of care Glassco brought to the challenge of translation. Glassco took particular pleasure in Downes's work, and much admired as well that of R.A.D. Ford, Jay Macpherson, Ralph Gustafson and F.R. Scott. (See PAC Vol. 2 and Vol. 4).

Glassco translated and published other, more minor works during the 1960s, such as Louis Riel's "To Sir John A. Macdonald" in Canadian Literature (in summer 1968); and "Epistle to Genereux Labadie Esq." in Joseph Quesnel (1970), but his particular accomplishment was the Complete Poems of Saint Denys Garneau.

Although published in 1975, the Complete Poems was principally a work of the 1960s, the work of, in A.J.M. Smith's words, the "master-translator" ("The Confessions of a Compulsive Anthologist" 12), the master-translator at the top of his artistic form. As we have already seen, Glassco had begun translating Garneau's poetry as early as late 1957, early 1958; he had, moreover, sent for his heavily-marked copy of the Poésies complètes when in hospital in 1961. In early 1962 Glassco was occupied in trying to regain his strength and health; indeed in March he was again bed-ridden with a heavy chest and bad cough. In February

he had, nevertheless, "resumed writing poetry, with a mixture of joy and trepidation" (letter to Jean Le Moyne, 24 February 1962) and was enthusiastic about attempting a translation of Convergences. However, he continued to be occupied by Garneau, and in late September 1963 applied to the Canada Council for a Senior Fellowship for 1964-65. His references were supplied by A.J.M. Smith, F.R. Scott, and Jean Le Moyne. Although unsuccessful in obtaining the Fellowship, Glassco's application for funding set forth his projects as:

- 1) Translation of the Poésies Complètes of Saint-Denys-Garneau (now half-completed, and several of them already published and subject to further revision);
- 2) Continuation of my work of translating the prose work of S-D-G., and if possible of his Correspondence when it is edited and published;
- 3) Composition of my own third volume of verse.

(letter to J. Le Moyne, 29 Sept. 1963)

Le Moyne expressed his confidence in Glassco's translation in a "Lettre de Recommandation," 1er novembre 1963:

Poète d'un raffinement exquis et dont la renommée est solidement établie dans les milieux anglophones (à ce seul titre il mérite un encouragement sans réserve), M. Glassco est de même mieux préparé que quiconque à la traduction de l'oeuvre poétique de Saint-Denys-Garneau. Il a déjà fait de poèmes de Regards et jeux dans l'espace des versions d'une grande beauté,

d'une fidélité toute en spontanéité, où on peut prendre la pleine mesure d'un poète éprouvant un autre poète jusqu'à la plus profonde intimité de l'expérience et de l'expression. Rien ne saurait mieux garantir la qualité de l'éventuelle traduction des Poésies complètes par John Glassco.

Thus, by 1963 Glassco had completed half of the translation. Evidently, he worked little more on the book during 1964, (a time when he was heavily occupied in writing the Memoirs of Montparnasse, preparing the manuscript of A Point of Sky, and editing his English Poetry in Quebec: Proceedings of the Foster Poetry Conference October 12-14, 1963), because when he wrote to Le Moyne on 3 November 1964 to announce that he had decided to apply to Quebec's "Programme d'aide à la création et à la recherche" for funding, it was in part for the purpose of completing the "Translation of the Poésies complètes of Saint-Denys-Garneau. This is already more than half done." For the next years, the work lay unfinished as Glassco's time was occupied with his other writing and with the care of his wife, whose health deteriorated steadily throughout the 1960s.

In September 1971 Glassco was again writing to Le Moyne requesting that a reference be given to the Canada Council, his program being "to complete my translation of the Complete Poems of Saint-Denys-Garneau and 2) to write a novel" Glassco was

at last successful in obtaining funding, the translation was completed and duly published in 1975.⁷

In the Introduction to the Complete Poems, certainly a careful analysis of and appreciation for his subject's poetry, Glassco harkens back to Garneau's Journal: "like most keepers of intimate journals, he tells us nothing--no more, indeed, than Baudelaire--of his moments of joy: these moments were obviously always private, self-sufficient, craving no record" (13). These words echo Glassco's own, often repeated in his own McGill Journal, when he confides that he turns to his "dear book" when in a state of loneliness, discouragement or fear. On one level, in the passage

⁷On 3 December 1970 Glassco wrote to Le Moyne that: "I have just finished my translation of the Poésies Complètes of S.-D.-G. (after your Fides edition) and am in the midst of writing a long critical introduction" (PAC Vol. 13).

Since Glassco's statement seems to contradict his assertions made in 1971, one assumes that in December 1970 he was referring to an earlier draft of the translation. Since Brault and Lacroix's definitive Saint-Denys Garneau Oeuvres was published in 1971 (Glassco attended the lancement which was actually held in Montreal on 1 December 1970), Glassco would have had to reconsider his translation in light of the Oeuvres. Indeed, at the conclusion of his Introduction to the Complete Poems of Saint Denys Garneau, Glassco writes:

The text of the translation is based on the Poésies complètes edited by Robert Elie and Jean Le Moyne (Montreal: Fides, 1949), and has been collated with that of the original edition of Regards et jeux dans l'espace (Montreal: privately printed, 1937) and with the definitive Oeuvres edited by Jacques Brault and Benoît Lacroix (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1971). (174)

quoted, Glassco is referring to a phenomenon he has observed in his study of literature; a phenomenon encompassing much truth, but by no means expressing a universal experience--one thinks immediately of favourite exceptions such as the Goncourts' Journal and the diaries of Virginia Woolf, or in Canada, the unpublished journals of Patrick Anderson. In his assertion, Glassco is stating a truth, but a partial truth, and one much buttressed by his own personal experience. Speaking of his chosen method of translation he writes that "I have followed a course that is bound to result in the intrusion of my own personality translation is a search for an equivalent, not for a substitute" (17). I believe Glassco is saying several important things here: first, he is asserting his independence from the methods of F.R. Scott, which Scott had stated were "to alter the poem as little as possible, and to let it speak for itself in the other tongue. This means a preference for literalness rather than for alternate renderings; for one poem in two languages, instead of two similar poems" (Scott 9). Secondly, Glassco is admitting that special reverberation he felt not only for Garneau's work but also for his personality. When Glassco worked on the translations of the Journal and of the Poésies complètes, he tried to immerse himself not only in the

cerebral pursuit of excellence in translation, but also in the aesthetic and emotional conditions that coloured Garneau's experience: Le Moyne shared with Glassco many of his most painful and tender memories of his friend, giving Glassco a unique opportunity to understand the disintegration and eventual destruction of Garneau (a process Glassco could understand only too well as his wife's psychosis came to possess her entirely). Glassco, moreover, read much that Garneau had read (again, on Le Moyne's recommendation, but on his own initiative as well), and surrounded himself with the music that had been so crucial to Garneau's emotional and aesthetic experience of that art. Both before and during his sessions of work on the translation of poetry, Glassco would listen to the phonograph records of the great symphonies beloved by Garneau (McCormick-Whitney Interview). Thirdly, he is suggesting what Eli Mandel has been bold enough to say plainly about "the appeal of Saint Denys Garneau to Glassco": "the reason for this translation, may very well be the attraction, the fateful attraction, of a like personality, a double. John Glassco knows a great deal about early death and rebirth, about exclusiveness, fastidiousness, about the vulgarity of what he calls 'emotional dépaysement'" ("Saint-Denys-Garneau?" 34). Thus Mandel has discerned from the work itself Glassco's own public

statement that "My interest in Garneau stems from my sense of identity with his own spiritual and poetic experience," not less than from his private words: "I have thought to find myself in . . . Garneau . . . most of all."

Of course Glassco realized that "this is not I." Glassco was not Garneau, obviously; he never grasped the depth of Garneau's religious crisis, although he treated that part of Garneau's experience with great respect. Like Garneau, Glassco sought to verify his existence through art; both struggled with self-justification of existence, though Glassco's attempt was secular while Garneau's was, in the language of music, both sacred and secular. It would be facile to attempt to "classify" in any way these two artists as somehow representative of the bond and cleft between the "founding nations" of this country. But the thought is there and will not be dismissed. Eli Mandel, always most sensitive to the implications of literature in the broad context of society, writes:

Important then in its own right, enormously significant in the development of modernism in Quebec writing, the poetry of Saint Denys Garneau assumes a particular place in the body of English-Canadian writing as well, illuminating as it does whole areas of modern sensibility common to both French and English Canadian experience. It is perhaps not surprising that this French poet whose utterly scrupulous reticence served as a kind of exorcism for "the demons of helplessness"

in the whole generation of Quebec youth should speak also out of his solitude to the contemporary English-Canadian writer. A version of some terrible dilemma, spectre of spiritual desolation and yearning, he inhabits new poems, appearing as a spirit presiding over the resolution of the problem of loss in Dennis Lee's Civil Elegies. "What can ail him that he goes on living/And why does he not go away?"

("Saint-Denys-Garneau?" 34)

It would be wrong to suggest that Glassco had any "social purpose" in translating Garneau. Glassco had, one fears, been in no small part corrupted by Smith's dated "cosmopolitanism," as these words from the Introduction to The Poetry of French Canada in Translation suggest:

The work of Nelligan, Morin, Choquette, Saint-Denys-Garneau, Rina Lasnier and Anne Hébert is of the first, or almost the first, order of poetry; but the measure of its worth is in its transcendence of the historical situation, of that French fact which, however fundamental to the life of the people itself, was nonetheless something that these poets assimilated and surmounted: the single-minded passion by which they did so is the measure indeed, of their poetic stature. (xviii-xix)

Nevertheless, Glassco's translations of Garneau's Journal and Poésies have a cultural import beyond the personal reverberations between the two poets, and beyond Glassco's search for self, and beyond the aesthetic success of these two books. At the very least Glassco's extraordinary accomplishment made and continues to make available to English-speaking

Canadians the works of this mythic poet who fatally re-enacted the role of the rebel--whether artist or coureur des bois--who withdrew from the settlement into the pays d'en haut and thereby confronted the "wilderness," both literal and metaphorical. Like François Paradis of Maria Chapdelaine, Garneau was taken by the waters of the north; water representing in Frye's words in Anatomy of Criticism "the state of chaos or dissolution" (146); "The world of water is the world of death" (150). Glassco's own ~~ashes~~ now float tranquilly in the stream near Foster, gone too into the waters of Quebec.

III

None of Glassco's subsequent translations embody the mythic importance of his work on Garneau. Yet the spark of interest in translation kindled by F.R. Scott in 1957, the meeting with Anne Hébert at the Scotts' in May 1958, and the subsequent collaboration with Le Moyne, had established another important genre in Glassco's oeuvre. In a letter to Smith, written from Foster on 22 November 1970, Glassco, while pandering just a little to Smith's paranoia about "truckling to our French Canadian brothers" (letter to Glassco dated "U.S. Thanksgiving Day ! 1970," which may say more about Smith than he might care to have admitted),

discloses that he has been having the time of his life going to "a succession of lancements of French books, lately":

One is dipped into a nationalistic whirlpool, all beards and beads and smouldering anglophobia. Really find my translation anthology is intensely disliked, and the Introduction found intolerably patronising. The remark that "nationalism has never made really good poetry" seems to have maddened all of them, critics and poets alike. Gaston Miron will not speak to me now,. No wonder: I have attacked his one and only Muse, a dear old Mother Québec whom he seems to visualise as a kind of Marquis de Montcalm in drag, living in St. Henri. Pauline Julien says that Frank [Scott] and I will be hanged on the same gibbet, come the Revolution. Well, as Richmond says, we are "showing the flag". And we talk endlessly with them. At times, I feel like a psychiatrist. When the discussion grows warm, I always make fun of the Pope: this clears the air. (PAC Vol. 14)⁸

Yet for all his flippancy (Buffy Glassco liked, after all, to be amusing in his letters and was always careful to impress Smith whom he revered as an editor), Glassco goes on to relate that he had had the unsettling experience of just missing summary arrest under the War Measures Act:

I, poor little I, just missed being picked up 10 days ago at Jilly's on Crescent St., where

⁸The "Richmond" Glassco refers to here is John Richmond, a Montreal journalist and friend.

I was beering with 3 péquiste poets around 1 a.m. They were nabbed, frisked and whisked off to jail 15 minutes after I left them, and not released until 3 days later. There, but for the grace, etc. Guilt by association is rampant now. They just pull you in, polite but firm. And then you have a police dossier. The FLQ has certainly buggered up Montreal nightlife.

Glassco, for all his rumbling agreement with "Frank" about the War Measures Act, and while he had no sympathy whatever for the "séparatistes," had been taken up in the life of poetry of the French majority in Quebec. Although once and always the Anglo, the Westmount boy, the McGill man, Glassco had succeeded in penetrating the old Quebec, the spirit of which he so perfectly captured in "Quebec Farmhouse," and in his later life, had grasped some understanding of the compulsions and energies of the new. These insights and the associations they brought him, helped to carry Glassco forward through the 1970s when his own creative flow had lessened to a trickle. He published his translation of Monique Bosco's La Femme de Loth as Lot's Wife in 1975, and his rendering of Jean-Yves Soucy's Un dieu chasseur as Creatures of the Chase in 1979. Glassco's last major work of translation was Jean-Charles Harvey's Les Demi-Civilisés, which appeared under the title Fear's Folly, published posthumously by Carleton University Press in 1982.

As much as Glassco would have pooh-poohed any notion of himself as a builder of bridges between the notoriously alienated "two solitudes" of Canada, his sensitive, graceful and admirable translations of the poetry and prose of Quebec have made no small contribution to the on-going struggle for mutual tolerance and shared nationhood.

Chapter Eight:

"Amazed at the Beauty of the Valleys Seen": John Glassco in His Poetry

The John Glassco of the 1930s is known to us through his McGill Journal and through his poetry of the period. The Journal reveals his struggle in the early years of the decade to regain his health: undergoing attacks of illness, operations, and the adjustment to a constitution forever weakened and an appearance unfavourably altered. The 1930s were the years of Glassco's twenties, a time for breaking away from dependence on his parents. This was finally realized when he was able to claim an inheritance from his grandfather, Edward Rawlings; the decade was also a time for strengthening his bond with Graeme Taylor. The Journal suggests a struggle to articulate a sexuality that sought an unconventional path. He deeply loved Graeme and Graeme loved him. Yet Glassco took pains to stress the centrality of women to his sexuality--but a very special kind of women: beautiful, close-cropped hair, a dominating and masculine air. His fantasies were fetichistic and masochistic. His desire for women who could satisfy his cravings was intense. It is as if his love were directed towards Graeme, but his lust towards women. He had little enough love for them. To say that during

the 1930s Glassco objectified the women he desired gives only a hint of the intensity of the two accompanying emotions: fear and hatred. Yet this was a period of artistic development.

The 1930s were occupied with the composition of pornography, the study of poetry and its forms, and the development of his own verse. He read philosophy and drama. He listened to music with attention and tried to purge himself of the romanticism of Keats, Debussy, Wagner and Tchaikovsky. He favoured Elizabethan dramatists, and Mozart and Handel, in a determination to replace "romantic" with "classical." He read nothing "modern" excepting Eliot and some Graves, although he knew the Georgians well and admired Gerard Manley Hopkins. Still, Wordsworth was, for the developing poet, the greatest model and inspiration as the Prelude-like The Invitations attests.

Yeats insisted that "the imaginative creation of oneself goes on from birth" (Ellmann, Oscar Wilde, 294). John Glassco wrote to create himself. He evinced a love of language and apprenticed himself to it from early manhood. The McGill Journal portrays a youth determined to discipline himself to the craft of making poetry and of making himself an artist.

Glassco's first mention of his poetry comes on 6 March 1934 with a typically self-deflating remark:

"My poetry seems very trivial, cheap stuff," (fol. 24). He had been reading Edith Sitwell whose work he found "trashy stuff" and Bridges whom he did not like: "very cold he seems" (fol. 34). Later that month Glassco began a poem "tentatively called 'March'," but he soon found it "derivative and uninspired"; he was equally uncertain about "The Dancers." (See Appendix D.) In the low mood caused by recurring pain and fever he judged himself and his talent severely: "I may not just have it in me to write poetry but yet I know that I shall go on scribbling till the end" (fol. 26).

A week before he was to undergo further surgery, for tuberculosis Glassco felt energetic enough to note that he had almost finished "March," and had "started in on the old 'Advice Poem'." But he saved some of his energy for a harsh assessment of British poets he had been reading, finding Graves "On English Poetry" to be "altogether too clever--smart." Glassco felt Graves to be "a good poet technically, one of the very best, but really very shallow." He was equally dismissive of Graves's contemporaries; Sassoon, Campbell, and Blunden he found "so extraordinarily pleased with themselves" and infected with "a most amazing note of smug self-importance in everything they write" (fol. 27).

Glassco set aside his diary until 17 May 1934 when he was to write that "I thought I would never again be

writing in this Journal," but rejoiced that he was free of infection, needed only one small operation and was at last "working with hope." He was encouraged not only by his greater strength and the spring weather but also by his reading of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Glassco seemed transported by Hopkins:

What has helped me as much as anything I think, is my 'discovery' of Gerard Manley Hopkins. He, at last, has given me an inkling of what it is possible to do with rhythm, with words. I really felt like Keats-Cortez. But why, why has no one thought of carrying out and continuing his method? There, I think, is the only direction that English poetry can take. After reading him, one's palate is too fastidious for the monotonous old rhythms--this with all respect for those rhythms (fol. 28A)

Glassco was aware of Hopkins's debt to Piers Plowman for many of his poetry's features including "sprung rhythm, copious alliteration, outrides, hurried feet, burdenlines and counterpointing." He was convinced that he should never "be able to write another poem without using one of them," and pleased that he felt that he had been "verging towards such a way of writing before I read Hopkins--counterpointing at any rate" (fol. 28A). Although willing to acknowledge faults in Hopkins's "needless inversion, lack of taste, lack of humor (total), commonplaceness of thought (though not too often), bad rhymes, and

hysterics," Glassco felt the poetry was redeemed by Hopkins's being "the most melodious poet, after Poe, Milton and Skelton . . ." (fol. 28A). No other writer, save Proust, seems to have aroused such spontaneous enthusiasm in Glassco as Hopkins did.

If he could praise Hopkins, he could equally well damn Rupert Brooke, whom he called the "inspired singer" of the commonplace. Glassco could not abide Brooke's "dreadful public-school humor," and found his life to be like "a story by E. Barrington." Glassco judged Brooke to "have been Peter Pan to many, Henry James among them."

By early July Glassco had recovered from a depression that had overtaken him after the elation of his "discovery" of Hopkins. On 5 July he wrote that "in consequence of feeling so well" he had decided "to chuck all my 'poetry of shadows' and stick to regular, definite, simple and perhaps sentimental themes." He "sketched out" several companion pieces to the love poem "I Loved You Early" having in mind a book of thematically-linked poems "somewhat like 'A Shropshire Lad'" (fol. 28D). Although Glassco, while in hospital, had written "I Loved You Early" for Peggy (Marguerite Whitney), he later found that it looked "self-conscious"; nevertheless, he wrote "that it came straight from the heart" (28A). He decided that he had

to reject his "Shropshire" project as "hideously sentimental & wishy-washy." He added that "I am not so sure at all if the 'simple' note is the best for me" (fol. 28D). His determined struggle to find his own poetic voice is typified by this pattern of investigation, acceptance, rejection, and experimentation.

Glassco continued to pass the summer of 1934 at Baie d'Urfé, enjoying Graeme's company and working when his strength and mood permitted. It was not until late October, when living back in the city at 107 Côte St. Antoine Road, that Glassco again seriously turned his mind to poetry. He wrote that he had been very happy throughout the summer and early fall and had not felt the need to write much in his Journal: "I haven't written anything here for months. I think that when I am happy I never want to write about myself" (fol. 30). He had completed "Sweet Marigold" and had nearly done with "The Golden Oriole." He regretted the loss of the "excitement" that could spur him to compose, and he was disappointed that he had not been able to write "something beautiful" about Graeme. On 29 November he notes that he was feeling "a bit low" but had written a sonnet "to show the hopelessness of any belief in a world of changing values, and yet the absolute necessity of it for the artist" (fol. 32). Struggling

with this concept, that belief was "a flint out of which sparks may be struck" by the poet, Glassco composed a sonnet sequence that pleased him: "I was very happy and excited writing them, and I feel they are almost the first quite sincere things I have done" (fol. 32). Besides his poetry, Glassco was occupied in reading philosophy. He found Plato "entrancing" but Schopenhauer "the only one with any real meat in him." Glassco reflected that "the sense of conflict in me between my yearning for order in things and the realisation of the actual chaos of everything is what hurts me." He longed "for a belief in something" (fol. 32-33) but found his only comfort in remembering that "there is Graeme always" (fol. 33).

On 8 February 1935 Glassco observed that he had fallen into a depression. This despair followed "two happy months of conviction that I was some good as a poet--the longest time this has ever happened!" (fol. 33). He recorded that he had completed "The Golden Oriole" and the sonnet sequence. He was pleased with them, but he later turned against them, establishing and confirming a pattern of enthusiasm and pleasure followed by revulsion and discouragement. "It all seems so derivative, such an echo of something else," he wrote, "and worst of all, it is not up-to-date--unrepresentative of this day and age." For Glassco

only Eliot seemed truly to be the representative poet of the century, but he could not see himself following in Eliot's path. He continued to thrash about, trying to articulate beliefs of his own. He grasped at some sort of aestheticism in which all was both relative and sensation: "I believe in nothing but sensations, powerful & pleasurable: everything that one calls 'right' or 'wrong' or 'good' or 'evil,' merely has to be shifted upside down and it becomes its opposite" (fol. 33). Two days later, still depressed, Glassco regretted that his fondness for travel--which had sustained him at times--had faded, and with it his desire for new places. He retained an interest in fresh acquaintances but mused that his "Youth seems dead, dead, dead" (fol. 34). On 21 March, "greatly" distressed by the signs of spring he had observed on a walk with Graeme, he returned to the house to write "Spring in the City," a mood poem reflecting his annoyance with what he saw as his own absurdity and pettiness, an annoyance "with my conceits and lusts," "which made me wonder [if I were] beginning to look dull and stupid" (fol. 34A).

Poetry seemed to be a central concern to Glassco in early spring of 1935. He had been reading "When the Lamp is Shattered" aloud to Graeme, as an example of "the lovely rocking rhythm to be obtained by mixing

anapests and iambs," when Graeme remarked that the poem's appeal was wholly to the intellect, rather than to "the emotions as sensuous faculties." Glassco seized this observation as significant: "I see now what it is that lifts Shelley above the rest: it is just that intellectual approach to everything, quite natural & as a matter of course." Similarly, he wrote that what was so "cloying about Keats is that he never approaches a subject intellectually." This is not to say that Glassco did not admire Keats, he did. What he objected to in Keats was "that sensuousness of his, with its infinite possibilities for sterile introspection and self-identification with the outward appearances of Nature" (fol. 34A).

By mid-June Glassco's mood was one of "rapture, ecstasy." He was again in the country and hard at work on his erotic novel ("The Way Back") and his verse. By 17 June 1935 he had completed "Beauty on the Roads" after nearly two years work off and on, and finished "I Loved You Early," "A Reckoning," and "The Wild Canary." As well, he was nearly done with "The Man of Vision," designed as a companion piece to the unfinished "The Man of Action." The most difficult task was "to finish poems well, and I think that here is where so many fall down--myself most of all: it is so hard to avoid putting a 'punch' in the end." He rejects the attempt

"to 'rise' when the poem is all but finished and get the Blake effect--'I will not cease from mental fight'--that is impossible for a man whose other work shows that he is a sober and rational man." Returning to Keats, Glassco becomes yet more harsh in his comments:

Then there is the custom instituted by Keats . . . brought to its highest pitch of artificiality by Tennyson, and reduced to banality by his imitators the William Watsons etc.--of going off into a splendid sounding metaphor that leaves the reader thrown up like a fish on an unknown shore: I think this last is due a great deal to that execrable sonnet of Keats' . . . "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." (fol. 34C)

Glassco concedes that Keats's "Homer" is "all right if taken for what it is, an effervescence of youthful enthusiasm, perhaps a bit hysterical, but quite sincere" (fol. 34C-34D). Glassco was not objecting to Keats's^A sonnet or his method, but rather to "elevating the defects of its construction & feeling into a system for writing sonnets" (fol. 34D). He concluded that "the 17th century knew best how to finish their poems--quiet, neither rising nor falling, and sticking straight to the point: Wordsworth has done it beautifully in 'The Green Linnet'." (Glassco was less happy with the "Lucy" poems, which, he wrote, "have a suspicion of 'punch'.") He had praise for Cowper who, Glassco wrote, "avoids the issue beautifully by deducing a wholesome moral from what has

gone before, and because we know he was sincere, the beauty of the poem is quite unimpaired, and the moral takes its proper place as a product of Cowper's peculiar sensibility."

Leaving aside the problem of a poem's conclusion, Glassco's thoughts turned again to Shelley, this time less admiringly so. He was troubled by what he perceived as Shelley's lack of tolerance for another's writing, as when Shelley "deliberately omitted a deal of Alcibiades' talk" in his translation of Plato's "Banquet" without telling the reader he had done so. Glassco saw this act as a contradiction of Shelley's preaching of tolerance, in fact "the most insidious form of intolerance." Glassco too was troubled by what he saw as Shelley's "rather too-pronounced shrinking from homosexuality." These thoughts seemed to prompt him to a brief consideration of what he called "true psychology," which he thought to be "the most important study (perhaps it can almost be called a science) today--should have the most far-reaching consequences, could do the most good" (fol. 34D).

Delivering himself of callow criticism of popular literature Glassco felt warmed to comment on Burns, whom he had been reading in the Oxford Book of Poetry. He found Burns's dialect "hideous" and "the violence, vulgarity and stupidity of the sentiments . . .

revolting" (fol. 34E). By 23 August 1935 Glassco had again found his good humour and wrote of his abiding happiness: "We have had the most beautiful summer, Graeme and I, that we have ever had The days go past now--just a succession of sweets: I have never known such happiness" (fol. 35).

At this time Glassco was satisfied with his writing, reckoning that he had "about 350 lines of poetry that I am really proud of--with 500 that are not bad." He was planning a book of verse, but felt that he needed to write "a couple of long poems" to add necessary "bulk & solidity" to his work. The poet remained concerned that his work was derivative, and he entered in his Journal a sharply self-critical catalogue of his work to date, finding fault at every turning: his sonnets were "bastard Shakespeare," and "The Wild Canary" owed too much to Cowper's "'Bull' poem and Wordsworth" while "A Reckoning" was frankly T.S. Eliot. "Beauty on the Roads" was imitative of de la Mare; other things were done "à la Hopkins and Milton" and he had written as well "a couple of 'Sweeney' poems." In spite of this rather unfavourable assessment of his poetry, Glassco was not downhearted; he believed that "I may hit my stride soon" vowing to never again turn on "the Muse" by permitting himself to become miserable and hence unable to write.

During the late summer of 1935, Glassco gave himself over to fetichistic fantasies about the seduction of Adrienne, a young governess employed at a nearby farm: "This going at a seduction like a game is really the best fun" (fol. 34). He was convinced, however, that this was a game that held real danger for him. Glassco wrote that seduction is often a "strain" and unresolved sex can be "a bit dangerous," while he felt concern that he might "do myself some injury." While on the one hand lusting for Adrienne: "I've only to think of her breasts and buttocks and I feel that I must have her" (fol. 38), he was aware that "she really only interests me sexually"; on the other he lamented that "she bores me stiff: that is a bad foundation for an affair" (fol. 42). He concluded, however, that this arrangement--uncomplicated lust--was "a safe one for the soul." In these words there is the refrain of the dangerous woman--the femme fatale who would become a feature of Glassco's prose. In any case, Glassco believed Adrienne worth a poem: "Graeme thought it was one of the best things I'd done . . . it is simple, sincere and neat, & the verse is harmonious." This poem was "To A.D. de B." and Glassco felt that it at least gave him "some lasting benefit from this affair."

Leaving aside the affair, one that Graeme obviously accepted if his encouraging remarks on the

poem are an indication of his attitude, Glassco turned to a discussion of "a long poem" he had begun in blank verse. This would be, eventually, The Invitations. He was concerned that while he found blank verse fascinating, he must guard against its becoming "sloppy, like Browning's." He was alert to feminine endings, which, he felt, gave "the work a phoney, pseudo-Elizabethan ring, like Byron's dramas and even bits of The Cenci." He decided that his models were to be Wordsworth and Milton.

In spite of constant interruptions to pursue his pornographic writings and to consider the objectification of Adrienne (who once possessed, became a commodity), Glassco dwelt on his personal psychology and his poetry. He was certain that the affair had done his health "a good deal of harm," and certain that he would "be punished for taking that kind of pleasure." He admitted to fear of real physical harm resulting from sexual pleasure with women; he was convinced that this apprehension was "bound up with my masochism" (fol. 45). He hated to be dominated by anyone, especially by women who entranced him sexually; this was an intellectual rejection of what he craved sexually: punishment by sexually attractive and dominant women. He wrote that "Every day now in my erotic imaginings I discover fresh depths: it is rather

frightening. But something tells me I am perfectly safe as long as I don't try to translate them, even in play into reality, don't try to act them out" (fol.46). He had become certain that the acting out of his fantasies would be "dangerous on account of the hideous rejection afterwards; for I am convinced now that 'black thoughts' are the great enemies of the physical system: happiness, contentment are its surest friends." Glassco was holding no moral scruple; he was expressing a neurotic fear of possibly adverse physical consequences, ones that could be avoided by finding erotic satisfaction in the writing of pornography. In composing pornography there was the additional benefit of fuelling his imagination, of providing "the sense of accomplishment" he craved.

Glassco's mind moved from such deliberate decadence--although his private writings at this time suggest this insouciance was a cover for a deep fear of women and of his own sexual imaginings--to resumption of his verse. He rejected earlier lines of The Invitations, finding them "flat and namby-pamby as could be" because "they were written on the spot, from nature, without the scene (it was description) having been really informed by the imagination." He found the blank verse a difficult form to compose but noted that there was no use "working at it," realizing the "best

poem" he had written, "The Two Linnets" (later "The Two Sparrows"), was the one he had taken most pleasure in writing.

In early October of 1935, finding himself unable to write poetry for over a month, Glassco read A rebours, in which "the spirit of Perversity," had found expression "at last." Reading Huysmans caused him to reflect on the "clumsiness and awkwardness" of "The Way Back," his current erotic work-in-progress. Glassco believed that Huysmans's novel was "the prose version of the spirit that Baudelaire typifies" (fol.47).¹ He quite suddenly had an insight about himself:

It's strange how I used to dislike that peculiarly French love of the macabre--that ability to find beauty in horror, torture, and decomposition--: I see now it was a defense-mechanism in myself--for I realise that I am not a strong enough mind to bear up under the fascination of these things: I also see now how outraged my psyche must have been

¹Glassco seems unaware of the moral dimension of Baudelaire's poetry. In William York Tindall's words, "a moral and almost Christian Baudelaire" was "far from being depraved . . . was an idealist who, like Swift, liked to torture himself with what revolted him, who found in ugliness a sort of back door to beauty" whose evil flowers "appear to have been the seven deadly sins" (247). Tindall writes that it pleased George Moore, Buffy's literary hero in the Memoirs, "to think that Baudelaire disbelieved in goodness, truth, and life itself" (256-257). It is possible that Glassco was, in 1935, similarly misled.

when I read the Jardin des Supplices
[Mirbeau] when I was convalescing.
Everything is much clearer to me. (fol. 47)

It is unclear whether this insight precipitated "one of the sieges of depression" that Glassco recorded on 25 October 1935 (fol. 50), or whether his mood was already darkening and tending towards psychological self-examination. By late fall, however, the ecstasy of August had gone, and with it the poetic muse. He believed that "the consequence of noble ideas is misery" and recalled Nietzsche: "that nature is hampered in her development by people becoming too good--too generous--too soft & pitiful and kind. I loathed the idea at the time,--but the more I dwell on it the more I come to think that he is right" (fol. 50). He was weighed down by the contradictions "between the actual operations and results of virtuous actions" and the thought that "one's best impulses should always be productive of misery & confusion." He was "sad and bored and full of spleen."

On this weary note Glassco left off his Journal until 8 January 1936 when he was able to note that The Invitations was progressing once again, that he had written "a little lyric" that pleased him, capturing "nostalgia: that's the only word I can think of for that keen and yet luxurious pain that the sense of the past gives" (fol. 51). On the whole, however, he was

not happy with his poetry at this time. Only when "the slightest bit elevated by ale" could he admire his blank verse, see in it "my own peculiar style." When sober he was, seldom confident, could only sit staring at the fire, the sheets on his knee, and no stanzas coming. Domestically, things were much more satisfactory in early 1936. By 1 February Glassco could write contentedly of his life with Graeme at Baile d'Urfé.

I think this is the best winter I have ever had in my life--not the slightest feeling of nausea and winter-depression I used to have . . . we walk about 2 or 3 miles every day, eat four very light meals, and drink about a quart of ale every night, which last sends us to bed sleepy and in a pleasant frame of mind. (fol.53)

Although happy enough with "Summer" (later The Invitations), which was well over half-written, Glassco's poetry was progressing slowly, since he could compose only when inspired, and inspiration came "only about two or three days of each month." He continued to tinker with other unfinished works and wrote that he had finished "the opening chorus of Korin, but more just for the satisfaction of putting it away at last among the poems which I don't intend to publish, 'finished' at least" (fol. 53). He was still weighing and assessing his work, with an eye to having 1000 lines of good work--"enough for a book." In a familiar

pattern, once having found confidence in his work sufficient to consider a book of his poems, Glassco immediately rejected the idea: "I suppose I had better try to get the book published by some regular company, only the almost absolute certainty of its being turned down is enough to make one unwilling even to submit it." He considered printing his own book, amusing himself with the idea that he could print and bind a volume: "it would be great fun, having one's own choice of types, binding and paper." The result would be modestly charming: "as unpretentious as could be: I have a notion good poetry looks best in the simplest and shabbiest dress." Uncertain of the best course, and recording his contempt for an unattractive reading public, he still wanted to see his "1000 lines integrated and rendered permanent" even at the risk of fame, which "would be nice" but would "have all the drawbacks of the praise of fools, & might end in making one extremely cheap" (fol. 54).

With no decision taken whether to publish, Glassco turned to a consideration of the romantic and classical tendencies in his work. "I hope," he wrote, "I am beginning to shake off that nostalgia and romanticism, that foginess and sentiment, that is always fighting against what I am sure is my clearer, saner, better side." He took himself to task for admiring Debussy

whose "music still comes over me like an agonizingly sweet memory", and confessed to being "almost ashamed" at having enjoyed Tchaikovsky and Wagner. He hoped that devotion to Handel and Mozart would cure him of Debussy, but he was doubtful. In reading, he was enjoying the Elizabethans, especially Webster and Tourneur, but he saved his keenest admiration for Samuel Daniel, going so far as to steal a copy of his works from MacDonald College. Glassco wrote: "I feel such a kinship with D. that I must have his work with me always."²

In mid-February he completed "Maytime" and was working on a French sonnet-sequence and attempting translations of Propertius. He announced that he had "at last cast off T.S. Eliot," deciding that Eliot was "a professorial soul of great ingenuity" whose essays were smug and whose poetry lacked life. Glassco confessed that he had "read him too much at an

²Margaret Drabble points out, in The Oxford Companion to English Literature, that although Jonson called Daniel "a good honest man . . . but no poet," he had his admirers in the Romantic period including Lamb, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. The last complete edition of his work was Alexander Grosart's of 1885-96. Glassco expressed his admiration for Daniel in the Memoirs (210). He is best remembered for the "Delia" sonnets, for "The Complaint of Rosamund" (a companion piece to "Delia"), and for his "Musophilus," "a verse dialogue in which Philocosmus, the unlettered man of action, is opposed by the defender of culture, 'of all learning'" (Sprague xx).

impressionable age, & his lines stayed with me" (fol. 55). Thus, having disposed of Eliot and Wagner (and Beethoven, a "colossal bore"), and claiming his loyalty to the obscure Daniel, the emerging poet faced the spring of 1936 in poor spirits: "I have just been looking over my poems, which I never fail to do when feeling low, and as usual think they are piffling, derivative, and though few, yet too many for the patience of even the most sympathetic & curious reader" (fol. 56).

Glassco's only consolation in this self-punitive mood was the realization that in such a depressed state even the work of "Wordsworth, Shelley or any one else, would seem to me almost pointless, tame and harsh-sounding." He had accomplished some work, however, and "Day in Autumn," composed in a state of drunkenness, was edging towards completion. Glassco admitted that he had not gone to bed sober for a year. This fact did not concern him since his health was quite sound: "I feel wonderfully well, walk for two miles a day, and eat lightly and with appetite. And not a cold all winter!" This healthy state of mind was short-lived: by 4 April, Glassco had become profoundly depressed; he wrote that he was miserable and incapable of work and that life seemed increasingly futile and hopeless. He longed to meet a new woman, rejecting all those he knew

as so "stupid and absurd" that he wondered if they were "a different kind of being from those I knew in Paris" (fol. 57). With the exception of the governess Adrienne, he confided in his Journal that he had been impotent with the few women he had known. He looked at the past five years as those of wasted youth and regarded his life with, as he wrote: "a kind of despairing anger at my own helplessness." He was burdened by the memory of his former, youthful beauty, lost to the tuberculosis that had left him with "my chest sunken and my back flattened"

Taylor was almost as depressed as Glassco in the spring of 1936. They had travelled down to Magog to look at a house, then found themselves feeling unsure of what they wanted. They made plans, then changed them, on the one hand attracted to establishing a real home where they could arrange their books and be comfortable, and on the other toying with plans to visit Greece, perhaps live abroad each winter, fearful that setting up a household would mean the end of youth. Graeme, on his part, had given up writing and had been directing his attention to Glassco's investments while they made plans for a fortnight in New York, and a trip for the fall to either France or Greece, less because they wanted to travel than because they feared feeling dull. At this time Glassco's

uncertainty about the future did not seem to interfere too much with his writing. By 30 July he could record that he had been working hard on The Invitations, although he and Graeme had been dislocated from their home at Baie d'Urfé by the Jesuits of Loyola College, who owned their property and decided to let it out to a boys' camp. Glassco and Taylor found themselves at Waterloo, Quebec, on a tour of the Eastern Townships in search of a farm to buy. Glassco recognized that in spite of his ambivalence to the idea of settling down, he could not work without a secure home to give him support (even as he considered the fantasy that he might be a better poet if he were "flitting about like a moth"). He stopped to consider "his good fortune in life," which he itemized as "youth, attraction, money, health (not strong but good enough), fascinating lusts & changing passions, tastes for reading & contemplation, a perfect friend who loves me & whom I love with all the love that can be without desire, & a belief (occasionally wavering) that I can write well" (fol. 62). Turning from bodily comforts to spiritual challenges, he read the Pensées of Pascal and reflected that he had "long since discarded the atheism of my youth." But he admitted that he had found little assistance in knowing God through Christianity. He accepted the doctrine of original sin, seeing it as an

explanation of humankind's "wretchedness, & our striving towards something which we vaguely feel we have lost, & which the artist sees as the sphere of beauty" (fol. 63).

On September 6, Glassco set aside theology and wrote with considerable excitement of a beautiful woman he had just met whom he named as Joan Todd. He was transfixed by her uncanny resemblance to the character of Jessie in his pornographic work, Philip Eugene: "the same physique, & the same voice and manner . . . her mannish military coat, close haircut, the chain on her wrist, her hands . . . this general masculine air of her bearing & conversation." Glassco wondered if Joan were aware of "the sole office for which Providence seems to have designed her," but he decided that she might well "understand a good deal more than I think." Although intensely attracted to this mannishly beautiful woman, Glassco was at once seized by his recurrent fear: "The suspicion that perhaps I was straining myself unduly in this affair . . . gave me a dreadful feeling . . . the sense that I was undermining my health and that a woman was somehow meant to work my ruin" (fol. 64). At this thought Glassco was struck, that this fatal woman was "extraordinarily like Peggy!" his Parisian love, and the model for Mrs. Quayle in the Memoirs. At first sweating in fear, he

collected himself and reconciled his feelings as mere superstition. But he noted that he should take this as "a warning."

Leaving aside his morbid reflections, Glassco emerged to comment that "The Invitations is now slightly more than half-finished" after a year's work. He was unhappy at the thought that the move from Baie d'Urfé might mean he would be unable to finish the poem, thinking it "is the best, indeed the only good, work I have ever done." The next months were given over to the continuing search for property. Glassco and Taylor finally settled on the Dawes House, the White Mansion set among trees just outside Knowlton where they moved in early 1937. They named the house and farm "Windermere." On 9 June Glassco recorded their pleasure in their farm, and his satisfaction that The Invitations would be completed by fall. During the summer of 1937 Glassco was enjoying life, driving his horse through the lovely countryside, and on 3 September he wrote that he had finished all but fifty lines of The Invitations. He added that "he could no longer believe in it" (fol. 72). In October, his interests were wholly in the stock market and a new mistress, Amelia von Auschenberg, an Austrian woman of thirty-five, "divinely beautiful." By February 1938 their affair was over but her effect lingered in

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Glassco's mind: "My emotional experiences with her . . . have been most valuable: they supplied a hint that developed into the plan for the ending, the crisis, of Philip Eugene, & gave me first-hand knowledge of a certain state of mind that he will experience" (fol. 75). At once Glassco added: "I am thinking that I can never be fond of anyone but Graeme,--which is as it should be."

The next month, in another frame of mind, Glassco wrote that he no longer believed in the need to write anything: "with The Invitations, I feel that it is a finished poem,--& the labour of actually finishing something, of laying hands on something really finished & static, is repugnant" (fol. 76). He was fearful of the "gradual ebbing away of my poetic faculty," fearful that his poetry had been only the exuberance of youth. This was a distressing thought, and Glassco attempted to lessen the pain by dismissing the importance of art to himself ("Oh, well, if I am not to produce anything, I am not"), while refusing to give up altogether ("And yet, I still feel . . . that I can do something").³

³An example of the sort of behaviour these conflicting attitudes prompted took place in August 1938 when Glassco had had an article, "Nasties," an early forerunner of "The Art of Pornography," rejected by Esquire magazine. Although finding Esquire a vulgar publication, and while admitting that "Nasties" was a slight work, Glassco's reaction to the magazine's rejection of his article was extreme: "I feel so

The atmosphere of the household changed radically with the arrival of Sappho (Mary Elizabeth Wilson), a former "beauty queen" and horsewoman who hired on as a housekeeper to Glassco and Taylor in 1939. Sappho was prepared to bake the pies, milk the cows, and participate in various combinations of sexual activity with her employers. Glassco kept her photograph in his bedroom, and it was his family's opinion that he would marry Sappho. She in fact married Taylor eventually. Her presence changed the dynamic of the house. In early winter 1940 Glassco recorded that he had become absorbed in "day-to-day jealousies, a hand-to-mouth existence of the emotions & desires" (fol. 82) but was managing to work again on The Invitations, which was (again) near completion, needing "no more than 10-15 lines of enthusiasm for minor Elizabethan dramatists, a few scattered lines filled in, & some (not much) polish."

In October 1941 Glassco's Journal expressed only sadness. Taylor had enlisted in the army in July 1940 and although Sappho remained at Knowlton with Glassco,

unsure of myself, so conscious of inferiority that I could burst into tears, tear all my work in pieces, & lie down motionless like an indisposed Yahoo. And my poetry and novel [Philip Eugene] are bad--so bad that I would rather not think of them!" (fol. 77). He berated himself for sloth, for failing to fulfil the promise of the "industrious, sensitive boy" he had been.

he felt a "numbing loneliness." He fretted he might never write again, and occupied himself in tending the farm and horses, and quarrelling with Sappho. Only writing in his Journal gave Glassco a more balanced outlook. But things were to grow worse. Graeme had married Sappho on 18 February 1941, and on 11 August 1942 Glassco reflected that the year living alone at the farm was "a dreadful time, the worry, and the drudgery, and the loneliness." Only with Graeme's discharge from the army and his return to Knowlton in the summer of 1942 did Glassco feel some relief at the "blessed sense that his being here renders everything all right" (fol. 85). Once more, Glassco felt secure, relieved of the responsibility of taking decisions and especially free "to indulge in childish things again, - moods, sulks, and pleasures . . . to behave, now and then, like the spoiled child I have always been" (fol. 86). His elation was intense as he wrote of "Blessed impulses of romance, that urge me already to long-suppressed daydreams, and may be urging me to action soon, soon!" But the elation, as usual, was short-lived. On 2 September he wrote of "melancholy and depression" brought on by the rejection of a story (fol. 87). Again, he was certain that he was "finished, completely," adding that "I cannot write, and I have no further interest in love-making." Only

horses gave him joy, although he noted that "Every day now, as I ride around on the mail, I feel like a dead man sitting behind the horse . . . dead from top to toe."

It was at this point that Glassco entertained the idea of trying to enlist in the air force. He was desperate for a change and for a means of showing others that he was more than a dilettante, and could behave like a man with purpose. Naturally, his application for enlistment was rejected when he applied in September 1942. Although Glassco was refused for the excellent reason that he had only one lung, he took the news the way he took all rejection: as an occasion for unrelenting self-criticism. His self-confidence shrank further, and he began to stammer a good deal, this latter affliction making it more difficult for him to meet new people or visit unfamiliar places. Even the local fall fair, which he had been looking forward to, gave him such anxiety that he was unable to drive his horses in competition and so won no ribbons for the farm. In spite of this disappointment, he took real pleasure in his horses and his driving, and cherished the compliments paid him by fellow reinsmen.

A year passed with no mention of poetry, Glassco being taken up with Philip Eugene (renamed En Arrière), until on 16 September 1943 he recorded that The

Canadian Forum had accepted "The Rural Mail" (fol. 100). By December Glassco was again frankly discontented with his life:

always the same day, stretching before me-- breakfast, strain the milk, then into my study to stare dejectedly at unfinished poems, stories, scraps--until it is time to take the mail around; then deliver the milk, take the mail (still a pleasant drive, I admit) and come back to read the newspaper till tea; strain the milk again, and then back to the study to stare at poems, etc. until dinner. And after dinner nothing to do but drink cider and chew over small scraps of gossip with Graeme, who is apparently supremely happy in this life. (fol. 105)

Glassco was discouraged that The Canadian Forum had returned what he called his "4 Civilian Poems" with a note saying "they were interesting, yet we believe they cd. be improved by clarification" (fol. 106).

Once again it was the exploration of perverse consciousness that seemed to offer hope of "success." Glassco became preoccupied, partly as a result of the fascination with Proust's creation of the private universe, with exposing the "super-egotistical consciousness of a neurotic hero" and examining "the problem of the bad conscience" (fol. 106). Glassco had come to believe that only through the neurotic hero could he "interpret the spirit, or at least one spiritual aspect, of the world today." He claimed that only the neurotic could "assimilate [the] chaotic

multiverse." The sane man could not reconcile chaos with his own stability; whereas the self-centredness of the neurotic instinctively permitted him to take only "what he needs for himself from all the data given by the world--in other words, though he loses his own balance, he keeps a balance between himself and the world,--and is therefore a fitting protagonist for a work of art."

At this time Glassco was pursuing only pornography as prose, so it was only in this genre that he could consider the development of his neurotic hero. But even that plan seemed to fail. As he passed his thirty-fourth birthday in December of 1943 he had already decided that he should stop writing poetry and put all his efforts into prose, a disappointment for him just when he felt he had developed a "satisfactory technique" (fol. 107). He faced the misery of Christmas--always a trying time for him--with the refusal of En Arrière, the arrival of bitterly cold weather, and the incidence of more enervating quarrels with Sappho. On 1 January 1944 Glassco wrote "This is the depth." He felt that his imagination was failing him. Even in his pornography, melancholy was ever-present, merely waiting an excuse to emerge and claim him, and his sexual life with women was destroyed, nothing remaining "beyond meretricious contacts and

ridiculous fantasies." He crept into the winter bedroom and lay down in his despair, wanting only "to howl like a wild beast."

It is difficult not to think that, in Glassco's mind, Sappho's presence in the house was destructive.⁴ When the McGill Journal resumes in March 1946, Glassco and Taylor have sold Windermere and moved to a modest farm house in Foster. Sappho has won a "separation pension" of \$60.00 a month from Graeme and has settled in Montreal. Even as his life became more tranquil, Glassco was unable to see Sappho realistically, on the one hand attacking her in misogynist terms and on the other praising her as a goddess who had created a "paradise" of amusement and sexuality. In short, he cast her as the Venus who was also the femme fatale. At no point does her humanity emerge from the pages of Glassco's Journal. In the mid-1940s he is still incapable of seeing women other than as extensions of his private fantasies or as his fictive creations. He supplied the imaginative construct and women were made

"Glassco notes in the McGill Journal that he had destroyed some fifteen pages of, "anguished passages" for fear that she might use them against him and Graeme in her suit against them for homosexuality. While it is impossible to discern Sappho's motives, her "destructiveness" appears to have been a result of the effect of her sexuality on the two men, and their perception of that power, rather than of what she actually did.

to fit his preconceptions. He continued to exploit women, taking up with a lame girl in whom he had no interest other than a sexual one (fol. 117).

Sappho's departure in late 1945 had done nothing to eliminate Glassco's ongoing depression, for the simple reason that she was not its cause. In Foster he continued to drink too much and to procrastinate about getting down to work. He was "fearful of stirring up old ghosts." Paradoxically, the past was always golden to Glassco. He seemed incapable of accepting that his memories were coloured by a haze of nostalgia. On 4 April 1946 he was continuing to harangue himself for failure to work while indulging in nostalgia about "the past of Windermere with all its atmosphere of ecstasy, happiness, heartbreak, misery--disgust" (fol. 119). His craving was for intensity, something that the quiet stability of his life with Graeme did not provide. He fancied that new buildings he saw were prefiguring their own decay, that "all endeavour [was] doomed." Even the simplest acts seemed to carry within them gloom and sadness: "The sight of a farmer spreading manure the other day . . . felt like weeping for him." Even the spring and the early cultivation of the fields, surely a hopeful sign, was depressing. He felt he could never again breed a mare, no more than he could beget a child. He repeated to himself

Schopenhauer's words: "The soul is grieved by everything it looks on."

After a workless summer, Glassco resumed keeping his Journal in October of 1946 in "an attempt to recapture the habit of putting thoughts and ideas on paper" (fol. 120). But his mood was no lighter than it had been in March and April. Even the landscape of the Townships, usually a source of pleasure to Glassco, became "this Canadian landscape . . . the most unreal collection of places, angles and colours that was ever seen." In that landscape he was himself a "deadman" alive only "from force of habit." Glassco believed himself compelled to write neither for money ("I have plenty") nor for fame (the world's "opinion is worthless to me"), but to "assert myself somehow." He seemed fixed in that inactivity that results from and compounds a deep fear of failure. No matter how discomfoting the effects of procrastination, the devastation of rejection--and Glassco had felt that sting--was worse: better to castigate oneself for idleness than to risk being faced with conclusive failure as a writer.

At this nadir of late autumn 1946, the one encouraging sign of literary life was Glassco's poetry. "Stud Groom" had been accepted by The Canadian Forum in August and would be published in November. On 20

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October Glassco could announce that he had just completed "Soldier's Settlement" (which would appear in the Forum in January 1947), and was pleased with the progress of "The Brill Road." For the first time in many months, Glassco discussed his work, rather than merely expressing hopes for its success or damning his own talent. He wrote that it was the conception of a poem, not its "actual writing," that was for him "the most important stage of the process of facing up to some new and grimmer aspect of mankind," of life, of fate: the poem itself shows me I have gotten over another hurdle, but remains not as the trophy of victory over some new experience but as a landmark or a tombstone, commemorating "some signal retreat, some piecemeal morte nuova of the spirit" (fol. 120-121).

Late 1946 marked a new maturity in Glassco's work that seemed to represent an artistic renewal. Sappho was gone from the household, and Glassco and Taylor resumed a quiet domestic life. They closed ranks against this woman who had brought such delight and conflict into their lives: once more it was "Graeme and I"--and Sappho was the enemy who pestered Graeme with letters from lawyers demanding money. The fatal woman was gone, and Glassco was once again safe with his beloved Graeme.

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By 24 March 1947 Glassco had managed to establish a routine for writing poetry. He sat at his desk for two or three hours each evening after dinner. This work schedule had enabled him to write, during February, "The Entailed Farm," which he felt to be his best poem (later published in the Forum in May 1947). The publication of his poems gave Glassco satisfaction. "At least I have 'done something!' And the plan of keeping on writing verses such as these is almost the only thing that gives meaning or direction to my life these days,--the plan of keeping on until I have about 1000 lines, enough for a volume,--'The Rural Mail'" (fol. 122). But, the elation of March was followed by the depression of April. He was no longer keeping his good resolutions to drink less and to sleep and work more regularly. His only occupation seemed to be the "walk through the ghosts of other years." He recognized that there was in his life a "spiritual hangover" following "every ebullition"; he wrote that "one is knelled back, with an ever greater intensity of sadness, to the underlying melancholy of human life, the terrible discrepancies of youth and age, of what hope and fancy contrive as a foil to what is" (fol. 123). In this frame of mind he wrote "Gentleman Farmer" (later "Gentleman's Farm," The Canadian Forum July 1954), which he liked well enough, but he was

concerned too that "this time I didn't seem able to put just that particular essential expression of myself into it." More positively, he saw the poem as supplying "a further good slice of documentation of the rural landscape." May was another desolate month. Glassco felt revulsion when he saw "The Entailed Farm" in the Forum: "the disappointment, amounting to shock, when I saw 'The Entailed Farm' in print: the thing looked simply dreadful--like a badly tied up parcel, all holes and flapping wrappings and loose ends of string: I have been working at revising it in a hopeless, discouraged kind of way--but I can see it will never be right" (fol. 124). The landscape mirrored Glassco's lifeless mood: "the grassy wood of fence-posts and fallen timber, the gray of stones, the brownness and poverty of the land to which the sun is so merciless."

While Sappho's departure had marked a renewal of domestic harmony and a subsequent artistic renewal, Glassco could simply not survive without a woman in his household. Poetry and peace of mind were forgotten when, having sold Windermere in 1947 and moved to Foster, the two men advertised for a new housekeeper. In early June of 1947 Glassco wrote of a "gradually deepening wretchedness." He and Taylor were desperate to find a housekeeper, "the real crazy type we like to

much" because, Glassco wrote, "we realise that without a woman beside us we are lost, the summer is lost, life is not worth living, we might just as well blow our brains out" (fol.126). Glassco continued to regard women as nothing more than a commodity, but an essential one. His attitude is revealed in a comment about Taylor and himself: "our interests in things,-- horses, books, women--were always keen and lively" (fol. 121)[emphasis mine]. Without women, "Horses no longer matter, nor literature, nor fame, nor (really) money: the only thing that can give significance to life is a crazy woman." In spite of the contempt for women Glassco felt, he was no less desperate that a young woman who had shown interest in the post of housekeeper should accept. Pages of his June 1947 Journal are given over to his anxious speculations. When it finally appeared that the prospective housekeeper would not be coming down from Montreal to Foster, his own "psychic condition" reached a "climax" that seemed to suggest near-madness, a dizziness like "a morris-dance of absolute concepts, a complete overthrow of reason . . . it is horrible, horrible!" (fol. 127). He became consumed with a terror so intense that he found it safer to try to keep perfectly still and to concentrate all his energies on holding his panic "within bearable limits" (fol. 128). The

anxiety of awaiting the call from "Audrey," the prospective housekeeper ("straining so hard to make the telephone ring"), was the occasion not merely for annoyance but for the acting out of nearly uncontrollable neurosis. Audrey's arrival (Glassco had never met her) would bring about the "deferment of the collapse that a man must undergo some time" (fol. 126). To see this unknown (and perhaps wholly unsuitable) woman step from a taxi before their house in Foster would bring an "ecstasy of relief and happiness!" (fol. 125). For all his contempt of women, without their acceptance Glassco was reduced to panic-stricken insomnia that lasted days and reduced him to a cold sweat, nauseated, and unable to tolerate the slightest noise. So concentrated became his focus on the telephone bell that he lost sight of "what the call, if made, would be made for" (fol. 128). The question was would this woman reject the vulnerable man and thus reduce him to worthlessness and self-contempt, or would she accept him and thereby, at least in his fancy, assure his self-respect and the happiness of the summer? She telephoned to say that she would not be coming to Foster to work. Glassco had taken the call: he was furious at her response, and his hand shook so badly that he could not write.

On 30 June 1947 Glassco wrote in his Journal that he suspected that he was going mad. He awoke in the night with his worst-ever attack of the "horrors" and found his body "twitching spasmodically for about half an hour" (fol. 129). Taylor tried to help, taking Glassco for a walk in the woods the next morning, but the change of scene and the comfort of Graeme's presence did not prevent "the worst attack of all" which, Glassco wrote, "culminated in my hiding my face in my hands and sobbing." The whole of the summer of 1947 continued in a struggle to endure such attacks, and the autumn brought little relief from "the worst kind of suffering I have ever experienced" (fol. 130). Work was nearly impossible as the struggle to regain and retain emotional control sapped his energy. He tried to record the experience of his first panic attack in "Windmill Point." He found himself able to describe the episode but unable to communicate the "idea" of it. He was striving for "the heart of the mental state" in the poem but decided he had better expressed it in his Journal. He was struck that the experience of such mental anguish had taught him nothing: "as if one had been struck by an automobile or kicked by a horse" (fol. 131).

The only relief Glassco felt was in writing. His Journal remained a unique consolation, a fact he had

expressed in a May 1947 entry: "It is peculiar, the effect that writing in this book has on me. When I sit down to it, there is death in my soul,--and no sooner have I written half a page then the bitterness subsides, the blankness and hollowness fills up" (fol. 124). His other writing was equally precious: "nothing can ever equal for me the beautiful serene satisfaction of having (as I believe) written a few good lines: this is the only absolute untainted good I now recognize, and indeed it is probably the only one available to me" (fol. 131). He closed this serious consideration of his creative state, written 10 October 1947, with the affirmation that he had recovered "for a short time, my identity." In November he was in good humour, although he had abandoned "Windmill Point" and was not pleased with "Gentleman's Farm," certain in fact that his "poetry [was] steadily deteriorating in vigour and quality." There were "no new women on the horizon," the attacks of dizziness continued, and the winter was upon them. Still, Glassco's mood was buoyant because "Off the Map" (formerly Philip Eugene and En Arrière) was being considered by a New York publisher. Glassco admitted that the "spark of hope" this news had ignited had grown into "a bonfire, burning in the background of my consciousness." Even Graeme had begun to write again (fol. 132).

February 1948 was trying, although both men were attempting to end their drinking and to withstand court action being launched by Sappho in search of more money. Sobriety was helpful as Glassco began to suffer less from dizziness and was able to work more. By March he had finished "Gentleman's Farm" and submitted it to Canadian Poetry Magazine after a "month's solid slaving at it," making thirty-four drafts in all (fol. 134). He had resumed work on "Windmill Point"; hoping it would be the best work he had done. Moreover, he had written sixty lines of a "Ballad of the Death of Thomas Pepys" which was "very stark."

He was living a mole-like existence, sleeping ten or twelve hours at night, to bed at four in the morning to rise at one or two o'clock in the afternoon. Sex was "solitary, this is not good,--but better than trusting any woman again." All his prose was erotic and his "concentration on poetry [was] merely the result of this inability to execute a work of any length or scope" (fol. 135). More uplifting perhaps was "still the shining goal of my Rural Mail book of poems: about 350 lines done out of a necessary 1,000" (fol. 135). He recognized too that "verse gives me greater pleasure" (than prose). His mood was still precarious, the early spring, "the vernal nakedness of the world" seemed to reflect his own "blankness." He

was not without energy, however, and was at work on "Blighty."

By late April 1948 he was convinced that he was a failure as a writer and a man. He feared rejection by publishers and by women, but forced himself to recount his blessing of acceptable health, Graeme's friendship, money, an ideal house and a hundred acres of land, and "no ties" (fol. 136). None of these availed. He wrote that the "mail is becoming more and more the only event of the day: the arrival of the newspapers with the stock market news." For the next year Glassco's only writing was prose. Graeme's divorce from Sappho was made absolute in April 1949 and Glassco was "elected town councillor of Foster by 'acclamation' later that summer (fol. 138). In October 1950 he noted that "The Burden of Junk," his last completed poem, had been accepted (The Canadian Forum, April 1951). He contemplated the autumn of early October: "The dead world peering at one again through the slanty sunshine, the light from red and yellow leaves, the smoky haze,-- and more real than the living world, as always. Oh this terrible, indefinable sadness!" (fol. 138). Although at work again on "Gentleman's Farm," Glassco felt that he had grown stale and was discouraged about another poem he referred to as "Undesirables." He sorrowfully wrote that "My poetry is steadily going

downhill, my ideas becoming more inchoate & emotionally intense & less & less articulate. Wordsworth has said everything I wish to say, already, & a hundred times better than I could hope to" (fol. 139). Yet in the latter months of 1950 and well into 1951 Glassco seemed to have more contentment and more confidence. He had been re-elected a town councillor with an encouraging majority and harboured ambitions for the provincial Liberal nomination. He was pleased to find that he was well-liked in the neighbourhood and happy to uncover an ability to "talk well and fluently" while electioneering. He had enjoyed the present of a new car from his mother and the handsome settlement of \$85,000 of his inheritance in 1951. He was satisfied when he saw "The Burden of Junk" printed (Forum April 1951), "a nice piece of mood-music," and was finished with "Town Council Meeting" (Forum June 1952) and "Blighty" (Forum November 1952). "Gentleman's Farm" now needed only a "final polish." He was satisfied with his work so far on "Under Shefford Mountain" (Forum May 1956) and was working on "Windmill Point" again, discussed as "long and Stevens-esque, almost done--but it still has overtones, and undertones, of a grandiose, mellifluous fake" (fol.142).

The years of 1952 and 1953 were a time of "tying up loose ends" and heavy drinking. Both Taylor and

Glassco pottered about with the establishment and organization of the Foster Horse Show. In 1954 Glassco, considered a trip to North Africa to satisfy his "fascination for coloured girls." He had affairs with exotic women, but avoided attachments. He maintained that he could stand no further "attacks" on his heart. Speaking of an affair with a Montreal dancer, he wrote: "I broke off when I felt myself becoming too much attached to a brainless, worthless, passionless and beautiful coloured girl" (fol. 145). He berated himself for having become dull. These were the years of search for subject that would culminate in the Memoirs, but in December 1954 while lamenting "if only I had a subject, a subject!" he could be satisfied that he had realized some progress with his poetry. He had finished "Windmill Point," "Deserted Buildings Under Shefford Mountain," and "The White Mansion" and had submitted them to Poetry (Chicago); he had written what he called "a trifle in semi vers libre, 2nd Sunday after Trinity, & John Donne genuflexus (an imitation) sent to CIV/n" (fol. 146). Glassco had not much hope for their publication, and said, self-defensively, "But after all, what does it matter? None of them are the kind of poetry I wanted to write. Then how did I come to write them? Merely because it is too wretched for me to go to bed without having written something."

Poetry (Chicago) did not take the poems, but later "Deserted Buildings" was printed by The Canadian Forum (May 1956), and "The White Mansion" by The Fiddlehead (November 1955). "Donne Procubitus" (formerly "John Donne genuflexus") also appeared in The Fiddlehead, in May of 1956, while "2nd Sunday" finally emerged as "Second Sunday after Trinity" in The Deficit Made Flesh in 1958.

In March 1955 Glassco wrote in his Journal that he was recording his "complete disintegration as a thinking being" (fol. 147). He was pursuing another dancer in Montreal, a very young woman of "gamin intelligence" who reminded him of Sappho. For the first time in his Journal, Glassco wrote with some tenderness of a woman. He was touched by the "heart-breaking sadness of her face in repose" and charmed by her vanity and kindness. He pulled back from her, however, "frightened at the intensity of my feelings for her" (fol. 148), and intellectualized his emotions into an avuncular pity for the girl. He scolded himself briskly: "Really, I am in my second childhood, after all." He was fearful too of "becoming a parody of [Graeme] with this young girl"; he sensed in her "my own reactions to him--the physical rejection, the impatience, the boredom with my sentimental, senile caresses." He felt guilt over his treatment of Graeme

--evidently for not returning the intensity of Graeme's devotion--and felt he could not bear rejection himself. Yet he could not separate himself from his mistress, "this young girl," returning to her for "a few hours of illusory happiness."

February 1956 was the occasion of more emotional illness, panic attacks accompanied by horrible homicidal fantasies and the memory that "I had always wanted to kill my father" (fol. 149). Glassco was again drinking heavily and taking little exercise. His relationship with Graeme was in a state of decay and his latest Montreal dancer had been found guilty of possession of drugs and sentenced to six months in prison. There were, however, encouraging moments. He made another foray into poetry. "Gentleman's Farm" had been chosen for inclusion in an anthology published by Occidental University as one of the best poems of 1954, and he began "The Web"--about Ulysses' Penelope (fol. 151) (Forum June 1957).

By November 1956 he was utterly disconsolate: "It is almost impossible," he wrote, "to entertain hope about anything" (fol. 152). Graeme was dying. The only bright news was that "Deserted Buildings Under Shefford Mountain" had been published, and a "few weeks later" Glassco "had a request from Art Smith to let him include it in the Oxford Book of Canadian Verse. He

also read it on the radio: the CBC paid me the magnificent sum of \$5.00 for performing rights. The only money I have ever received for poetry!" (fol. 152-153). The other pleasing news was that he had met a woman who interested him: "I have a new mistress--a Russian girl who is really fond of me and with whom I have an ideal sexual relationship" (fol. 153). This woman was evidently Elma von Colmar. At the time of their meeting Glassco said that they did not have much in common and that he did not love her, but did admire, trust and pity her: "She is so completely alone in the world, is hopeless about the future, and yet remains brave and capable of gaiety." Elma's presence in Glassco's life was an irritant to Taylor before his death in February 1957. She was to move in with Glassco as housekeeper, but it was some time before they grew to real intimacy. On 28 November 1957, Glassco wrote in usual despair of his realization that he was "entirely alone," a knowledge that brought him to tears, "tears of humiliation, anger and fatigue" (fol. 154). Only work held any charm. Even Elma could remain only if she caused no "further emotional trouble" (fol. 155). Meanwhile, the hauntings of memory continued, the panic attacks and dizziness persisted, as did the horrifying homicidal fantasies. He became seized by a compulsion to commit suicide, a

terror that was alleviated by prayer: "in the last recourse, only God can help me. Prayer" (fol. 156).

II

From these years of self-doubt, work begun and left incomplete, and from the few successes, emerged in 1958 the book of poems he had first thought of as "The Rural Mail," now completed as The Deficit Made Flesh. A.J.M. Smith described the poems as the work of one whose viewpoint "combines an aesthetic with a genuinely moral code of values." Smith read into the volume a presentation of "the evils of mechanization and success-worship," though it is difficult to see this Lawrentian sentiment in the poetry of Deficit (dust jacket, Deficit). Smith, perhaps thinking of his own few but carefully written verses, finds Glassco's work to be "classical poetry." This comment sits oddly by Glassco's own later self-assessment, recorded in his *Intimate Journal*, that he had wished, by the simple force of his own example "to found . . . a 'Romantic Revival'" (2 June 1965, 2).⁵

⁵Eliot had commented on the 'Romantic' and the 'Classic' in After Strange Gods in 1934, that the "opportunities for systematic misunderstanding, and for futile controversy, are . . . almost ideal," since there are inevitable shifts in meaning "between how one reader or another uses the terms" (Selected Prose 30-31).

It is not likely that a poet as well-read as Glassco could have been free of the prevailing artistic climate of his period. For Glassco this climate was Modernism. Against this influence stand his admiration for the brilliant originality of Gerard Manley Hopkins, his fondness for and knowledge of the Georgians, and his reverence--not too strong a word--for Wordsworth. Nevertheless, he was profoundly moved by Eliot, and even in retreat in the Townships, was touched by Modernism. He did not strive to be a Modernist--he did not seek to free himself from form-- but rather to master it. Glassco's poetry in Deficit points more to the continuity of Romanticism in Modernism than it does to Eliot's "impersonal theory of poetry" that spoke for Modernism as "cultivating impersonality, objectivity, and detachment" (Schwartz 71). Revisionists have argued that Modernists like Pound and Eliot and their followers have "exaggerated their break with the nineteenth century" (Schwartz 72). Eliot and Pound were in reaction to nineteenth-century excesses of subjectivity, an accepted view that Schwartz also holds. Eliot's poetic theory, perhaps more than his poetry, stresses the impersonal. Glassco's poetry may be thought "classical" in its adherence to established forms such as the ode, but Romantic-Modernist in sensibility. His impulse is to explore and exploit.

form rather than to question or challenge it. His first major work, The Invitations, is imitative of The Prelude, and, like its model, it is composed in blank verse. His unpublished poetry exploits the Shakespearean sonnet, the Italian sestet ("The Hag"), the Spanish redondilla ("I Loved You Early" and "Sweet Marigold"), the common measure ("The Man of Action"), and verse drama ("Korin"). He disciplined himself to write in the manner of Hopkins (the untitled "Sonnet to my Father"), Blake ("Sweet Marigold"), Verlaine ("The Lovers") and Shelley ("The Golden Oriole"). Glassco's apprenticeship was realized in Deficit, where the greater number of poems is at least superficially Romantic in sensibility. This sensibility does, however, incorporate the dislocation of Modernism in its exploration of form.

Deficit is autobiographical to the extent that the majority of poems is drawn directly from Glassco's life experiences. "The Rural Mail" portrays the idyllic valley where there are "Cows that exist in a slow-motion world" and yet where World War II has invaded. Death is announced with crisp military language "Easy," "As you were," and is confirmed in the Knowlton News thrust into the metal mail-box with a "knell": "and the countryside contracts / For an instant to the head of a pin." The rustic is no rural

innocent, but greedy and narrow of heart: "Far as I'm concerned, the war can go on forever!" The "green valleys" are menacing where "the bull, the buzz-saw and the balky mare / Are the chosen fingers of God for a farmer's sins." This farmer's axe fells "his woods," and "his calves and / chicks and children" are waiting their "slaughter in the course of things." This is the Romantic countryside invaded by the modern world where none is safe. The soldier's return to duty in "Noyade 1942" has the flat restraint of a farewell: "And the horn summons you. Goodbye." The man's boots clump on the stairs in response to the honking taxi, the "car door slams" and he is gone. Now the bed is "too wide, too empty", and cries of loneliness are suffocated by solitude. Promises are forgotten and "pure and tender thoughts . . . are stifled" in the destiny of the suffering world: "the age's will is done!" In "Soldier's Settlement" the returning men stand in "The valley of autumn choked with sun" to regard "the stoney pasture" with "No hint of the war with time and weather" that lies before them. But for one moment in this "warm wind" there is dream:

But stand for an instant and fix forever
 The battered mail-box, the shallow stream,
 In a frame where all is gold and azure

And the stoney pasture, plinth of a dream.

These three poems are strong and concrete. The landscape is beautiful, and man in this world has his impulses and tenderness. He is, however, fragile, self-deluding, and ultimately with little hope of overcoming his destiny. World War II is a presence in these poems, but if not the war then the axe; these are "green valleys where accidents will happen" ("The Rural Mail"). Man in this world is the victim of fate; there is no safety in the valley, no promises from God, "of His-will-be-done" ("Noyade 1942"). In this valley even the tender season of spring is toothed, "stripping shingles, scaling / Beam and clapboard . . ." as it "probes for the rot below" ("The Entailed Farm").

The voice of the narrator in the landscape poems of Deficit is a double one. He describes a world where "all is gold and azure," and where man has trod "green paths"--and breathed "honest air / Lapped in green valleys." But on this earth, in this valley, nature has a trick in store: fate. Fate comes blindly to the White Mansion and to the Entailed Farm. In "The Brill Road" the narrator states that "The road is a trick, like every form of life . . . the road is a trap." Nature is only superficially benevolent, and man's life and fate are determined by forces beyond his control: ". . . we do the mountain's bidding . . . we drive

into the trap Madly seeking the other side of the mountain." Man, nearly helpless, moves "to a screaming music." There is only the faintest hope of meaning to life, or the promise of peace. "The Brill Road" concludes on a plaintive note that longs for a northern paradise:

Does it even exist, that quiet road
 Snow-pleached between the laden, bending trees
 Where the small, fat birds will be flitting and
 feeding,
 Where the mind is muffled and we move at peace?

Peace is not found in splendour either. In "The White Mansion," named for the graceful Windermere where Glassco and Taylor lived near Knowlton, the house is personified as a "bright thing" which stands triumphant "A green hill behind me, a blue brook at my feet" but whose construction represented not triumph for man but his defeat: "I am the death of man and of his dream." The house "devours" its acres of land and eats the "farmer's flesh and his children." The same farmer lies dying, "Crying within the strangling noose of hope." The house proclaims "I am the grave of the bondsman's hope." The house was the man's beloved ("he dressed me in splendour"), but it "stripped him naked, / Sent him away weeping, to beg for money." Even abandoned by its builder, the house's power is not diminished. Even as the "woods crept up to my rotten

window-sills," the house remains the "fairest court of love and pleasure"; even as "Stones fell in" and the walls mouldered, "The holy fire streamed upright on the altar: / Two hearts, two bodies clove, "knew nothing more." But the lovers had no power over the blind force of the house: "Ere I was done I tore them asunder." The house exults "I am she who is stronger than love." It is "The scourge of hope," "the sink of wealth," and "the bond of love." Only the house endures "Swan-white" among the ruin of maple trees grown "bare crusted," the green hill gone grey and the blue brook now "black water at my feet." The house awaits the next who will struggle to occupy the splendour when it will "announce once more the death of man."

Frye calls the rural poems the "core" of Deficit, and perceives in them "how a feverish vision of a paradise of conquered nature forces generations to wear themselves out to construct and maintain a 'Gentleman's Farm' or a 'White Mansion'" (The Bush Garden 91). The White Mansion, in Frye's view, takes on "the malignancy of a white goddess." This goddess crushes everyone who enters her sacred precincts: "I am a shining temple" whose doors face east to Jerusalem and whose window panes are transformed to stained glass ("The whirling sun makes my windows a glory") and on whose altar the "holy fire" consumes all lovers.

If the White Mansion shows the enduring malevolence of fate, the Gentleman's Farm is a new monument to foolish pride. Man never learns. To a "valley of slash and beaver-meadow" (man has already despoiled this landscape) comes the Philistine. "Now 'things are humming' as the 'silos rise' and 'the milkwhite temple' fulfils the passion of the 'absentee whose will has broken / Between these barren hills.'" This is a temple of greed, the "working out of a man's reverie." Nothing, however, will be different. This house will be the gentleman's "own memorial." There will be the "same revenge," and powers "will equate / Farmer and Gentleman" whose house is crowned with the idol of "a gilded calf." This monument to the success of the Gentleman and to the toil of the Farmer, "the regional self" who struggled to plough the "hummocky pasture" of the estate, stands in "the pale farflung November sunlight," its "shining roof" in juxtaposition to the "rotting sawmill." Of this the narrator says: "See that the wreck of all things made with hands . . . Must marry the ragged matter." So it is with all human endeavour. All men's temples are hollow; so says the narrator in "Deserted Buildings Under Shefford Mountain":

Here where I grasp the certain fate
Of all man's work in wood and stone,
And con the lesson of the straight

That shall be crooked soon or late
And crumble into forms alone [.]

He questions why there is a "correspondence of the heart," why "ragged things" awake in him "their counterpart." What heart is this that "loves the failing attitude?" ("Deserted Buildings Under Shefford Mountain"). The heart is John Glassco's.⁶

The narrator's voice in the landscape poems is unsentimental, as in this description of "the tumbledown cabin" of "The Burden of Junk":

See, with its tarpaper hanging in tatters, the
doorstep awash in a
Puddle of cow-pies and kindling-chips, ringed with
the mud of a fenceless
Yardful of rusty and broken machinery, washstands
and bedsteads [.]

Like all the landscape poems, this one, with its dactylic hexameter that shows "an accurate sense of parody" (Bush Garden 92), "Junk" was inspired by direct experience. On 4 August 1956 Glassco had written to Elma von Colmar, sending her holograph copies of "my five best poems all now finished":

⁶As a little boy he used to accompany his mother on walks through Montreal to wreckers' sites where many of the city's old houses were being torn down. Beatrice Glassco liked to collect interesting pieces of masonry from these decaying buildings. John Glassco kept a piece of such Montreal stonework in his sitting-room at Jamaica Farm, Foster. The block had been dedicated to "Buffy" and signed "Mumsie," as Beatrice Glassco was known to her children.

"Deserted Buildings Under Shefford Mountain"
 ("Clark Baird's old place in Iron Hill"); "A
 Devotion" [a celebration for Elma]; "The
 Entailed Farm" ("This is Julia Wheeler's
 place--you know, just past the cemetery");
 "Blighty" ("This is Bill Arnold's place--with
 the sign!" [a green house named "Blighty"
 that still stands on the principal road
 through the village of Foster]); and "The
 Burden of Junk" ("This is me and Arthur
 Charles who lives (still) beside the farm in
 Knowlton [Windermere]. The harmonium I saw
 with my own eyes!

(McGill Collection)

While the landscape poems are a response, partly
 prompted by Glassco's sensitivity to his surroundings,
 the tone of these poems expresses the despair the poet
 experienced so frequently between the early 1930s and
 the mid-1950s. In "Second Sunday after Trinity" the
 narrator speaks of the absolute determinism of loss and
 decay:

Alas, in time, I know
 The birds shall all be slaughtered
 The elm-tree neatly felled
 And our love ended [.]

The speaker, however, like Glassco himself who
 veered so regularly and inexorably between joy and
 sorrow, is not without some intimation of hope and
 happiness. While the lovers are caught between "lust's
 last nightmare" and "God's ascetic grip," there remains
 "Your morning kiss" and the faint faith that "All is
 not lost." What gives hope--and there is little hope

in these poems--is something rooted, something of the earth, and organic. There is the beauty of an autumn day in Canada, the "animal hope" of a dog, the "golden air" of horses on jogging track, or "daffodils" in a vase." There is no faith in man ("To trust anything on earth more than man") and nothing but rage for woman. In "The Web," faithful Penelope is transformed to scheming whore who has turned her home into a brothel and whose amusement it is to "stir the discord, see the broil of men." Her "endless pleasure / A woman's triumph, the gleaming tissue of discord" is the "joy of a woman sovereign and laughing." The image of chaste and yearning Penelope hardened into one who thinks only of her power: "Zeus, keep him upon the hungry sea forever" is a cruel distortion of uxorious steadfastness. The hatred of woman emerging from "The Web" is part only of a broader contempt for humankind where "shame and self-loathing" are ransomed with the blood of decay in Utrillo's streetscape ("Utrillo's World II"): "Madness and fear . . . And murder" dwell in these "Anguished . . . sombre houses."

The purest loathing, however, is husbanded for release not on figures of myth or painterly images but for the Nobodaddy of "The Whole Hog." The narrator is led to the father by the betraying woman: "When I was very young my mother told me / That my father was the

strongest of men." The child finds in his father a corrupted power. He would "set himself to become / Great God to a little child," "To be the Absolute to someone else." The father builds in the child's heart "an altar" on which the boy is to be sacrificed: "the altar stands, eternal absolute." This perversity is the unholy church built "in living rock," on "infallible authority," that has reduced the boy to a "dog whistled by my master," alone and "nosing about the world for love and tid-bits." Like the hungry stray he is, the boy lurks outside the lighted windows of his father's house where there are "no dissensions," and where stands "the Portland vase before the Venetian mirror." This temple of domesticity is the abode of evil: "my father's demons spoke of his hold forever / On my heart, and mine of the fragile tenure of all things." This is the image of the father that we have seen elsewhere in Glassco's development.

The Deficit Made Flesh was well received, if misunderstood, by Canada's book reviewers. Louis Dudek rightly called Glassco's poetry "brainy" and "gristly," although he showed little insight into the work. Dudek sees Glassco's theme as "the struggle of spirit against the opposite place, against matter and the erosions of flesh" ("Poets and Apple Polishers"). I see no evidence of such dualistic "struggle" in Glassco's

poems. It is my view that nature is the force and man's will is of little consequence. He can endure; struggle is futile. He, like the little dog in "The Cardinal's Dog," can be "simply . . . well-behaved"; can, in an epiphany, know the transcendent unity of all humankind having "seen the birth of God / Either through eyes of friend or master / In a book, a song, a landscape or a child" and thus be "For a breath of time . . . immortal." In Deficit there is beauty in the correspondences between occasions of serenity in nature and receptivity in man, but there is no sense of peace that endures and certainly no sense of "struggle." One cannot struggle against a preordained fate.

Glassco explores this idea in the religious context of "Thomas à Kempis," where the mystic is a "prisoner" in his monk's cell: "not that he's brave / But that, on earth, there's nothing left to fear." For the saint, fate is sealed as surely as for the sinner because "Nobodaddy held him in his hand / A fireless particle." This is an essentially Calvinist view of predestination. Struggle is irrelevant; one can only endure and await God's predetermined decision on one's fate. We seem to be coals "blown at times by God." The cell is constant in time: "Always the cell is here / Stronger than fire, than the release of fear / Than any love I can answer for." Man is one with nature;

therefore, no struggle is possible because to struggle is to struggle only against one's self. This grim view does not preclude pleasure, happiness or the love of beauty ("But oh, green leaves and singing birds that see / The flaming sun"), but it is the baseline that supports the poems of Deficit. These are poems of strained resignation, surely not the work of "Glassco assuming a Wordsworthian lyric voice" as one critic has written (Burrett 3). Glassco considered Wordsworth the greatest English poet, but Glassco's poetic voice is not Wordsworth's. Milton Wilson is incorrect in his assertion that "These poems are Canada's lyric equivalents of Wordsworth's The Ruined Cottage, Michael and The Brothers, poems of fallen or unfinished sheepfolds, of unnatural piety and lost covenants: arguments for the broken design" (Forum 65). Apart from the fact that it is a challenge to see the archetypal "Michael" as a poem "of fallen or unfinished sheepfold" (and the irony of the devoted father, Michael, lavishing love on the unworthy son, Luke, rests oddly with Glassco's own situation), there are here only superficial resemblances between Wordsworth and Glassco. In "Michael" nature nurtures and nourishes man. There is no equivalent in Glassco where nature is one expression of fate: "The unwrinkled lake, the landscape and the leaves" that may shimmer in

loveliness but offer only themselves, "undiscoverable isles" where all is "beyond geography." The world of nature is "untouched / By hope or hunger." The speaker experiences a moment of serenity when he accepts that struggle is impossible, that he must "leave them as they were" as he resigns "The flowers to yellow and the lake to blue" ("Hail and Farewell"). The only possible struggle is the one with the self: "The adversary I wrestle with / Is my dying self" The only truth is "aging passion, aging pain."

The poems of Deficit come from that sensibility whose fear of the father figure, "rebellious / To the violent patterns, the makeshift marks" left the poet, like the speaker of "The Whole Hog" with only a "fragile tenure / Of all things." If the father's behaviour is erratic and violent, the child cannot develop the trust and faith that sustain hope in life. That developed child is the man from whose conscious and unconscious mind these poems ("splinters from a damaged sensibility" in Beattie's words) emerge. Beattie comes closest to discerning the tone of Deficit, in whose poems there is "an attitude to life that is both compelling and repulsive" (310). While Beattie perceives a struggle between man and nature, rather than the raging but final acquiescence, not acceptance, by man of his fate, he does recognize the

pessimism of the poems, where the speaker "has put his money on nature." These are moral poems: not moralistic or preaching, but a statement of a writer's baleful knowledge that the road leads upward to "impossible heights" where it finds no Olympus or Parnassus, but is enveloped in "boiling snow": "There is no turning back; but the road is a trap. / This is the involvement that we never sought" ("The Brill Road"). In the landscape poems of this collection, the speaker often stands at the top of a hill, but he is no god surveying a paradise. He is doomed to the roads, to the rise and fall of the path he must follow; like the hackney pony on its jogging track going round and round, the man must follow the road that leads nowhere but to where: "The hills darken, and this heaven-riving road thrown / Like a noosed lifeline to five worthless farms / Peters out under the snow" ("The Brill Road"). This first book of Glassco's poems surely expresses the fragmented sensibility that could write in "The Entailed Farm":

From us, with our hearts but lightly tinged with
poison,
Who composed our quarrel early and in good season
Buried the hatchet in our father's brain.

III

John Glassco's second book of poetry, A Point of Sky, was published by Oxford University Press in 1964. Milton Wilson found it a work of "final maturity," a work "of coming to terms with life when it is nearly over" ("Letters in Canada" 358). Glassco's life was scarcely "nearly over," but Wilson was correct in sensing a culmination. If Deficit grew out of the long years Glassco spent in the Eastern Townships with Graeme, then Sky evolved from the years with the doomed Elma who carried her madness with her always, and from the year in hospital, 1961, when the central poems of Sky, including "Luce's Notch" and "A Point of Sky" were written by the tubercular poet. Edel has written that Glassco's "modernity resides in his using his own immediate world and his own death-in-life experiences" ("John Glassco (1909-1981) and his Erotic Muse" 115). Edel finds Glassco's poetry to have a "warmth of passion" behind his intellectual and "keenly literary" verse, but concludes that he "drew his poetry out of felt experience" (117).

A Point of Sky is a full achievement. Squibs such as "After Reading Seven Very High-Class Current English Novels, Sent Me in a Parcel" or "Lines Addressed to a Dozen Young Canadian Poets, After Unwisely Devouring Five Little Magazines at a Sitting," add nothing of

weight, and one questions whether translations from the 1930s, such as "From the Second Book of Propertius," enhance the volume; the gravity of A Point of Sky is realized in writing marked by a "combination of firmness and grace," writing that emerges from a poet of "unpretentious fineness of mind" (Wilson 357). Louis Dudek wrote of this collection that "Beauty is a rare thing" ("For Evenings of Quiet Meditation"); indeed there is beauty in A Point of Sky. There remains the beauty of the landscape so frequently evoked in Deficit. There remains, too, the force of decay and, even more strongly, the inexorable rôle of fate. There is a sense of a squandered world. The "Two little Baltic girls" (a biographical reference to Elma and her sister) in "The city of Narva, thirty years ago" roam through the streets, "the cobbled way to the Petriplatz," in search of their lost kitten ("The Crows"). Their world disappeared with World War II. Their world was part of the garden, of the myth of the garden that George Steiner believes formed an essential element of early twentieth-century western civilization.⁷ The death of that myth, of the fiction of the "imagined garden," exploded in the chaos of

⁷ For a discussion of Steiner's full argument, see "The Great 'Ennui'" in In Bluebeard's Castle.

1915 and was finally extinguished by August 1945. Glassco was himself an heir to that destruction of the "imagined garden," as well as a refugee from his own past.

In the meditative poems of Sky, Glassco's poetic ecstasy in nature, mistrust of humanity, and acceptance of the absolute power of fate first fully elaborated in Deficit, are repeated, reinforced, and made more universal. The city of Narva was over-run and Elma imprisoned. There is the "simian terror of a bomb" to add to humankind's fate ("To Save the World"). There are choices to be made: 1) maintain the status quo and "Dissolve in an exquisite universal yawn" ("To Save the World"); 2) recreate that fictive garden as in "A House in the Country": "We have clean air, meat, cheese and ale"; or, 3) confront the inner man and seek some integration of self before the "day when it will not matter" ("The Day").

Eli Mandel saw A Point of Sky as an important book. His review, "A Special Adequacy," (Canadian Literature Autumn 1965), won Glassco's approval: "All in all, a very good review" (PAC Vol. 1). Mandel saw the collection as unique in Canadian poetry, demanding "in its formal perfection, its decorous language, and its stately control of tonal movements" that we readers "reconsider our notion of what is relevant or

significant in our poetry at this moment" (71). Mandel writes that "there is nothing startling about Glassco, except there is no one quite like him on the immediate scene. For this reason alone, his reception is likely to be mixed and uncertain, as it was for his first book" Mandel finds in Glassco the precision and discipline lacking in much Montreal and Toronto writing in the 1960s. Mandel's use of "adequate" is meant to suggest Arnold's use of the term, which "he took to be the mark of a genuinely modern sensibility," not to suggest a kind of "Canadian Philip Larkin murmuring about church-going." Mandel advises Glassco's readers to keep in mind "the distinction between excitement and comprehension."⁸

Diane Bessai reviewed Sky for The Canadian Forum in July 1965. She grasped the superficial resemblance to Wordsworth; in fact Bessai calls Glassco a "convincing Wordsworth" (94) in the opening lines of "Ode: The Autumn Resurrection":

This day is beautiful: it could not ask
Of earth or sun or sky one further grace,

⁸Mandel writes that this is a distinction that "Glassco himself is not always able to keep steadily in view." Glassco wrote opposite this comment: "Good--fine criticism: hits my weakness."

One blessing more, that surelier should make it
Lovely some way to all mankind [.]

This ode is derived from the Prelude-like The Invitations, Glassco's first significant work in verse, and a poem clearly influenced by Wordsworth. Bessai correctly notes that two stanzas later "another voice emerges in bitter counterpoint" when the narrator speaks of his "horror of the human face / That is the world's foulest tenant." Here Wordsworth's voice is superseded by Glassco's own. Glassco has written in new material and dropped other lines: the "spontaneous joy" of the earlier version becomes the "spontaneous sorrow" of the later. Invitations is more overtly autobiographical than "Ode" as these lines from the 1930s will suggest:

This summer which has seen the certain end
Of my long sickness and its cloistered hours
All dulled and wasted by a fearful mind,
And harsh presentiments of death and sorrow.

While the influence of Wordsworth on Glassco was early and important (the blank verse paragraphs, the tracing of the autobiography, the long digression on books in The Invitations are modelled on The Prelude), Eliot's voice is heard in the stanza on "An April melancholy," where April is "That month of reckoning and its sense of loss . . . patient cruelty," and

Lampman's voice is evoked in the dream-like description of late summer:

where we walked
The air was musky with the breath of August,
Heavy with silence, where a pulse beneath
Beat,--held divined, unheard save when it paused--
The low and rhythmic trumpeting of the frogs
Sounding among the reeds towards St. Anne's,
And all was dreamland, where expectancy
Hovered about the air, when to us came,
As in this dream . . .

The speaker concludes that "We are in the hands of the seasons, one and all / Seasons of earth, the cruel and the kind," that the human cycle of life is "Our imitation of that aimless course / The oceans take obedient to the moon." Man will find in life the "Firm assurance of futility / Fixed and unalterable as death itself." There is happiness in life, the "assuagements, little raptures, transient joys," but these are temporary respites. These are the days "of grace," the "breathing space before the dark," for ultimately "other souls are dark to us" and "we must go lonely to the grave." Our only transcendental unity will come in the grave, where we at least will be part of earth. Yet even The Invitations' faint expressions of peace and unity are lacking in the "Ode." Here the grave's embrace is "like an icy sea." Life is an "infinite autumn," and man's tears are "envious, dying, idiotic." The hills and woods are "naked," the skies

"inarticulate," and the dawn "barren." The birdsong is "insentient" if "ecstatic." Here the bird is a creature who belongs to and on the earth, unlike unworthy man whose face shows "the bared and shining fang." Here is the fate of man expressed in Deficit grown even more dark in A Point of Sky.

This bitterness becomes hatred in "For Lucifer," where "years bring fresh antipathies / To chronicle the things we hate." All images are of distress and hollowness. Suffering is the end of suffering. Death is "a slow gigantic mole" that is "tunnelling deep in the brain." In the poetic voice of this collection is the twin horror of "fear of God and fear of Death" ("The Puritan Lady"). The infant of "The Screaming Child" knows "The entrapment of its state, the plight, the prison." This child is no Wordsworthian father to the man, only a "shaken body and shrieking face." Sorrow piles upon heartless fate upon demonic sinfulness: "He mocked the period of the spirit's death" ("The Permanent Doughnut").

There is no sanctuary here: the "timid tramp" is set upon by dogs, and the moth struggles in the spider's web; man looks on in sadistic pleasure ("A House on the Country"). A "mouse lacks cover--and the owl finds prey" ("Beautés de la Nature"), and for man "Boredom, disaster and distress" have etched his

imprisoned face ("A Point of Sky"). There is finally only the grieving soul at the end of his life, his future lived, staring from his mountain-top at the "dumb, breathing beauty of the world," yearning for his only possible destiny "closely bound" to the earth itself ("Luce's Notch").

Glassco's "Romantic Revival" was no reaching back to the great Romantics. Such an attempt would have been sterile and ultimately impossible. His poetry reaches past the post-Eliotic verse and its preoccupations with psychology, neurosis, religion and religious disillusion, and urban life, past the 1940s preoccupations of Montreal poets with politics and the War, and past the pseudo-pastoralism of the Georgians, to the exhausted romanticism of the 1890s, and to his own fated despair: "Oh, for a plague, a wasting fire / To come upon these peopled hills!" ("Ode: The Autumn Resurrection").

The poems of A Point of Sky are rooted in experience. This book grew out of his hospitalization in 1961. The volume speaks of confinement: "(Note how often the image and idea of prison recurs in my poetry!)" he wrote to Elma from hospital on 16 April 1961 (Glassco-von Colmar correspondence, McGill Collection). While in the sanatorium in 1961 he composed "A Point of Sky." He wrote to Elma about it

on 14 May: "Everybody will say it is like Eliot's Four Quartets and it is true that the method is the same, but that is all." He assumes here that the one thing he knows is "that the worse I feel the better I write." He had finished "A Point of Sky" by 7 June, although he continued to adjust it into July. On 3 September he wrote that he was uncertain of the poem, even though he was pleased by Elma's liking it, and was sketching out another poem (perhaps "Luce's Notch"). On 19 September he wrote to Elma that "I've started another long-ish poem called . . . 'Luce's Notch.'" On 7 October he again mentioned "Luce's Notch," saying that it will be "a complete uninterrupted whole, flowing in one single movement from the beginning to the end." He had in mind "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," which was for Glassco "the finest meditative poem in English." About a week later, on 13 October, he reported that he had begun "The Places Where the Dead Have Walked."⁹ On 9 November he was pleased that another "ten key lines" had been "hammered out" for "Luce's Notch."

It is, however, "A Point of Sky" that draws together in ceremonious form the themes of sorrow,

⁹"The Places Where the Dead Have Walked" was published first in Yeg in September 1966, then included in the Selected Poems (73).

weariness and decay. Written when he was in the claustral surroundings of Ste-Agathe, this poem is the portrait of what Glassco's poetic persona had become. Although he would go on to complete the Memoirs of Montparnasse, the portrait of Buffy there contained is, as we have seen, what Glassco wished he had been. The poetry reveals a world-view not different but grimmer. While "Sky" has been compared to Four Quartets, the comparison to Eliot is not completely accurate. There is the same elegiac tone, the same chaste and deliberately "ordinary" plain diction, the same evocation of specific places of great meaning (in Eliot's case his family's ancestral village, or the ruined monastery of Little Gidding; in Glassco's the confines of the sanatorium where there is the "slurred passage of slippered feet passing your door," one in a series of prisons both actual and psychological endured by Glassco); there are also the ecclesiastical echoes: the gospel of St. John in Four Quartets, and the Book of Common Prayer in "Sky": "That my regrets / May so shine before me / All the hours of my life" (The Book of Common Prayer 47 and 73). But differences remain. In "Little Gidding," which is both a complete poem in itself as well as the summation of the whole of Four Quartets, there is resolution. The pilgrim alone in the ruined chapel knows and accepts that the state of

"complete simplicity"--achieved only through having renounced nothing less than everything: all goods and worldly distractions--is man's true estate. The pilgrim is enlightened by the tongue of fire of Pentecost united with the Dantesque rose of God, the heart of which is perfect stillness. This is the realization of the Incarnation, the "hints and guesses" of "The Dry Salvages." The reader knows that "all shall be well." In Christian terms he has come to rest in God in "selflessness and self-surrender." The acceptance of the pilgrim of "Little Gidding" is the perfect knowledge of the mystic.

The narrator of "A Point of Sky" is a secular pilgrim. In place of the Incarnation he has found "one clear flame of longing." In place of the stillness of the mystic, he has found dignified rage: "Deny, always deny that you are diminishing / Let your words burst like blisters in the face of the law / Asserting always it was not made for you." In "Sky" there is only a "certain contact and connection with God." There is longing and determination to cling to the only life this soul can know. In the words of "The Day": "the soul, naked at last, panting in its anguish / Will look for its non-existent home." When the soul has reached "the place of the abolished future," it "will escape / Like a mouse in the darkness." These lines from "The

Day" are moving in their modesty. The soul of Glassco's poetry in A Point of Sky is still defiant, but less choked with anger than that of The Deficit Made Flesh. There is not acceptance so much as a weary resignation to the fate that has hung like a threat over the two collections. There will be a final attempt at assertion ("Fight with both hands against the prison of God"), before he slips away like a mouse in the night. While there is a certain harmony in the "thing foregone and the thing achieved," the soul has not recognized the state of transcendence that is man's proper goal, in Eliot's words in "Burnt Norton": "At the still point of the turning world." The soul in Glassco's poetry does not comprehend the unity of all things, the oneness of birth and decay, joy and sorrow, sin and goodness. He does, however, celebrate the grace of nature when she is kind, and does find in her smiling face a moment if not an eternity of peace; when he recognizes that he can never control her, as in "Luce's Notch," he addresses her from the mountain-top "Purged of each last impulsion of desire / To make you mine, to carry you along / On the wings of possession!"

In a letter Glassco wrote to F.R. Scott on 3 July 1966, but never sent ("too gushy" Glassco scribbled in the margin), he set out his mature view on poetry:

I've always looked on the moral or intellectual content of poetry as not of prime importance, certainly of less importance than the form or the happy or magical disposition of the words themselves, but have felt that such content should be there, as a kind of skeleton not to be seen or obtruded but nonetheless always in the background if not in the cupboard. This is why I prefer Shelley to Keats, Tennyson to Swinburne, Eliot to Pound, and your poetry to any other Canadian poet's dead or living (PAC Vol.14)

In this letter, Glassco praises the "deep seriousness and what I can only call [your poetry's] rather unfashionable quality of nobility. Somehow, too, it captures Canada as a whole" Glassco adds further: "I have heard your work dispraised for its reticence and 'reserve': these are to me its greatest strengths." While acknowledging Scott's contribution to satirical verse, it is "the Laurentian and the other serious poems, with their brooding and even fearsome sense of an immanence of things to come" that most move Glassco. It is the "rocks turned to children," the "terrifying language of flesh and roses, of the millenium (or apocalypse) which, however distant or deferred, we must not lose sight of if we are to retain anything of poetic vision" that he admires.

This letter is John Glassco's testament of his own poetry. He was wise not to send this letter to Scott, not because it is "too gushy," but because it describes not Scott's work as much as his own. The seriousness,

the sense of immanence and apocalypse, are essential to Deficit and, if anything, more fully articulated in Sky. If Scott captured the Laurentians, then Glassco immortalized the Townships: both captured something of Canada as a whole in their specific focus on particular landscapes. Even more than Scott's, Glassco's poetry is marked by reticence and reserve. And indeed, in both poets, "content" is "there."

Glassco has been called a craftsman. He was. But he was too a poet of ideas, ideas that do not "improve" or "grow," but rather become more particularly articulated in Sky. In my introduction, I said that the Memoirs represented a kind of Jungian mandala. A Point of Sky represents that maturing of the individual at mid-life that is not mere growing older, but a growing wiser: what Jung would call a wholeness. The self is the archetype of wholeness. The self, the wholeness, expressed in "A Point of Sky" does not, as I have discussed, fully realize itself. Nevertheless it has known the "point of sky and the garden." The poetry of A Point of Sky, like the life of its creator, possesses "deep seriousness" and that "rather unfashionable quality of nobility."

Afterword

As I have indicated throughout this dissertation, Glassco was a writer whose strength, and indeed whose privileges, permitted him to rise above an unhappy childhood and an experience of near-death in early manhood, to realize a diverse and complex talent. His abuse at the hands of his father, and the complicity (perhaps only semi-conscious) of his mother in the mistreatment of her sons, were expressed both in his life and in his writing in his fascination with masochism and with the figure of the femme fatale. Edel has stated that Glassco's "erotic muse was forever young, born of pre-adolescent titillation and exposure" ("John Glassco (1909-1981) and his Erotic Muse" 108). Nevertheless, it was this erotic muse that fuelled not only his own sexuality, but much of his writing. When Glassco wrote of Beardsley's "essential unabashed reliance on the prodigious inner power of eroticism" in the Introduction to his completion of Under the Hill (12), he surely described himself as much as he did Beardsley.

Glassco never fully overcame the mental anguish that resulted from his tormented childhood. His widow has spoken of the agony of his last years, when he strived to work in spite of being imprisoned in an endogenous depression that never left him: "He made

himself work, he drove himself to it. He kept a very full diary of the depression" ("A Canadian in Paris" Part II). Similarly, Leon Edel recalled his old friend from McGill when Buffy and Marion visited Hawaii in the late 1970s: "The real depression came two years before he died . . . it had surfaced . . . I used to glimpse him . . . sitting out in front of the apartment where he was living and he looked so forlorn . . . he looked terribly lonely . . . he sat there in a posture of dejection, it was very touching" ("A Canadian in Paris" Part II).

John Glassco had known happiness in the 1970s, in the early years with Marion when she took him to tour Ireland, to walk again through the streets of Paris to the old studio he had shared with Graeme, to winter in Mexico, and to explore Haiti and Hawaii. He saw his Selected Poems take the Governor-General's Award for English Poetry for 1971, and he continued to write and translate.

Ultimately, however, the agony of depression weakened him until he modestly slipped away on a cold Montreal afternoon on 29 January 1981. He was buried from the family church, St. James the Apostle, at noon on Monday, 2 February 1981. His widow scattered his ashes in the stream near Foster, in the Townships that

had been his home and whose landscape he had evoked
with such eloquent restraint.)

Appendix A

A Description of the "McGill Journal"

Untitled Journal of John Glassco, referred to by me in the text as the "McGill Journal", MS. The manuscript begins fol. 24 and is dated 28 February 1934; the writer's address is given as "1745 Cedar Ave. Montreal." Fol. 24-28, 28A-D, 29 cover the period 28 February 1934 - 29 July 1934. Fol. 30 is dated 26 October [1934] and the writer's address given as "107 Cote St. Antoine Road." The bottom portion of fol. 30 and fol. 31 are cut, as are the bottom of fol. 33 and most of fol. [34]; fol. 34A dated "21st March" [1935] and fol. 34B are cut. Journal resumes on "17th June" [1935] on fol. 34C. Fol. 34D, 34E, 35-39 (top half) are extant; fol. 39 (bottom), and 40-41 are cut; fol. [42]-47 extant; fol. 48 and top fol. 49 cut; fol. 50-59 extant; fol. 60-61 cut; fol. 62-63 extant but for cut of about one paragraph at bottom of 63; fol. 64 extant but for first paragraph cut; fol. 65 cut; fol. 66 extant; fol. 67 about three-quarters cut, also most of 68 cut; all fol. 69 cut and most of fol. 70, also top of fol. 71; portions of fol. 72 cut; 73 extant; portions of fol. 74 cut; fol. 75-77 extant; fol. 78-81 cut; fol. 82 extant; top of fol. 83 cut; 84-90, 90A, 92- [in Glassco's hand "(no. 93)"], 94-95 extant; fol. 96 cut, also last paragraph of 97 and fol. 98; fol. 99-103

extant; fol. 104 cut; fol. 105-109 extant; fol. 110 and second half of fol. 111 and fol. 112-113 cut; fol. 114 and top 115 extant; fol. 116-117 extant; nearly all of fol. 118 cut; fol. 119-160 extant. (The bottom of fol. 118 is dated "April 4th '46"; after this date, the entries in the Journal grow less frequent and take on the character of "cumulative reviews" of periods of months, of even up to a year, rather than maintaining the more regular pattern of the earlier Journal.)

Only one entry is TS and it is dated "Sunday night/December 15th, 1957/My 48th birthday" [fol. 156]. The MS resumes on fol. 157-159 (d. 16 Sept 1960); fol. 159-160 (d. 13 November 1960). Fol. 160 includes the note "Only two more books to write -- The Monster . . . and the Memoirs of a Young Man, still untitled." Fol. 160 ends with a subscribed holograph note "But now I am happy with Elma, my only, my [unclear] love. / End of Journal / (Discontinued when I went to the hospital with T.B. in March, 1961 -- & never resumed) / John Glassco / March 24, 1964."

There is, in addition, one sheet (unnumbered), MS, dated "Oct. 1964," which is a key to certain references in the Journal, albeit a brief and obviously incomplete one. In total there are 128 leaves in the McGill Journal.

The Journal is part of the Glassco collection, held by the Rare Book Room of the McLennan Library, McGill University. The Glassco papers are uncatalogued to date; 1½ feet; c. 1917-1965; accession #74-731. The Journal is stored in Box #2, although this designation is obviously not a permanent one.

Appendix B

Relations & Complications

When Relations & Complications: Being the Recollections of H.H. The Dayang Muda of Sarawak was published in London by John Lane, The Bodley Head, in 1929, a circular that advertised the book and provided an order form for its purchase was printed. Rhoda de Pinto of London, England, the companion of the Dayang Muda from late 1929 until 1932, showed me a copy of this item, which reads as follows:

In this book of reminiscences, Her Highness The Dayang Muda of Sarawak, whose husband Bertram Brooke, The Tuan Muda, is the brother and heir to the present Rajah of Sarawak, recalls the events and personalities she has encountered during a varied and interesting life. . A well-known figure in London and Paris society, Her Highness The Dayang Muda is the daughter of the late Sir Walter Palmer of Reading, and her mother was an intimate friend of some of the most famous men of her time: George Meredith, John Ruskin, Oscar Wilde, Swinburne, etc., all of whom she has vivid, youthful memories. Her marriage took her to Sarawak, and her description of her life there and of the unique position of her husband's family is a most interesting and valuable sidelight on one of the most romantic stories in history. Later, on her return to Europe, she came into contact with many great personalities in all walks of life and she has some excellent stories to tell of Isadora and Raymond Duncan, Ellen Terry, Kubelik, Henry de Windt, Leon Daudet, Venizelos, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and her numberless other friends. Her intense zest for life, her genius for friendship, and her eager personality come out in every page of the book. As Mr. T.P. O'Connor says in

his excellent foreword, everyone will read this book with profound and almost breathless interest.

The illustrations include some hitherto unpublished drawings by Sir Edmund Burne-Jones

Appendix C

Graeme Taylor

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of William Graeme Taylor in John Glassco's life. From their meeting as McGill undergraduates c. 1925 until Taylor's death at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal on 1 February 1957, the two men were companions, friends and lovers. Local people in the Knowlton area remember Taylor and Glassco as inseparable companions during the 1930s and 1940s, seen about the village in matching fur coats, always smoking cigarettes.

Taylor was born 28 December 1905, the son of a Presbyterian clergyman and his wife, Christina Graham Taylor. He was of medium height, 5' 9", of fair hair and complexion, with blue eyes. As I have indicated in the text of this dissertation, he showed early promise as a writer of short stories and was so recognized by A.J.M. Smith. His attempts at verse remain unpublished. He was not a gifted poet.

He enlisted in the Canadian Army (Active) on 29 July 1940 at Montreal. He became a guardsman in the Canadian Grenadier Guards, the same regiment that Archibald Glassco had joined, with the rank of lieutenant in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary

Force on 11 September 1916, also at Montreal. (Public Archives of Canada, Government Records Branch, Personnel Records Centre: Lieutenant A.P.S. Glassco).

At the time of his enlistment, Taylor gave his mother, then a resident of Lewisburg, West Virginia, United States of America, as his next-of-kin; his occupation as horse breeder and typist; and his educational background as "B.A. (McGill) (General Arts)." He identified himself on the army's "Occupational History Form" as "Gentleman Farmer" at Knowlton, Quebec.

The Headquarters Intelligence Section forms pertaining to Taylor note that he had been on active service twenty months as of February 1942, had committed no crimes, and had completed "several Regimental courses." His "Occupational Background" entry reads: "Gentleman farmer--owns 50 acres, Knowlton, P.Q. raises horses, has always lost money at it. Has private means." The interviewing officer had further noted:

No mechanical interest. Has driven very little. Used to do a bit of writing; "played the stock market and knocked around Europe." Seems older than age (36) not the usual type of Private soldier, but difficult to place. Superior ability and intelligence, but seems of doubtful suitability for A.R. [Armoured

Regiment]. Age and background questionable[.]

Throughout his army career, Taylor's health seems to have been poor. He was admitted to military hospital on 20 November 1940 for a week, was never sent overseas although he volunteered for such duty, and was discharged at Camp Debert, Nova Scotia, as "Medically unfit for military services under existing standards" on 25 June 1942. Taylor's discharge was "Honourable," and he was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and the War Medal 1939-45. (Public Archives of Canada, Government Records, Personnel Records Centre: William Graham Taylor).

While enlisted, Taylor married Sappho, Mary Elizabeth Wilson, spinster, at Knowlton on 18 February 1941 (he had been granted furlough from his regiment from 15 February to 3 March 1941). Taylor and his wife were granted a divorce on 30 April 1949, on grounds of Taylor's adultery (Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Volume II Divorce Acts, 168).

Appendix D

Unpublished Poetry

Most of Glassco's extant unpublished poetry may be read in typescript or manuscript at the Public Archives of Canada (Glassco Papers, Vol. 1). Of the poems named in this dissertation, but not collected in The Deficit Made Flesh, A Point of Sky, or Selected Poems, only "A Child in the House," "Windmill Point," "March," "A Reckoning," "Day in Autumn," "Undesirables," "a French sonnet-sequence," "Advice Poem," "4 Civilian Poems," and Glassco's translation of Catullus' "Dirge for Sparrow" are not included in the PAC collection.

The poem "To A.D. de B." (Adrienne Dostie de Bellot) is subtitled "With a 4-Leaf Clover," and "The Man of Vision" is marked "R.B. Bennett," and dated 1935 at Baie d'Urfé.

The PAC collection holds 40 unpublished poems, including two translations from Propertius (one a fragment and the other marked "unfinished/Baie d'Urfé--1936").

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