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MORE TO MITCHELL:
THE ELUSIVE ART OF W. O. MITCHELL'S
Jake and the Kid

by

JUDITH E. CARRUTHERS,

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of English

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

August 15, 1986

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MORE TO MITCHELL:

THE ELUSIVE ART OF W. O. MITCHELL'S

Jake and the Kid

submitted by Judith E. Carruthers, B. A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chairman, Department of English

Carleton University.

DEDICATED TO.

Patrick Shannon de Mahy and Genevieve Elise de Mahy,
who have waited so long.

ABSTRACT

Although W. O. Mitchell's Jake and the Kid is often considered a relatively light-weight work, readers respond to the authentic and powerful Canadian voice within it. This voice is the result of great artistic subtlety, for Jake and the Kid is not the simple, direct work it is usually taken to be. It is written in the strictly controlled first person point of view of a child. However, Mitchell manipulates the language in ways that make it possible for the reader to see more than is apparent to the narrator. One device is a representation of what the Kid observes while others speak; this enables Mitchell to avoid the normal representation of paralinguistic markings while gaining the same effects. Repetition and manipulation of the grammatical resources of the sentence serve the same purpose. Another device is Mitchell's representation in writing of rhetorical devices and rhetorical failures which are characteristic of speech, but, not usually represented in writing. A third feature is the lexicon) Mitchell chooses. Because he maintains the child narrator's point of view so strictly, the vocabulary of the book is full of Canadianisms; indeed for many it is the first recorded source. These features make it possible for Jake and the Kid to offer the rich aesthetic experience that so many attest to.

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God continues to place people in my path, and, to all of you my heartfelt "Thanks!"--including W. O. Mitchell who has graciously allowed me to use our taped conversation as part of this thesis.

LEGEND

For the purposes of this thesis, the text used will be Jake and the Kid, W. O. Mitchell, (Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1961). The citations will be prefaced by an abbreviation of the title (JK) followed by the page number.

A transcription from an interview with W. O. Mitchell conducted at the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, September 27, 1985, is included as Appendix A. Citations will be prefaced by an abbreviation of title (MW) followed by the page number.

Citations from Martin Joos' "A Phonological Dilemma in Canadian English", Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America, 1942, will be referred to by an abbreviation of the title (PDCE) followed by the page number.

Citations from Martin Joos' Five Clocks, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., (New York, 1961) will be referred to by an abbreviation of the title (FC) followed by the page number.

Citations from Walter Avis' Canadian English, The Senior Dictionary of Canadian English Series, W. J. Gage Limited, (Toronto, 1967) will be referred to by an abbreviation of the title (CE) followed by the page

number.

Citations from Walter S. Avis' Dictionary of Canadianisms
on Historical Principles, W. J. Gage Limited (Toronto,
1967) will be referred to by an abbreviation of the
title (DC) followed by the page number.

CHAPTER ONE

W. O. Mitchell's Jake and the Kid is widely regarded as a technically limited children's novel. Paradoxically, Jake and the Kid was not written for children. The selection of thirteen short stories does not possess the characteristics which would justify calling it a novel, and, rather than being stylistically undistinguished is, in fact, Mitchell's most elaborate and technically successful work. Overshadowed by critical acclaim afforded Mitchell's later writings, Jake and the Kid has remained largely ignored and basically misunderstood..

While most critical and scholarly attention has been paid to his other works, some attention focusses on Jake and the Kid. Commenting in Canadian Literature, Margaret Laurence explains how her view of the Jake and the Kid stories evolved over time. Having first heard them as radio dramas, Laurence felt the stories were among the first to give prairie dwellers, herself included, that thrill of recognition: "that's us; he's talking about us" (Laurence, 69). Writing years later as an adult, a now sophisticated Laurence states that she can no longer experience Jake and the Kid with the same freshness. Accordingly, she feels that Jake and the Kid can be considered a Canadian classic only if it is relegated to the category of children's

literature. Mitchell, however, claims he never wrote a children's novel:

There was a German publisher that was going to bring out [Who Has Seen the Wind] and I called it off because they insisted they were going to publish it in German as a "juvenile." I would feel the same way about Jake and the Kid. I know it speaks and means a great deal to young people; it was not written as such (MW, 105).

The colloquial style makes Jake and the Kid accessible to a younger audience; for the mature reader there is more to discover. Of such writing, Mitchell himself says: "it's very simple. It's got nothing to do with me as a writer in the function, and the persona of a writer so much as it is within the kind of people it is about" (MW, 103). He adds wryly: "I'd have been up the creek if only kids had listened to Jake and the Kid" (MW, 105).

Although Mitchell's work does appeal to younger readers, there is more to Mitchell than an easily readable high school level text. In discussing the seemingly casual chatter of the youthful narrator, Joan Walker states:

There is a deceptive simplicity about W. O. Mitchell's writing that is actually extreme sophistication and touches the hem of genius. He is devoid of cliché, his narrative is as smooth as corn syrup, his plot is rarely predictable (Walker, 18).

Close analysis of selected linguistic features and representations of paralinguistic features within

the narrative discloses how Mitchell employs certain devices in order to create that seemingly artless simplicity.

Far from being the loose, wandering chatterings of a child, Jake and the Kid is a tightly interlaced, closely controlled, formal presentation. As C. E. Montague, paraphrasing Sheridan, has observed: "'Your easy reading . . . is damned hard writing.' If a book moves with a gliding, mellifluous or lightly tripping gait, the seeming ease is almost always illusive" (Montague, 192).

Characters, location and basic themes evident in each story appear in subsequent tales, as do minor themes such as Jake's recurrent attempts to join the overseas war effort in spite of his advanced age, and Jake and Old Man Gatenby's constant efforts to top each other in the telling of tall tales. The broader theme of Canadian history itself permeates the entire selection. Mitchell re-writes Canadian history, through the characters in Jake and the Kid, only this time with feeling.

The school teacher, Miss Henschbaw, and Jake maintain a continuous conflict between the two opposing views of Canadian history and Mitchell uses the repetition of this conflict as a cohesive thread throughout Jake and the Kid:

All Miss Henchbaw knows came out of a book. Jake he really knows (JK, 3).

She figures because she teaches from a history book she knows it all, but she isn't so smart as Jake when it comes to wars (JK, 18).

Most of the time at Rabbit Hill I don't do so well with history, because I get most of it from Jake, and Miss Henchbaw, that thinks she knows it all, says Jake doesn't know his history right (JK, 64).

Although the Kid does not fully understand the conflict between the "real" history and Miss Henchbaw's history, the mature Jake is well aware and warns the Kid:

I wouldn't go tellin' that to--to folks that are fussy about 'hist'ry book hist'ry'--the kind that like her sort of watered down. She might be a mite too rich for Miss Henchbaw (JK, 69).

This conflict seems to be somewhat resolved in the very last story of Jake and the Kid, "The Golden Jubilee Citizen" (JK, 172). The Kid had written an essay on Crocus' most important citizen: "where you had to tell who you thought was Crocus District's Golden Jubilee Citizen, the one person Crocus couldn't have done without during the last fifty years (JK, 176). Miss Henchbaw is initially enraged at the liberties taken with the historical facts:

'Truth,' she said again, 'is like a pure spring welling from the ground. It must not be adulterated or contaminated. Its sparkling clarity can be so easily dulled and muddled.'

'This year--especially this year--our anniversary year, we cannot stand for impertinence with our province's history' (JK, 179).

Miss Henschbaw, however, is affected by the Kid's enthusiasm and decides to edit the Kid's version of the essay which is in fact a biography of Jake. The reworked copy subsequently appears in the town newspaper as a eulogy to the Canadian hired-hands and the man chosen to represent them. Miss Henschbaw leaves some of the local colour intact:

'This man suffered during the blue snow of Nineteen Six and Seven . . . He wears flat soled boots, has chores in his blood, straw in his overall bib and binder twine in his heart.

'He is in the pool of our lantern light now. You know him. Crocus's Golden Jubilee Citizen, without whom there could have been no fifty years of history, no Province of Saskatchewan.

His name is Jake Trumper' (JK, 183).

Official recognition of Jake's contribution seems to be a resolution to the basic conflict between Miss Henschbaw and Jake. It seems to make Jake and the Kid a novel in that it adheres to a specific framework in time. However, while Miss Henschbaw progresses and changes she is the only character to do so, and, even in this case, the time sequences of the progression are out of kilter.

Chapters 1-10 seem to glide through a somewhat seasonal pattern:

Chapter 1: Spring,	Chapter 2: Summer,
Chapter 3: Winter,	Chapter 4: Spring,
Chapter 5: Spring,	Chapter 6: Winter,
Chapter 7: Summer,	Chapter 8: Spring,
Chapter 9: Summer,	Chapter 10: Summer.

Each story progresses according to its own time sequence. Chapters 1-10 take place sometime during the war, while in Chapter 11, mention is made of someone returning home from the war, suggesting that Chapter 11 took place during 1945. Chapter 13, which portrays the events of Jubilee Year in Crocus takes place in 1955, some 10⁹ years after the events of Chapter 11. Chapter 12, according to Mitchell, took place even later than Jubilee Year, leaving more than a 10 year gap between Chapter 1 and Chapter 12 (MW, 106).

The Kid as narrator and main subject of interest does not mature over the 12-13 year span covered by the stories. He remains a Kid. When Jake felt it was perhaps time to tell the truth about his seemingly magical power of rain-making, the Kid relates his own defiance:

He looked down at me for a minute.
'Ever hear tell of dry ice, Kid?'

I looked right back at him. 'Sure,' I said, 'it was all over the prairies the year of the blue snow. That was when the dust froze into solid cakes.'

Jake looked at me kind of funny. He started to say something, but he changed his mind.

He knows better than to try fooling me (JK, 157).

"In the novel," states E. M. Forster, "allegiance to time is imperative: no novel could be written without it" (Forster, 49). This "novel" however, does not progress over time and is, in fact, not a novel at all, but a selection from the many short stories written by Mitchell over a 12-13 year span. While the stories are pieced together somewhat randomly, each exhibits an allegiance to the Canadian locale and the Canadian Kid's voice and personality; stories narrated by Jake were not included.

By having the child narrator use a combination of dialogue and narration, Mitchell keeps his child narrator within character while allowing much more to be suggested than could ever be said. Mitchell, the conjurer, readily admits to being a creator of illusions: "technically speaking, the Jake and the Kid stories are quite deceptive--they are sleight of hand" (MW, 70).

Cloaked in the guise of the child narrator, Mitchell is able to teach on a variety of topics; a one-room school teacher behind the scenes, perhaps, he keeps it simple for the less astute reader but his craft provides enough variety to interest the more sophisticated reader who is willing to delve deeper and who has more life experiences to bring to the reading. As a teacher in real life, Mitchell appreciates the necessity of repetition, enthusiasm and timing as

well as humour. He allows the adult characters short monologues through the child narrator when the persona of the Kid would otherwise be stepping out of his prescribed bounds. This flexibility allows Mitchell to tackle such complicated topics as love in a scene between the Kid and his mother:

'--what makes a person fussy about somebody?' (JK, 49)

'People can't help being--fussy about a thing that needs them, son--whether it's a calf or a colt or a runt pig or a chick. If it needs you, you'll be fond of it.'

'But--but--Mrs. Clinkerby she ain't what you'd call helpless. She . . .'
(JK, 50).

'That's a little different . . . Yet it's the same--just backward. People are fond of someone they need' (JK, 51).

Through the persona of Jake, as related by the Kid, Mitchell is able to teach the necessity of self-restraint and the need to learn from mistakes:

'If a person would keep his mouth shut,' Jake said, 'he wouldn't get him into so much trouble . . . Not that he won't have him a crop of trouble anyways, but maybe she won't go so many bushels to the acre. An' maybe if he keeps his mouth shut, she won't grade so high when he gits her. Number one hard.' He turned to the door then back again. 'Don't fergit that, Kid.' As he went out he said, 'Like I done this afternoon' (JK, 148).

Giving such a direct lecture is not Jake's usual style. In this instance, however, Jake makes certain his message gets across. Although he still speaks in

metaphors, the tone is serious and the homespun metaphor makes his parable more personalized for the prairie-dweller child-narrator.

Usually, Jake teaches by example. What the reader receives is two-fold: Jake's intent and the child's interpretation. As the Kid accepts everything Jake says at face value, the incongruencies provide a basis for much of the book's humour:

The naivety is of course calculated to allow for the continuing comic and pathetic themes that unite the stories. The Kid accepts as true history all the tall tales of the hired man, Jake, which give flavour and direction to most of the episodes. . . . The reader as adult can laugh, but as child he can feel wonder (Robson, 27).

Mitchell uses the naivety of the child narrator to his utmost advantage.

Doing so allows a lighter touch than might otherwise be acceptable where difficult social issues are raised such as the controversial, emotional issue of native rights: "Moses is Blackfoot but he doesn't live on a reserve. He quit being an Indian and he took out his citizenship paper so he could vote and go in the beer parlour if he felt like it" (JK, 160).

When Moses' son is finally permitted to present flowers to the visiting Princess (ironically at the insistence of his father), the narrator comments: "They were buffalo beans he'd picked off the prairies and Indian paint brush and brown-eyed Susans . . .

they were wild flowers."

The father urges his son along saying: "You go up there and give her them, Lazarus. When Miss Henschbaw says, 'Just walk up and hand 'em. You're citizen too. Hers. One hundred percent.'" The father then adds "you got kings in you," referring to the abandoned Indian heritage. The Kid makes a telling comment in his final lines: "Little Lazarus, he didn't curtsy like Cora Swengel when she gave her flowers (JK, 171).

Though remaining within the limits of the child narrator's first person point of view, Mitchell is thus able to present a clear picture of a Canadian paradox, the thorny issue of aboriginal rights and tangled web of Canadian federal laws pertaining to those rights. He has thus presented the moral lesson of "The Princess and the Wild Ones" through rather than in spite of the restrictions of the child's point of view.

Mitchell rarely uses a first person narrator in his writing; however, he felt it essential in Jake and the Kid. Apart from the fact that it allows for simplicity and clarity, Mitchell had other reasons for choosing this particular stance. He explains his decision to use first person child narrator point of view through references to C. E. Montague's A Writer's Notes on His Trade. Montague uses the illustration of

Mrs. Harper and Mrs. Hawkins gossiping over the back fence: "and you better believe it, I seen it with me own eyes" (MW, 75). Mitchell enjoys the credibility that first person narration lends to any tale:

it is very interesting how often unbelievable things are given a persuasion by the use of first person point of view. Robinson Crusoe, that's pretty hard to swallow. That's first person. When you get into historical romances, exotic, other worldly things and especially melodramatic kind of things, one of the ways of making people believe it is Mrs. Harper saying 'I seen it with me own eyes.' And it is very interesting how many adventure novels, historical romances and things, and I mention the real example of that is Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. It is 'I--I--I' . . . and yet I am dealing in Jake and the Kid with not all that hard to believe things. I don't think they are tall tales . . . they are actually quite homespun and ordinary, so, evidently, I didn't pick first person in order to fool people (MW, 77).

But Mitchell does fool people, especially people who wish to be fooled. As McLay says of Mitchell's imaginary town:

Crocus became a Western Mariposa, a microcosm of the experience of many Canadians who had to leave their Mariposas in order to see them anew . . . It is the sophisticated urban readers and poets, not farmers and labourers, who delight to read or write of the simple country joys (McLay, 335).

And, while reliance on readers' willingness to suspend disbelief is a basic necessity of any piece of fiction, Mitchell does not just trick his readers; he also gives them something real in return. "The

answer," says Mitchell, "is life and actuality:"

others are experiencing life and actuality and if you play true to that then they think they are seeing through a clear window when they are actually seeing through another clear window into their stored past . . . that's where the magic takes place between the two (MW, 78).

Mitchell uses the first person point of view in such a way that immediacy is brought to scenes:

But right here is where I better tell you how history got tangled up with what came after (JK, 64).

And even if there wasn't good grades in her, I guess I'd be fussy about Mac's coulee in spring. Here's how she is (JK, 65).

By maintaining a lighter touch, presenting his social messages with a veneer of humour, Mitchell avoids becoming bogged down in the controversies of any particular space in time. He remains free to comment on any topic. One of his favourites is, in fact, the absolute need for humour in life. In discussing his intentions, Mitchell says:

there is a natural wisdom and a natural wit that when Jake is speaking of racism for instance but they're talking about horses, and he says it don't matter whether it is a pinto or a paint or a shaganappy or whatever, the colour don't matter a damn, it's whether he can pull, or whether he can hang in there or whatever he does [it] is another way of saying what a more learned person would be saying, speaking to the matter of equal rights amendments or something else . . . (MW, 91).

Once again, remaining within the bounds of the narrator allows the issue to remain within the confines of the child's comprehension: according to C. E. Montague, a good writer "never [tries] to make the waters of his sentiment rise higher than their source." Such careful attention, Montague continues, "will result in a book as refreshing to read, as a cool bath is to take after much dusty walking" (Montague, 59).

The story Mitchell tells through the voice of his child narrator is the story of the Canadian West, the citizens, the farmers, the townsfolk, the hired men whom Mitchell's school-teacher character presents as hailing from: "Ontario, Galicia, Poland, Bohemia, Ukraine, he comes from south of the border, from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Belgium . . . (JK, 183). Mitchell's characters, based on real western prairie-dwellers, and playing true to themselves, have access to the words borrowed from other new Canadians as well as from the original Canadians. Montague claims: "Each word's evocative value or virtue, its individual power of touching springs in the mind and of initiating visions, becomes a treasure to revel in" (Montague, 3).

Mitchell's graphic depictions allow even those readers who have never, as a child, faced a crowd with eyes brimming, to experience, rather than merely

read about the moment: "everybody turned all spangly . . ." (JK, 13). "Spangly" as it is used here, means to sparkle as through tears. This passage is an example of how Mitchell does not give the reader a rough hint, but rather presents a precise, unquestionably accurate emotional photograph, (Frye, 67), thereby freezing the moment in time. To take Laurence's restricted view of Jake and the Kid then, is to confuse familiarity with maturity, to miss entirely the deeper layers of Mitchell's work and to ignore his most subtle devices. Though written from the point of view of a child, Jake and the Kid is not a children's book.

A closer analysis of the way in which the language of the Kid is controlled to reveal more than the Kid could ever be consciously aware of will show something of the subtlety of technique within this work. In turn, such an analysis will help to explain why it has been at once accepted as a children's book and acclaimed as a Canadian classic. Of course, as Enkvist states: "the secret of individual style can never lie in one dominant feature alone" but must be seen through the "inter-relationship of many parts which make up the whole" (Enkvist, 91).

Insights from contemporary analysis and discourse theory reveal Mitchell's methods. Stylistics, used in this manner, is the most appropriate approach to

Mitchell's work, as, according to Leech "[it] tries to explore for pattern and system below the surface forms of language: to reach for the principles of meaning and language use which activate and control the code " (Leech, 6).

According to H. J. Widdowson, stylistics brings about a necessary conciliation between the disciplines of linguistics and literary criticism, the term itself referring to "the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation " (Widdowson, 3). Stylistic analysis allows the pieces to be separated and broken down into their simplest components.

CHAPTER TWO

Mitchell creates the world of Crocus, Saskatchewan, and presents this world through the emotions and intellect of a child while allowing the reader an inside view, a view much broader than could be realized by the child narrator. The child narrator's authority must never be questioned or the fine thread holding the illusion together will snap and the special effects will be lost. The child seems to be chattering guilelessly; he continues to appear to be in control of the narration throughout and the reader seems to be listening in. These illusions are maintained through Mitchell's artful manipulation of the written language.

What appears as the Kid's casual, spontaneous speech is the result of Mitchell's elaborately contrived formal written discourse. Michael Gregory, in his classic article "Aspects of Varieties Differentiation," presents a taxonomy which divides types of discourse into finer categories than merely spoken and written discourse. Gregory suggests that when "relationships such as those between lectures and articles, between conversation in real life and dialogue in novels and plays, have to be considered, distinctions amongst modes of discourse, if they are to be really useful, have often to be more delicate than the primary one

between spoken and written " (Gregory, 188).

In his taxonomy, Gregory divides speech into that which is spontaneous and that which is non-spontaneous. Spontaneous speech can, in turn, be sub-divided into "conversing" or "monologuing." Speech falling into the category of "conversing" suggests participation by another speaker while "monologuing" suggests a one way flow as found in storytelling. Non-spontaneous speech can be subdivided into "reciting" which includes poetry or the "speaking of what is written" such as that of some speeches, liturgies and some types of lectures (Gregory, 189).

Gregory divides written language into three categories, the first being that which is "written to be spoken as if not written." This type of writing would include poems, plays, and stories written, for example for oral delivery such as radio broadcasting. The second category includes work which is "written to be spoken" such as newscasts and liturgies. The third classification, "written not necessarily to be spoken" is found in novels and short stories. This latter category is further sub-divided into three distinctions, include writing which is "written to be read as if heard," writing which is "written to be read as if overheard," and writing which is "written to be read," such as that found in essays and journals. The spoken sub-category "the speaking of what is

written" is cross-categorized to all three written categories (Gregory, 192).

Jake and the Kid falls within Gregory's category of "written to be read as if overheard", the classification most easily adapted to what seems to be a spoken monologue. Some of the tales were written before the radio series and later dramatized; these dramatizations fall within Gregory's category "written to be spoken as if not written". The short story versions are not really intended to be read aloud, but the reader must "hear" a Kid who seems to be speaking spontaneously. Indeed, the reader must feel he is listening in to an unrehearsed, uncontrived monologue.

Mitchell creates this illusion in two ways: through the indirect representation of the paralinguistic markings in speech and through grammatical manipulations.

The term "paralinguistic features" refers to those features of an utterance which are actually beyond intonation such as stress and pitch, and which constitute part of the total message by revealing the speaker's attitude or feelings; anger, calmness, frustration, etc. The representation of these features in written discourse is usually highly conventionalized: "he said loudly", "she whispered breathlessly". An author's representation of such paralinguistic features can keep a story line flowing, the characters in character, the scenes set and the reader fully involved and informed. According to Gillian Brown:

When an author wishes to show that a character is speaking in a certain way, he assumes that his description of the manner in which the character speaks can be interpreted by his reader. The fact that authors do this--and that readers do interpret these descriptions, and that readers reading aloud often adopt the same sort of paralinguistic features to characterize a given emotion or attitude--suggest that there must be some regular paralinguistic features that are involved (Brown, 125).

Brown feels it necessary to use quotations from written literature, because, as she discovered through working with the speech of actors: "unless you have seen the actors that I have seen, and unless you agree that the emotions I think they are expressing are indeed those same emotions, we have no common base to work from" (Brown, 85). Because Brown uses quotations from English novels to illustrate her paralinguistic categories, the categories can easily apply to excerpts from Jake and the Kid.

Like any other linguistic feature, a representation of a paralinguistic feature may be either marked or unmarked. The unmarked form, "(subject) said," reveals nothing about the kind of paralinguistic features the reader should attribute to the utterance represented. "He shouted," however, guides the reader to interpret the written words as sounding a very specific tone. In contrast to "he said," "he shouted" is a marked form.

One of the remarkable features of Mitchell's style is that he uses the supposedly unmarked "he said" almost exclusively, finding other ways to reveal how the written words are to be heard. These devices are a consequence of his choice of a child narrator. The simple "he said" is appropriate for the unsophisticated young narrator; however, the unmarked "he said" pattern is often preceded or followed by Mitchell's own particular style of extended intonation markers:

Jake gave a little start like he'd struck himself with the point of the matchstick. 'Why--certain'y, he said' (JK, 96).

Jake's Adam's apple was going up and down like a bucket in a well. 'Ef I wanted to rain,' he said, 'why I could do her right now' (JK, 147).

The following markers indicate in turn a state of distractedness and a state of nervousness.

'And--a tin of blackstrap,' Molly said it to Mr. MacTaggart, but she was looking at Mr. Godfrey. She didn't sound like she was so fussy about getting any molasses (JK, 100).

'Why--hello , Jake,' Sam said. He was turned kind of nervous to the doorway (JK, 71).

These pre- and post-intonation markers contribute significantly to our ability to interpret the meaning of the utterances. The Kid does not have to use the more conventional forms such as "he said nervously," "she said wistfully." Through presenting vivid visual experiences, the Kid expresses feelings rather than.

opinions. Mitchell thus avoids the need to make the Kid judge motivations which might not be within the range of a child's consciousness and yet helps the reader make relevant judgments as to what is going on. The reader thus becomes more involved in the work.

By incorporating these markers into his style, Mitchell is able to stay within the limited point of view of the child and yet is able to suggest much more. Through this procedure, Mitchell is able to present a full range of emotions.

Happiness glows from such a statement as: " 'Don't give him that money!' Jake's face was all lit up like he'd eaten a sunset" (JK, 141). The fire of the mother's anger is presented in the utterance: "Ma's face flamed. 'You can depend on my word Mr. Rickey' " (JK, 192).

In order to have the Kid convey deceit, Mitchell has him describe what he perceives as a contradictory message: "'I don't know what you're talking about.' Doc was smiling, but it was a pretty sick-looking smile " (JK, 141).

Through the Kid's description of what he sees, small scenes are constantly set and become enmeshed in the overall background setting: "'Chew tobacco!' Jake's mouth dropped open and his eyes bugged " (JK, 141).

In some instances, Mitchell uses an entire scene as an intonation marker. In the following, Jake has been caught at his own game; he is embarrassed, trapped, non-plussed. The Kid's description of what happened conveys the full range of these emotions without benefit of paralinguistic markers or even one unmarked "he said."

Jake looked startled. "She?"

"Miss Henchbaw."

Jake swallowed.

I swallowed.

Once before I saw Jake looking that way. It was the time he knocked down nine grey Canada honkers in Tincher's smooth-on barley field and Axel Petersen walked in on him.

That was two years ago, the fall Jake had forgot to get his license. Axel Petersen is game warden for Greater Crocus District (JK, 184).

Occasionally, an unmarked "he said" becomes marked, or value-laden, through the simple device of repetition: "'Jake,' I said, 'like I said, that there's history'" (JK, 70).

In this instance, the mere repetition of "said" adds a touch of ponderousness to the statement, giving it more weight and drama than it would otherwise hold. Repetition can add power or reduce a statement to babble; it is one of Mitchell's most effective devices.

Repetition is, in fact, a key device in what is stylistically one of Mitchell's most remarkable accomplishments, a passage to be referred to as the "Blizzard Monologue" (JK, 35-38). In this passage,

which constitutes most of Chapter Three of Jake and the Kid, Mitchell set himself the extraordinarily difficult task of representing, through the point of view of a child narrator, the narrator's loss of consciousness and recovery.

The Kid has foolishly gone to the barn in a raging blizzard to rescue his kittens. Upon his return to the house he loses his way and begins to suffer the effects of exposure, exhaustion and fear.

Repetition of the child's simple language is a key stylistic technique in the Blizzard Monologue; it helps to build a feeling of growing frustration and confusion, of impending doom:

It wasn't because I was tired I sat down. The reason I sat down, I wanted to sit down, so I sat down. I thought I'd have a little rest before I took another try at her, so I sat down for a little rest (JK, 37).

The repetition shows the utterance for what it is, an internal argument of a frightened child who is trying to defend an action he knows to be wrong. What the Kid needed was a second wind, but once he states "I'd got my second warmth" (JK, 37) his incorrectly realized cliché finalizes his list of rationalizations and he is overcome.

The reader must step outside of the child's point of view in order to regain his bearings. The child, however, never steps out of character. Mitchell

creates this situation by complex grammatical manipulation. Beyond repetition, it is particularly by means of the way Mitchell exploits the syntactic possibilities of the English sentence that he at once involves the reader in the Kid's loss of consciousness and allows for the reader to see more than the narrator actually presents.

Before the Kid begins to lose consciousness, he is the first person subject of virtually every clause:

I was feeling sort of scairt.

I was lost.

I lit out again, and I was thinking about how Old Man Froomby lost his leg in o'six. I was thinking how a person's feet and hands get cold even when they got shoe-packs and mitts on and are mostly warm from exercise like I was.

She was taking too long to get to the house; I wasn't getting any nearer. I was sure. I stopped. I took my mitt off, felt in the coal scuttle to see how Milk and her kittens were. I stuck my mitt on quick so I wouldn't lose it.

I didn't know till later why I couldn't feel Milk and her kittens.

My legs were sinking right up to my knees in snow and I headed into her again. For all I knew now I was walking right through that black stinging blizzard, out onto the bald-headed prairie where Ma and Jake would find me in the morning--maybe not till next spring when the snow melted off.

It wasn't because I was tired I sat down. The reason I sat down, I wanted to sit down, so I sat down. I thought I'd have a little rest before I took another try at her, so I sat down for a little rest. My legs were sure glad I did it, and once I was sitting, I all of a sudden wasn't so cold any more; I'd got my second warmth.

Once the lantern goes out, the situation worsens. The Kid is in the throes of panic; once he states that he does not care, the situation becomes grim. Two lines after the lantern goes out he uses his first tall tale to alleviate his fears:

Jake always says she seems twice as far when you can't tell how close you're getting to where you're headed for (JK, 36).

Being immature, remaining within his character as a child, he gets "het up." He "lit out" rather than making a plan of action. He starts sinking into unconsciousness as he begins sinking more deeply into the snow drifts. The Kid's increasing concern for his legs shows the progression of his fatigue and the deterioration in his powers of reasoning.

Before the Kid's condition has deteriorated to this level, however, Mitchell gradually leads the reader into the terrifying situation, using repetition to keep cohesion in the chaotic scene. The emphasis on the state of the lantern keeps up the suspense and signals what could be the beginning of the end for the Kid: "The lantern flickered; nearly went out " (JK, 35), "The lantern was still going " (JK, 35), "The lantern was out " (JK, 36) .

Anytime the Kid is not the subject of the sentence there is indication of danger, of loss of control, and helplessness seeps in: "The blizzard wind got me right by the throat, grabbed my nose, needled my eyes "

(JK, 36), "the snow threw me" (JK, 37). In these passages the Kid is initially the subject and the object varies:

It wasn't because I was tired. I sat down. The reason I sat down, I wanted to sit down, so I sat down. I thought I'd have a little rest before I took another try at her, so I sat down for a little rest. My legs were sure glad I did it, and once I was sitting, I all of a sudden wasn't so cold any more; I'd got my second warmth.

By the time he states he has gotten his "second warmth" he is on the verge of losing consciousness. From this point on the Kid disappears. He is neither subject nor object:

They ought to sell snow instead of those hard mattresses; they ought to rig up some way to get the wind to sing people asleep. Lying in snow is just like in bed on a Saturday morning; just like after measles when you don't have to fight the wallpaper and the door knob and the quilt any more. Blizzards in these days wasn't so cold, Jake had said, and Jake was right (JK, 38).

The child narrator's return to consciousness after an unspecified time lapse is marked by his reappearance as the first person subject along with an unidiomatic and strikingly revealing use of the continuous form of the verb: "After a while I was hearing Jake's voice" (JK, 38).

Because the Kid is narrating the Blizzard Monologue directly, there can be no indications of paralinguistic features such as "he said foolishly"

or "he said feverishly" to help the reader judge the validity of each statement and question the Kid's rationalizations. Instead, the reader is drawn closer to the Kid and yet must try to judge the situation only according to the information supplied by the Kid, who is, within character, suffering from severe exposure. Mitchell, through the lack of paralinguistic features and the direct application to the audience crosses the line from remembered past, from the child narrator telling what happened in the past, to a feeling that the incident is actually occurring in the present moment.

The only indication the Kid was not conscious during the most significant part of the episode is the telltale "--" as Jake continues and the Kid picks up the thread of the conversation: an indication that the narrator has not been with us for quite some time, and another example of Mitchell's ability to use time and time sequences rather than being restricted to any time schedule or framework within the particular story.

Evident once again is the fact that Mitchell uses a combination of devices to avoid the restrictions normally incurred in the use of the child narrator's first person point of view. Through the indirect representation of paralinguistic features, the use of repetition and the manipulation of the correlation

between the narrator and the grammatical subject, Mitchell manages to present an illusion of control which in fact the narrator does not possess.

At the same time, by keeping totally within the point of view of a naive kid raised on the Prairies, Mitchell maintains the illusion of a strongly regional/prairie voice. This, in turn, helps to give the whole that authentically Canadian feeling which is to be examined in more detail through a study of the vocabulary in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

While the Blizzard Monologue presents a clear example of how Mitchell controls linguistic features at the sentence level, the excerpt to be referred to as the Refugee Speech presents this same authorial control on a rhetorical level.

The first short story ever published, "You Gotta Teeter," constitutes Chapter One of Jake and the Kid. In this story the child narrator tells of his traumatic first attempt at public speaking. He is required to give a fund-raising speech to help war orphans overseas. During the time he and Jake rehearse for the big night, the Kid's puppy, Mr. Churchill, is killed. Mitchell uses this turn of events to build suspense: the Kid barely survives the introductory passages and then the heart seems to go out of him entirely. He forgets all his carefully rehearsed lines and is standing in the middle of the stage, under the bright lights, with every person he has ever known sitting before him, waiting. But the Kid does not run away. True to Mitchell's teachings in "The Liar Hunter" (Chapter Seven), "People in this country aren't squealers [quitters]" (JK, 101), the Kid ad libs.

The speech the reader (as well as the audience) hears appears at that moment to change format from an extensively well-planned formal speech which could

be classified as "Written to be read" in Gregory's taxonomy, to an informal chat quite like the rather incoherent style Joos refers to as "casual" (Joos, 23). Joos explains that "casual style is for friends, acquaintances, insiders." As the Kid jumps from topic to topic, makes references to local issues, hesitates and continues in fits and starts, he slips more and more into this casual style.

Word-searching, in combination with repetition, helps the narrator deliver his speech in what appears to be the "normal non-fluency" required to stay within character under these nerve-wracking circumstances (Crystal/Davey, 104).

According to Joos, when casual style is "addressed to a stranger, it serves to make him an insider" (Joos, 23). The audience is not a sophisticated group and, had the Kid tried to keep to the prescribed formal format, he would not have been comfortably within character and his audience would not have reacted to him in a positive way. They would not have identified with the situation, and the goal of the speech, to bring the problem of the refugee children to their attention and make them take action to improve conditions, would not have been achieved.

The result of this rhetorical manipulation is that, by appearing to become less formal, more homespun and folksy, Mitchell's narrator reaches the crowd and

melts the coldest hearts in town, hearts which would not have been touched by a more formal academic approach.

Again, all is illusion. Mitchell was formally trained in elocution and oratory, the conventions having been ingrained since the age of five. Through stylistic analysis, what appears to be a panicky attempt to get out of giving a speech at all is revealed as a more than adequate, competently executed speech which succeeds in producing positive results far in excess of those originally expected.

As in the Blizzard Monologue, the reader is swept along within the child narrator's consciousness as there are no paralinguistic features to warn or guide him. Unlike the experience of the Blizzard Monologue, however, the reader does not step out of the Kid's consciousness. Only after the fact do the reader and the narrator discover how great a success the speech actually was:

Those refugee kids'll eat; \$69.70 was collected. They thought it was \$100.85 at first, and then they had to cut her down when Mr. Ricky realized he'd stuck in \$31.15 he'd collected that afternoon from Mr. Metherall for back taxes. And they got to quit calling Mr. Tuck the tightest man in the district now; he gave 10 dollars (JK, 13).

From the very beginning, Mitchell's authorial control is evident. He begins at once to play with time: the Kid switches from telling the speech to

actually giving it, continuing to move in and out of the scene while maintaining control of the narration. The Kid begins by relating what happened just before he started to give his speech: "I looked down at the floor, and cleared my throat . . ." (JK, 11). The Kid sets the scene in the past, and then switches to the continuous form of the verb, sliding deftly into the present:

I was breathing loud all over the hall. Mr. MacTaggart was still staring at me. . . .

'Baldy--Mr. Chairman and Ladies and --and Jake. I gotta make a speech. About refugee kids. It's all about refugee kids and--and I'm gonna do it too . . . (JK, 12).

The Kid gives the speech in the present tense: rather than reading a narration of how it happened the reader "hears" the speech as it is delivered.

Although the Kid starts out well, from his own point of view, he quickly loses control of the situation and is unable to give a speech at all. In narration, he states:

There weren't any more words I and Jake figured out. I couldn't remember them. Mr. Churchill was lying dead on the side of the road, and I was standing up there with no speech to make. Nobody'd give a nickel for those refugee kids that needed it real bad. (JK, 12).

The Kid also tells his audience directly that he cannot perform:

'Look,' I said, 'I--I had a speech all figured out; I practised it, and Jake he helped me, only I can't give it. I'm awful sorry but--Mr. Churchill he died this afternoon. He got run over. He's dead now. I can't give any speech about refugees because he was my pup (JK, 12).

However, instead of being the dismal failure the Kid claims it to be, the speech is a resounding success. Only when the collection is tallied does it become apparent that the Kid has accomplished what he set out to do.

The Kid continues to claim that under these dreadful circumstances he cannot possibly give a decent fund-raising speech. If seven disclaimers in a row do not convince the audience/reader then the silence indicated by the dash in the last line confirms the fact, and with the closed quotation marks and the inability to utter another word, the speech ends:

'Neither am I. I can't do it, and I'm sorry. I'm sorry I messed her all up. I'm--sorry because those refugee kids need the money real bad.

'Please--if any of you write my father, don't tell him about this. Mr. Carswell, don't you say I give everybody from Crocus to the correction line the heartburn, when you write your paper this week. I--' (JK, 13).

Of the forty-two lines which make up the speech, only six lines attempt to deliver the formal, prepared speech. Only two lines of the excerpt refer directly to the fund-raising for orphaned refugee children,

which is the actual focus of the speech. One reference appears within the child narrator's actual monologue and one is embedded in the narration. The reference within the narration does not appear until approximately half way through the speech while the only reference the audience actually hears does not appear until four utterances before the end of the speech: "I'm sorry because those refugee kids need the money real bad" (JK, 13).

The Kid uses two lines of narration and fourteen of monologue to explain his inability to make the presentation at all. Sixteen lines of monologue and one of narration are devoted to discussing the grief he is experiencing over his dog's death. Eight lines are devoted to how this grief can be likened to the love and protectiveness of farm animals for their offspring; eventually the Kid likens this familiar feeling to a more alien one, a refugee child's grief, thereby bringing out sympathy for the cause of a circuitous but highly effective method. "That's why I've messed up this speech for the refugee kids," connects grief over the dog's death to the speech itself. "If you lost your kids could you make a speech in front of a bunch of people?" (JK, 12) connects human grief to the speech.

The statement "Calves and colts and chicks and pups, they're the same as kids," makes the connection between the familiar of Crocus, Saskatchewan, the farm

animals and human children in general, while the line "Those people over in Belgium and France and England, the way they feel it isn't any different than with Queen or Eglantine or--or me without my pup" (JK, 13) connects the feelings of unknown foreigners and their grief with what would be familiar to South Saskatchewan farmers and the Kid's own very personal grief.

Not only is the speech a financial success at the story level, but it is also stylistically successful as a masterful manipulation of stylistic devices. Much of what the Kid has to say in the speech has nothing to do with the topic of the speech itself, but everything to do with the making of the speech: holding the audience's attention, drumming up sympathy, dramatizing the situation. Although the Kid does not really need to gain the floor, as he is the key-note speaker, he needs repetition and verbal fillers to buy time to marshall his thoughts. As Brown states: "the ability to keep on speaking even while saying remarkably little is the mark of a fluent speaker" (Brown, 109).

Fillers other than the uses of thematic repetition are apparent in verbal fillers such as "and--and," "I--you--it's," and are evident in no less than eight lines of the forty-two line Refugee Speech.

In all, fourteen lines of the speech disclaim the narrator's ability to give a speech at all. At

the time the story was set, which was during the Second World War, anyone standing in the middle of a school stage, visibly upset and repeating the news that Mr. Churchill had just been run over would no doubt have received the undivided attention of everyone in the hall. Not until four utterances later does Mitchell have the Kid mention that Mr. Churchill, in this case, is actually the Kid's pet dog.

A layering pattern begins to emerge when the Kid returns to the topic of the difficulty of giving a speech under these circumstances. This time, he focusses attention on the parents saying even they could not do it. Mitchell's child narrator appeals directly to the audience for sympathy and understanding of his plight, thereby involving them more deeply in the speech and in the orphans' dramatic situation as well. While E. M. Forster feels that taking a reader into one's confidence may cause a "drop in the temperature," (Forster, 123) Mitchell's narrator, by seeming to appeal only to the audience in the school auditorium while actually appealing to the reader, paradoxically increases involvement and interest:

'If you lost your kids could you make a speech in front of a bunch of people?

'You wouldn't remember about 'Mr. Chairman and Ladies and Gents and--and a real honour' and like that.

'You wouldn't expect any of those refugee kids that's lost their mothers and

fathers to be any good at makin' a speech, would you? (JK, 13).

There seems to be a pattern of expansion from the specific to the universal and back again. An indication of this can be seen in linguistic choices made by the author. The disclaimers regarding the Kid's ability to give the speech indicate this path: "I had a speech . . . only I can't give it," "I can't give any speech about refugees," "I've messed up this speech for the refugee kids " (JK, 12).

As shown, the linguistic choice ranges from the undefined "a speech," "any speech" to the more particular "this speech." The child narrator vacillates between these and the general "any speech" and the particular "this speech." The Kid thereby synthesizes the concept of universal and specific in the reader's mind.

The Kid's juvenile delivery of the speech masks its exacting format; however, Mitchell never superimposes his devices in order to have his writing sound a particular way. Mitchell's work is the result of the intrinsic nature of what he is writing about as well as being a result of ingrained life experience of the author himself:

when I was five . . . she
[Mitchell's mother] enrolled me in
Madame Wilkinson's School of Dance
Drama Music and Elocution . . . now
that was my life model, right? However,
I am going to impute this to Jake. Now

Jake has seen politicians, and the dreadful ones, William Lyon MacKenzie King and the rest of them, how they hook their hands in here and how they got to teeter, you see. And so, out of life . . . (MW, 27).

The same skillful rhetorical manipulation which can be demonstrated in the Refugee Speech pervades the rhetoric of the whole book. Jake's account of the buffalo pound (JK, 67-70) could almost serve as a textbook example of the casual style as characterized by Joos. In Jim Matthews' barely articulate proposal to fish for goldfish (JK, 22), the representation of hesitation phenomena, while we know it is the product of an artful writer, serves to demonstrate as well as anything in Brown how hesitation phenomena emerge in unrehearsed speech. The radio conversation between the Kid and his father illustrates subtle differences between casual conversation and radio or telephone conversations (JK, 42). Mayor MacTaggart's tendency to speak in truncated noun phrases (JK, 162), Wayfreight Brown's way of talking "like those C.P.R. travel folders" (JK, 162) as well as the endlessly repetitive Repeat Golightly (JK, 162)-all are totally at the mercy of Mitchell's control of the rhetoric of the narration.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mitchell states:

art is an illusion of life, and for that reason the writer has to start with life. You see, I believe that all great fiction is regional, not in the usual sense of regional, that what a person does will be only within the family or whatever . . . the prairie or the foothills, or Italy, whatever but that the illusion lives--is in the world of the many--of smell, taste, touch, sound . . . and emotion, and the writer must explore his or her own stored past and must begin with life models. You do not fake it. That's where it happens. And the name of it is life, and the actuality that you build on it. Unfortunately, the way it is approached, many people study craft, technique, that's the harness and then they forget the most important thing, of sitting down and writing--not writing a poem or a play but just whatever floats and let it come out and let it declare what it should do (MW, 98).

Mitchell's stored past is the prairie. Writing out of this stored past Mitchell does not superimpose certain words, certain area-specific "Canadianisms" upon his work in order that it sound Canadian. Because he feels that a writer, in order to have his words ring true, must write only about what he knows, Mitchell writes about life on the Canadian Prairie. This, together with the fact that the child narrator's point of view is rigorously maintained, makes it authentic.

Mitchell's product has a distinctive Canadian tone. to it, at times an almost tangible Canadianness which is due to a number of interdependent linguistic features

as well as the context and the character of the persons involved. In playing true to his characters, in playing true to himself as a writer by knowing his characters and their place in space and time, Mitchell has them use words that would have been available to anyone who happened to be in the Canadian prairie provinces at that time in history.

It is because he writes out of this specific context that Mitchell considers himself to be a regional writer rather than a Canadian one. Patricia Barclay defines a regional writer as one:

who knows and understands a certain district, a way of life, an ethnic group; and who writes about it in a way that brings his subject to life for those who have never known it or awakes nostalgic recognition in those who have. He is an interpreter of his own particular corner of the rest of the world, and hence his title, 'regionalist' (Barclay, 54).

In discussing how important the West was as a setting for his writing, Mitchell does state that an artist is "created by the bombardments of the first litmus years of his life . . . what is laid down and what he is, is marked by this" (Cowan, 15). At the same time, however, he claims that he is a regional writer only in the sense that the region referred to is the inner self. He considers Virginia Woolf to be "one of the greatest regional writers I know. The region is herself. In the end that's the true region

of any writer" (Cowan, 15). Hence, his claim that labelling a work Canadian is "chauvinistic and so utterly irrelevant to the art experience . . . [that it] just has no bearing whatsoever on the piece of art . . . what I recoil from is the idea of the bloody Maple Leaf stamped on a piece of Canadian writing . . ."

(MW, 100).

But, although he dismisses as inartistic and invalid political nonsense any attempt to designate his work Canadian, he does admit that the word choice, although made unconsciously at the time, lends a Canadian flavour to his pieces. Preferring his word selections to be referred to as "prairie-isms", "regionalisms", or even "short-grass culture-isms" he feels that they could be heard on the American side of that Western Canadian border:

in Wyoming, in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, because that short grass culture runs down the whole continent [and] is no respecter of that horizontal boundary (MW, 101).

In fact, no matter how unconsciously, Mitchell has written himself into and helped to establish a specifically Canadian tradition. Northrop Frye feels this style contributes to the:

nostalgia for a world peace and protection, with a spontaneous response to nature around it, with a leisure and composure not to be found today, [and] . . . particularly strong in Canada (Frye, 238-9).

The details of what it is that distinguishes American English from Canadian English which Canadians respond to in Mitchell have proved surprisingly elusive. Joos, writing in "A Phonological Dilemma in Canadian English", states that the English in Ontario differs from "General American speech (for example, that of rural New York or Wisconsin), in only two items of any phonological consequence" (PDCE, 141). Two other Canadian linguists of note, Professor M. Bloomfield writing in 1948 and Henry Alexander in 1951, suggest that there are few differences, Bloomfield feeling that Canadian English: "is to all intents and purposes General American with a few modified sounds usually paralleled in American sub-dialects and with some vocabulary variations" (Bloomfield, 62). Alexander adds that: "the speech of most Canadians belongs to a type of English that appears fairly consistently throughout the central portion of the North American continent" (Alexander, 13).

Walter S. Avis, on the other hand stresses more strongly what distinguishes Canadian from American varieties. Qualifying an earlier statement he had made in which he identified Canada as "an extension of the Northern speech area of the United States", goes on to say that:

A detailed survey of Canadian speech habits would probably reveal that a number of isoglosses run parallel to the political boundary, too few, perhaps to set Canada completely apart from the northern variety of American (i.e. North American) English, but certainly enough

to establish a speech area in many ways distinct from the principal area. The sum of these isoglosses representing lexical, phonological, grammatical, syntactical and semantic differences would be equivalent to what is distinctly Canadian about the English language in North America . . . (Avis, 55).

Mitchell, in fact, is quite wrong in claiming that this "short-grass culturism" is not distinctly Canadian. Jake and the Kid contains over 120 words which are cited as Canadianisms by The Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles.^I

^I A complete list of these Canadianisms appears in Appendix A.

As this chapter deals with Canadianism in Jake and the Kid, Canadianisms will be highlighted as they appear in quoted text. The Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles, (hereinafter referred to as the DC) defines a Canadianism as follows:

a word, expression, or meaning which is native to Canada or which is distinctively characteristic of Canadian usage though not necessarily exclusive to Canada, Winnipeg couch falls into the first category, chesterfield (sofa) into the second (DC, xiii).

Some Jake and the Kid entries such as "buffalo jumping pound" (JK, 67), and "rain" (JK, 151) remain the DC's sole authority.

And so, if it is not a simple task to say what makes a work of literature sound authentically Canadian, we must recognize, following M. H. Scargill, that Canadian English lays "claim to some independence of vocabulary" (Scargill, 18). It is in studying this independent vocabulary that we can see how the universal appeal of Jake and the Kid can be presented through a Canadian voice, a voice which remains elusive while it is yet distinctive. It is the voice specifically chosen by the Canadian people to tell their story. As Canadian author, Robert Kroetsch states:

American writers of the nineteenth century had a choice between their own voice and a literary voice, with Longfellow electing to work within the convention, while Whitman dared to sing himself. I see Canadian writers facing the same choice. There are very tempting other voices around us. The American voice is one of them, and it may be the most obvious temptation. It has authority, it has directness, it has confidence. But Canadians still have to elect for this relatively unknown voice that is theirs, and make literature out of that . . . (Kroetsch, 86).

According to the Editor-in-Chief of the DC,
Walter S. Avis:

That part of Canadian English which is neither British nor American is best illustrated by the vocabulary, for there are hundreds of words which are native to Canada or which have meanings peculiar to Canada. As might be expected, many of these words refer to topographical features, plants, trees, fish, animals, and birds; and many others to social, economic and political institutions and activities. Few of these words, which may be called Canadianisms, find their way into British or American dictionaries; a fact which should occasion no surprise, for British and American dictionaries are based on British and American usage, being primarily intended for Britons and Americans, not for Canadians, (SD, ix).

Because of the difficulty and at times virtual impossibility of accurately labelling specific words "Canadian" or "American" due to our often shared heritage, the editors of the DC confined themselves to source materials which were: "written by persons native to or resident in Canada who were writing about Canadian life or by travellers and other visitors to Canada who were commenting on their experiences in this country" (DC, xiii).

Avis used Mitchell extensively as one of the Canadian authors who, through incorporating into their written literature local words and expressions which were already well established in the oral tradition, enabled these words to be classified as "Canadianisms." Such literary support is deemed necessary for the survival of the words, as, according to C. E. Montague:

Suppose a new word sought a home in the English language: our line would be simply to ask, 'Has any English classic used it?' And if the word had no great man of the past to speak up for it, then we should have to chase the poor thing away from the door . . . (Montague, 18).

Although Mitchell is very much a man of the present, and notwithstanding his aversion to political classifications of literature, his contribution to a specifically "Canadian" literature is nonetheless an important one. The "Canadianisms" gleaned from Jake and the Kid total more than all his other works combined, Jake and the Kid being, of course, the basis of all subsequent works.

Mitchell's Crocus, Saskatchewan, inhabited as it is by the Rasmussens, the Abercrombies, Christensens, Wings, Kiziws, MacDougalls and Lefthands, is a microcosm of the Canadian West. The voice of each citizen intermingles with his neighbour's contributing to one song, that of Prairie. Such a blend is presented in

Mitchell's deceptively simple statement "Olga Wolochow's doing the Highland fling" (JK, 7).

Mitchell's characters are based on real Western prairie-dwellers. These characters therefore have access to the words borrowed from other new Canadians as well as from the original Canadians. When the available words from these sources did not suffice to depict the new phenomenon of their environment, these Canadians extended the meanings of English words and as well, created compounds in order to express themselves in more relevant terms--and Mitchell chose his words very carefully. McKenzie Porter tells just how particular Mitchell is when it comes to finding just the right word:

John Drainie, the Toronto actor who played Jake in the radio series, learned one night how exhaustively Mitchell explores the vocabulary. Dining with the writer he was puzzled to see a jar of varnish on the table. Throughout the meal Mitchell sniffed at it periodically. At first Drainie was too polite to comment, but eventually he exploded: "Bill! What in hell goes on?" Mitchell explained: "I've been trying for a week to find words to describe the smell of varnish. And I can't. And, dammit, it's driving me crazy." (Porter, 46).

Western Canadians, indeed all Canadians, were never short of words, however, and this legacy allows Mitchell a range of area-specific vocabulary to his fictional Crocus, Saskatchewan characters. The "Canadianisms" from Jake and the Kid are words Mitchell

first heard in life and was then able to put into the mouths of the cast of Jake and the Kid and have them ring true. Mitchell does not coin words for his own literary use, rather he uses words in his stories of the West which would be available to any other Canadian prairie dweller at the time the story is set. C. E. Montague suggests of this type of word choice, that:

all the words here are common enough; and one may feel either that kitchen coals have turned for a moment into diamonds, or else that a few diamonds have ceased for once to masquerade as kitchen coals (Montague, 10).

Highlighting an author's word choices is necessary in order, as John Spencer claims, to "appreciate in full the alchemy by which he transmutes the base metal of everyday language into the gold of art" (Spencer, xii).

While Mitchell's use of metaphor brings out the essence of the Canadian prairie even without the use of Canadianisms, in such phrases as "thirsty cracks in your land" (JK, 154), "the snow sort of squealing under our feet" (JK, 79), "our house cracking its knuckles" (JK, 118), there is no doubt that through the use of "Canadianisms," even more of the flavour comes through:

[the sound] ran like the wind over the edge of the prairie coming to tell everybody they can't live forever--slick as the wind through a field of wheat--slicker than peeled Saskatoons (JK, 142).

'She--she shore was mad--she--shore was mad.'

'Was she?'

'Yep--went up like stumpin' powder'
(JK, 59).

'... You don't know prairie. You're like a lot of other folks that come make a stake outa the prairie and get out as fast as you can. It's people like you give her a dry, cracked face with hot winds rollin' tumbleweed over
(JK, 26).

By being one of the first Canadian authors to use available local words, Mitchell lifted a popular Canadian vocabulary to a level of recognition such that it had to be included in the DC. The DC mined Jake and the Kid in order to validate many of its Canadianisms. Mitchell's work, in maintaining the child's point of view, does not send the ordinary reader scurrying to the dictionary. Often, after using a particular Canadianism, Mitchell will work an explanation of the term into the story, not only suggesting a definition but explaining the place of that particular item within Canadian life. A simple and direct example of this pattern is found in the interchange between Jake and the Kid:

'Say, Jake, did you ever see a pound?'

'Dang right. Ain't I had tuh go git Queen and Baldy outa . . .'

'Not that kind. Like Indians had where they run buffaloes so's they could kill a lot and git meat fer pemmican (JK, 66).

Rather than merely explaining what a "coulee" is, as

does the DC: "1962 Alta Hist. Rev. Autumn 14/2: The dry bed of a stream when deep is a 'gulch or coulee' its inclined sides distinguish it from a canyon, the sides of which are perpendicular " (DC, 175). Mitchell instead explains what it felt like to be in a "coulee," what a "coulee" means to a prairie dweller: "when you lie on your belly at the bottom of Mac's coulee, you're in a world; she's your world, and there's nobody else's there, and you can do what you want with her " (JK, 65).

In his description of a "coulee," Mitchell incorporates five other "Canadianisms," and presents them as part of the overall picture:

. . . I'd be fussy about Mac's coulee in spring. Here's how she is:

Still, still as water, with the sun coming kind of streaky through the wolf-willow along her edges . . . You can look close at the heads of the wild oats all real feathery; you can look at the crocuses and they're purple, not out-and-out purple, but not blue either. If you look real close they got real, small hairs like on a person's face close to a mirror. And there's tumbleweeds caught down there; they make you think about umbrellas that got their cloth ripped off of them like bones, only not stary-white like a buffalo skull (JK, 65).

Mitchell's process has an encyclopedic pattern to it. He not only uses "Canadianisms" to describe the Canadian West in regional words, but he also defines this vocabulary through contextual references.

within Jake and the Kid itself. Although subtly presented, these clarifications are crucial. According to W. R. Wees Vice-President, Publishing, of W. J. Gage Limited, writing in the Foreward of the DC

/The study of people's language is . . . a study of their experience over the course of time, an intimate study of their history. . . . That separateness of experience, in the bludgeoning of the Atlantic waves, the forest over-burden of the St. Lawrence valley, the long water ways to the West, the silence of the Arctic wastes, the lonesome horizons of the prairie, the vast imprisonment of the Cordilleras, the trade and commerce with the original Canadians--all this is recorded in our language (DC, V).

As Maurice S. Elliot states, without a thorough knowledge of our language and how it is used, "the whole landscape becomes a manuscript we lose the skill to read " (Elliot, 162).

Mitchell helps the reader through the manuscript by going into great detail explaining the significance of the "Canadianism" "Chinese cafe," although he does not in fact use the specific term in any of the Jake and the Kid stories. The DC refers to a "Chinese cafe" or "chinese restaurant" as:

. . . a restaurant operated by a Chinese, especially one of the small cafes that are found, particularly in the West, in most Canadian small towns (DC, 146).

Mitchell adds life to this definition by adding a short yet powerful biography of the owner of the Chinese cafe in his mythical Crocus, Saskatchewan.

Jake advises the Kid to use Wing, the proprietor of Crocus' "Chinese cafe," as the subject of a school essay, "where you had to tell who you thought was Crocus District's Golden Jubilee Citizen, the one person Crocus couldn't have done without during the last fifty years" (JK, 176).

The Kid relates Jake's reasons for choosing Wing, thereby providing a short biography of Wing as well as a thumbnail history of the district's activities, and explaining the need to look beyond the obvious personalities such as local politicians and look closely at someone special:

... a person wouldn't think of offhand. Somebody that's bin goin' along, doin' his job so you--well--sort of like you was holdin' up a lantern an' there he is Crocus' Jubilee Citizen. Bin there all the time--till your lantern shone on him an' showed what he was really like

Now--I like Wing. Sanitary Cafe . . . during them dirty thirties when he fed the bindle stiffs an' the stew bums--the scen'ry hogs an' the gay cats an' the lump bums that swung down off of the freights behind Hig Wheelers lumber yards. Wing never let one of 'em go away hungry. You take the hockey outfits--Peewees, Juniors, Intermediates --ain't a year Wing didn't put up the money for their uniforms (JK, 176).

While the following "Canadianisms" do not use Jake and the Kid references to illustrate their meanings, Mitchell explains them so clearly within his text that consulting the DC is not necessary.

While the DC refers to a "reserve" as "a tract of land set aside for a specific purpose by the government," Mitchell's reference adds depth, "emotional staining" (MW, 88) which tells what a "reserve" really represents within the Canadian scene:

Moses is Blackfoot but he doesn't live on a reserve. he quit being an Indian and took out his citizenship papers so he could vote and go in the beer parlour if he felt like it (JK, 160).

The DC definition of a "combine" is rather dry:

"... a farm machine which cuts and threshes grain in one operation . . ." Mitchell's explanation describes the importance of the machine to the prairie farmer: "he's got two tractors and a couple of combines so he can seed seven or eight sections each year" (JK, 64).

"Buffalo" is described by the DC as a "North American bison." Mitchell, in discussing the buffalo, explains all the uses that can be made of the buffalo and therefore its importance. In doing so, he incorporates several additional Canadianisms defining them in the process as well:

... Jake, he says, we gotta have buffaloes. We need her fer meat, an' we need her fer tepees, an' we need her fer moccasins. . . . The pemmican we was savin' up from last year, the kiyoots [coyotes] got at her (JK, 67).

Seventeen of the "Canadianisms" in Jake and the Kid are borrowed directly from languages other than

English. The diversity of sources indicates the importance of the demographic mixture created by immigration.

Dutch	- caboose
	- sleigh
Canadian French	- coulee
	- gopher
	- habitant
	- prairie
Salish	- chinook
Spanish	- corral
	- coyote
	- stampede
Algonquin	- mocassin
	- pemmican
	- shaganappy
	- skunk
Cree	- Saskatchewan
	- Saskatoon berry
Sioux	- teepee

As suggested by McConnell, in Our Own Voice, there are two other methods a language has of increasing pertinent vocabulary, one of which consists of "... extending the use of words already in the language," the other of "... creating new terms from the resources of the language." The following "Canadianisms"

fall under the category of "extension" (McConnell, 55) in which old words have been used in a new context for something similar, such as "crocus":

. . . crocus (on the Prairies) for 'anemone', sometimes prairie crocus to differentiate and also called prairie smoke [not a Canadianism], sandflower, and windflower . . . (McConnell, 56).

consolidated school	correction line
Community Hall	councillors
democrat	district
dollar	federal member
Fenian	Liberal
Maple Leaf	nickel
dime	municipal
parliament (federal)	parliament (provincial)
quarter section	school board
town council	Senate

As well, any phrase beginning with "Province" would fall within this category of extension, such as "provincial minister" (JK, 166).

Special activities require extensions of existing vocabulary to extend their terminology as "hockey," "hockey stick" and "curling."

According to McConnell, words also become "linked with . . . place of origin" resulting in the following:

Canada honker	Dominion Day
Hudson's Bay catalogue	prairie crocus

prairie itch

Saskatoon berry

Winnipeg couch

Winnipeg gold-eye

Jack rabbit

North Shore

Northwest

Perhaps the most colourful examples of extensions, especially in Jake and the Kid, are the metaphors chosen by Mitchell to present images of the Canadian prairie:

bald-headed prairie

blowdirt

clod-busting

crow-hopping

field pitchers

gold-eye

Indian paint brush

jumping pound

mounties

root house

spikers

stoneboat

stubble-jumper

windbreak

tumbleweeds

run-off

The inevitable cross-classifications occur in isolating "Canadianisms" which have been compounded in order to create a more appropriate term (McConnell, 61):

binder twine

blowdirt

bobsleigh

buffalo beans

buffalo jumping pound

Canada honker

clod-busting

coal oil

consolidated school

correction line

down east

four-bits

game warden

grain elevator

half-section	haywire
lumberyard	meadow lark
peace pipe	quarter section
root house	run-off
school board	sheepherder
shoe-packs	sod-buster
stoneboat	stumping powder
town council	trapline
tumbleweed	windbreak

Laws and customs peculiar to certain areas cause new compounds to be created. "Canadian drinking laws . . . have produced beer parlour . . ." (McConnell, 62). Mitchell, of course, provided us with the sociological and emotional side to this particular issue.

What becomes evident rather quickly in this type of analysis is that merely listing words does not tell the story. For all Mitchell's claims that he is not an author of Canadian literature but of literature, Jake and the Kid, through an interdependence of devices, including generous use of Canadianisms in their specific context (as many as ten per page), reproduces a particular tone. It is not surprising that Mitchell would pick up these particular "kitchen coals" (Montague, 10) subconsciously and incorporate them into his work, as Montague states: "You can seldom be sure how far the maker of any particular piece of

literary beauty knows--consciously knows--all the means that he is taking" (Montague, 184).

Mitchell is a Canadian who writes about other Canadians interacting within a specific region in Canada and in doing so he uses the words of these people, words which have been authenticated as "Canadianisms". As Robert Kroetsch states: "Whatever art illusion the writer creates, the bubble he blows simply has to grow out of the fact that he inhabits a certain place upon the skin of the earth and a certain point in time" (Kroetsch, 57).

It is because his own experience of prairie life was so numinous for him, is so much a part of his artistic being, that W. O. Mitchell is able to create so totally convincing a character as the Kid. The Canadian vocabulary of Jake and the Kid is not unrelated to Mitchell's use of such stylistic devices as repetition and manipulation of grammatical resources and the kind of rhetorical control examined in Chapter 3. On the contrary, all of these features of his style are a consequence of his rigorous maintenance of the first person point of view of a child narrator.

CONCLUSION

There is more to Mitchell's Jake and the Kid than appears at surface level. The stylistic manipulation and rhetorical devices enable us to see beyond what the child narrator can see. But at the same time, the art of the writer creates a totally credible narrator, a child who is very much of his time and place. It is the voice of this narrator which proves to be the authentic Canadian voice to which so many Canadians have responded. Skillful use of language, underlying paradoxes, moral messages, and grass-roots humour together weave a lively tapestry depicting rural Canadian prairie life as well as a universal, timeless tale whose colours do not fade even under the intense artificial light of stylistic analysis.

Previously considered an effective, enjoyable but simplistic children's novel, Mitchell's selection of short stories is actually elaborate and technically successful adult literature in the classic sense, suggested by Joos as that which is "spun from a thread of feeling, woven close to a community pattern of feeling, tailored to suit re-readings of men and events, patched with pieces that would not have been taken while the brands were still visible" (FC, 54).

The colloquial style of the child narrator allows the reader easy access; perhaps this seemingly easy-going style is what has kept most readers from taking Jake and the Kid more seriously. Many readers have enjoyed the work without knowing what lies behind it; however, Montague says of such works:

If a writer is really lifted above himself; if as he writes he is veritably making forays far beyond our ordinary field of consciousness, even beyond his own as it is at most time, it is not merely pardonable that his written report of these raids should ask us for some little effort of comprehension; if it were all a plain tale you might even suspect that he had not gone very far (Montague, 86).

Mitchell has gone quite a bit further than would first appear, and the reader must be willing to look more closely at the language, to be aware at word, sentence and rhetorical level in order to get the most out of Jake and the Kid. As René Wellek states:

there can be no clear separation . . . of text from situation. There is no formal linguistic way of dealing with this. One must contextualize, summarizing the situation the language is relating. In dealing with any portion of text, this contextualization may for certain descriptive purposes be delimited to a specified segment of it. This may be termed the immediate intratextual context. Moreover, the reader of a literary work has increasingly available . . . an accumulated intratextual context.

By the end of the text he is thus in possession of the total intratextual context . . . this 'reading with a sense for continuity, for contextual coherence, for wholeness', must be an essential part of stylistic study; it is a necessary check on the equally necessary discreteness which any aspectual work on a text, linguistic or otherwise, requires (Wellek, 145).

Separating context from process in Mitchell's work is a difficult undertaking, and "reading . . . for wholeness" is, after all the desired goal.

Wholeness in this case includes the Canadian voice emanating from Mitchell's work. Mitchell has made literature out of this "relatively unknown voice" (Kroetsch, 86), literature which is not only representative of a specific region in Canada but that is also universal in appeal. He created simplicity through skillful use of elaborate craft techniques. No doubt, however, it is as Montague suggests:

When the winds of the creative impulse are blowing great guns again no imaginative painter or writer will wait to discuss, with himself or anyone else, how far nature ought to be represented in the work that he does at her instance. He will do the work first--do it as his passion bids him--and then sit and listen, with a twinkle in his eye, to the buzz of all these intelligent midges (Montague, 145).

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APPENDIX A

Edited Transcription of Personal Interview

with W.O. Mitchell

Conducted at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario

September 27, 1985

by

Judith E. Carruthers

CARRUTHERS: I am working on a thesis which looks at Jake and the Kid from a linguistic standpoint. It slops over into "lit crit" here and there, but basically, I think I've figured out what you did. I refer to you as a "conjuror," the word being a "Canadianism" in itself. I felt you were a creator of illusion and I would like to know how you did it. In the scene which I refer to as "The Blizzard Scene," where the narrator gets lost in the storm, the narrator also loses consciousness and you give us an unconscious narrator and yet the story never misses a beat and I think I figured out how you did it. . . .

MITCHELL: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. . . . The narrator in time is recalling, right? . . . This is point of view, of course. In the story, does the narrator tell you anything that the narrator unconscious would not have been able to know about?

CARRUTHERS: No, but . . .

MITCHELL: I know, I know the answer first. You don't. Because it is such a primitively simple thing, point of view. . . .

CARRUTHERS: . . . he's maybe recalling it in the novel but at the time it's a present thing. . . .

MITCHELL: . . . it's not a novel, it's a short story.

CARRUTHERS: . . . linguistically we figured out what happened in there. In the beginning, he was the subject of the sentence and then he became the object and then he wasn't the subject or object anymore. He disappeared.

MITCHELL: I don't believe you. . . . It is so, so cardinally a thing that it would almost be like shifting gears in a car. It could never happen. . . .

[Mitchell checks the book.] He didn't come right out of it. In his consciousness, in his envelope of consciousness, he doesn't know that he has passed out when he comes to . . . bewildered . . . he doesn't know the lapse of time. He is still within his own consciousness even when it is blanked; therefore, you can't get Jake and the others coming out and finding him and bringing him in. He doesn't know what the passage of time has been and now you are still within the thing.

CARRUTHERS: Well, that's what I found interesting-- that you could give us a narrator who was unconscious

and yet the story never seems to skip a beat. It just flows on. It is only after you read it that you realize, "Oh, he was unconscious there."

MITCHELL: Yes, I realized that when I did it, if I can remember rightly. . . .

CARRUTHERS: That's what I liked about it. That's one of the first things that really got me looking for other things. . . .

MITCHELL: Well, that's pretty smart of you, because, technically speaking, the Jake and the Kid stories are quite deceptive. They are sleight of hand, in that you want people to suspend, you want to con people. Then that puts you into all kinds of difficulties if you're within a child's mind. . . . Indeed in some of the radio versions, of these, and there were over 300 of them, these are only short stories that were done, very frequently, I did not use the child's framework, but used Jake's. Because if you're dealing with a child who's not experienced and everything else, then you're ruling out, you can't have that child speaking or observing or with adult wisdom, or speaking like a professor in an English Department. So it's a very limiting thing. . . . It would be much easier to use the omnipotent point of view, which is not limiting, as I did in Who Has Seen the Wind. . . . It is a very interesting thing you zeroed in on and besides what, I misunderstood, thinking of point of view, whereas

you were thinking about time lapse and that's difficult to do, admittedly, if the person has been unconscious and doesn't know how goddam long they've been unconscious. I get your point. . . . And again, it is done simply, because you are within a child's consciousness. Therefore it has to be simply done.

In Remembrance of Times Past, Sartre [sic] has a sensitive and intelligent and sophisticated person. He can do all kinds of things with time like observing what happens when he eats a piece of cake soaked in wine and then the whole thing flashes back. . . . Can't do that with a kid if you're going to be true to being a kid.

CARRUTHERS: Well, what I had found in it was, and I went word for word, because it really bugged me; I couldn't figure out how you did it, and I came up with that in the beginning it was "I"--"I was tired" "I sat down." The Kid was the subject. And then it was "they ought to sell snow instead of those hard mattresses," "they should do something." "They." He went right out of it. He wasn't the subject, he ceased to be an object of it anymore . . .

MITCHELL: You are off the track there really, because, you are still within him . . . he is not the object . . . that is the same thing as what he is feeling in his legs with the snow and everything else. It's no different that when he comes out of his unconsciousness,

the next thing he hears is other people talking. You haven't left him as the focus because what he is hearing the others say is still within him. . . .

CARRUTHERS: It was interesting that you said Jake and ~~the~~ Kid was sleight of hand because this is what I have been wanting to talk to you about. In Jake and the Kid it's the constant complaint that the real history of Canada wasn't written, the history book history is one thing, but Jake's history is the oral history and hasn't been thought of as valid. But when you do that you also wrote Jake and the Kid which became a written real history, and then the Kid gives a speech; I call it "the Refugee Speech." Of course, again, linguistically, I went through every word and counted up how many times he said "I can't do it," "I'm sorry, I can't do it." He spent the entire speech except for one line saying that he couldn't do it, but in the dialogue there was only one space where he couldn't, where there was an "I" and then a dash (--) he couldn't talk anymore, and I find that is a pattern in the book. That you say "look, something is not being done," but at the same time you are doing it.

MITCHELL: Now again, you've got to look at it psychologically. The Kid is apprehensive, nervous, the usual inexperienced person getting up in front of a bunch of people and he had prepared a didactic speech,

then got carried away, and what he does in the thing after his first thing, until he finally shifts gears is a totally different thing. He then proceeds not to do a memorized and prepared speech but to speak from the heart and it is not cerebral, intellectual, deliberate. That's the mechanism that perhaps, I don't know at this point, that I may have had in mind when he did it. Then he doesn't speak of the refugees. . . . What is it he speaks about?

CARRUTHERS: He speaks of the domestic kind of grief if a cow lost a calf, or if you lost your own kids. . . .

MITCHELL: Oh, and he's lost his dog. His puppy. He wasn't worried. Initially, he was not worried about whether he could speak of the flood victims or whatever the hell it was. He would never have been about telling someone of a cow losing a calf because that ain't a speech. That's real. And that's what he gets into without realizing it. So, it hasn't been a deliberate thing, or a performance or anything else. He has just gotten fluked into, unconsciously sucked into, talking about something that he doesn't think, . . . just telling his mother and Jake or somebody about . . . so that's what happened there.

CARRUTHERS: In Jake and the Kid, you explained the need for tall tales, for people as a barrier against the terror of nature, but Jake and the Kid is the tallest of tales, isn't it? The whole novel?

MITCHELL: Not if what you said is there. The fact that people lie or tell tall tales doesn't get me off the hook to cause people to willingly suspend disbelief about what's taking place. I don't think so. I would hope not.

CARRUTHERS: . . . You answered my question. "How did you create using a child narrator?" The illusion that the Kid can handle it all, but he didn't. . . . Jake handles some, Mr. Godfrey handles other areas. . . .

MITCHELL: The Kid is still the narrator. You see, you are coming back to point of view always. . . . It is not a difficult technique to handle, point of view, it concerns writers, young writers, apprenticing writers, a great deal, and gives them a great deal of difficulty and, indeed, when I was learning to write, I was very aware of it. . . . But it is really not a difficult one to handle and using a child is not easy. Now it is very interesting. . . . I'm not all that fond of first person, which is what most of the Jake things are, all of them are, and this other (How I Spent My Summer Holidays) is the only time I've ever used the first person and then because of the nature of what it was.

CARRUTHERS: In Jake and the Kid you didn't really go from the adult to the child because there is no progression of age.

MITCHELL: No. Never. No. This other, How I Spent

My Summer Holidays is the only time ever in anything

I've written that--no that's not true, I just finished a short story that's adult/child voice. You know what's wrong with first person? . . . [Read] C.E.

Montague's Writer's Notes on His Trade. . . . It's a series of Cambridge lectures. . . . He speaks of the

handling of dialogue, all kinds of things. When he

gets to point of view, he mentions first person. . . .

To illustrate it, he mentions Mrs. Harper and Mrs.

Higgins talking to each other over the fence and Mrs.

Higgins: "Hey, you know what she did" and "you'd better believe it, I seen it with me own eyes. I heard every

word of it, I'm telling you, Mrs. Harper." Now, if

somebody says "and you better believe it because I

seen it with me own eyes," that is an advantage of

first person. It makes it more believable "cause I

seen it with me own eyes," but it is a second rate

kind of illusion. It is the illusion of "you may not

believe it but you don't question" that Mrs. Higgins'

saying that "I was there and I seen it," right?

However, to me that was a very limiting point of view,

even though I used it for the Jake stuff, because

what is the nature of the illusion? It's--all it cons

people into believing that a person--not that it is

happening, but that you are getting it second hand

from somebody who was there and saw it happen and that

is not as immediate, that is not as effective, that is

not as good--of being conned into thinking it is really happening and you, the reader, are hearing it and seeing it and observing it. See the distinction? And that may explain why except for the Jake and the Kid stories, and also How I Spent My Summer Holidays, I very seldom used it. I prefer, evidently, that you are there rather than Mrs. Higgins telling you what she seen and telling you over the fence, which is to me the limitation of the first person, among other limitations, especially if you are picking a child [narrator].

Having said all of that, it ain't all that important. It really isn't. It is a nice little technical nit-picking . . . and as evidenced by the fact, my people, my material, it just seemed more natural and more effective to use the child's first person and certainly the first person adult child voices of How I Spent My summer Holidays. Again, it is very interesting how often that unbelievable things are given a persuasion by the use of first person point of view. Robinson Crusoe, that's pretty hard to swallow. It's first person. . . . When you get into historical romances, exotic, other worldly things, one of the ways of making people believe it is Mrs. Harper saying, "I seen it with me own eyes." And it is very interesting how many adventure novels, historical romances and things, and I mention the real

example of that is Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. It's "I--I--I." And yet, I am dealing in Jake and the Kid with not all such hard to believe things. I don't think they are tall tales. They tell tall tales . . . they are actually quite homespun and ordinary, and so evidently I didn't pick first person in order to fool people.

CARRUTHERS: What Ian and I were discussing was that you managed to create a perfectly translucent window through which people can see. I guess it is the over-hearing the Kid and the feeling that you are standing behind him all the time, but you are not.

MITCHELL: Really? That's an interesting observation. I think I know where the answer lies. . . . Art is an illusion of life, and for that reason the writer has to start with life. You see I believe all great fiction is regional. Not in the usual sense of regional, that what a person does will be only within the family or whatever, whether he lives on the prairies or the foothills, or the mountains of the seashore, or Italy, of whatever, but that the illusion lives, is in the world of the many, of smell, taste, touch, sound and emotion. And the writer must explore his or her own unique stored past and must begin with life models. You do not fake it. I couldn't begin to write about a hired man unless I had known hired men.

. . . [He goes on to explain that he spent months

researching court scenes for Daisy Creek.) In other words, I research it. Now research is not a great part, as Mark Twain said, is a very small part of the equipment, but it is still there.

In other words, if I write, either I shall have known lawyers and defendants [or specific character types] in my own past experience, or if I don't I had better goddam well find out and go there and find and put it outside myself and then let it happen, The answer is "life and actuality" and that others are experiencing "life and actuality" and so if you play true to that then they think they are seeing through a clear window when they are actually seeing through another clear wind into their stored past; that's where the magic takes place between the two, you see.

"Life ain't art". . . . and there is a creative leap but the life had to be there first. . . . That sense of actuality, that illusion is to the extent to which, first that the writer writes about what he may have experienced and knows about, though it isn't that because one is life and the other is art and it moves through the creative leap away from there. And then in those, what Virginia Woolf calls her seams, and she is speaking there of the seams when the fabric of actual experience leaves off and you have to research, and you've got to make up for it . . . so again then

deliberate research, which is what most journalists work from and so nonfiction and fiction are not all that different. It is just that the writer of fiction does his or her research, does an inner research in the past within his or herself. You ain't home free because you are doing fiction at all. Otherwise you are not going to con people, you will not persuade them, they will not suspend their disbelief. . . . The thing is that in the fictional character, whether it is Jake and the Kid, the child, the hired man, the isolated rural community, or in anything that I have done, if you do a lawyer, or another instance was a novel of mine, The Vanishing Point, with a faith healing evangelist: I never knew, in fact, an actual live evangelist, but again, I went to the Emmanuel Chapel Free Assembly of God Pentacost from Grey Cup Game Day to Easter, when I blew my cover, and I heard a number of different travelling faith healers and I heard tongues and I saw these guys operating. Now, if a fundamentalist preacher, Jerry Falwell or Billy Graham or something or any Pentacost or Nazarene read that book, they should be quite outraged because they would think it was real. So you not only have to fool ordinary readers, but if you do a lawyer, or a neurosurgeon, or a thing that you don't know about there can't be sharps or flats in it. It has to persuade the lawyer. . . .

If it's effect, and it was Oscar Wilde that said it "life follows art," it reverses it. And then again, in Who Has Seen the Wind, when the still blew up in the Presbyterian church basement, and it was serialized in Lady's Home Journal, and from all over the United States and Canada but mainly the States, there were people wrote in to tell me about the still that blew up in the church in the basement. And again, I did a convocational address at Bishop Granden (sic) High School in Calgary, and the Bishop of Calgary, some 15 years after the book had been published leaned over to me and he said, "I know where you got that still that blew up in the church." And I said, "You do?" And he said "Yeah." But it wasn't Presbyterian it was Baptist. And it wasn't the basement it was the belfry of 4th Street First Baptist Church." And I didn't know what to do and anyway I said "well, I married a Baptist Minister's daughter." And he said "Yeah." And he was satisfied. . . .

That's where it happens. And the name of it is "life" and the actuality that you build on it. Unfortunately, the way it is approached many people study craft, technique, that's the harness and everything. They forget the most important thing, of sitting down and writing, not writing a poem or a play but just whatever floats and let it come out, put it out, and let it declare what it should do.

Acting and writing are the closest of any two arts I can think of and I have an approach with young writers, they call it "free falling," in which they find, find, not to a given destination and but with a vague concept and, again, C.E. Montague touches on this, and he uses a visual artist where the concept directs the marks and then that excites him and makes him change the context and so you get a nice analogy there of what a writer does but it is with stored memory coming back, coming back, again and again and again, and that is where the illusion of reality comes from. Interestingly enough, my approach with young writers, as a teacher, is not a method but it is like method acting and the Stanislowsky and Lee Strasbourg approach to acting.

See, the only distinction is that an actor looks it, moves it, and speaks it. And a playwright writes it. He has more guidelines and it is more collaborative, but it is still the same thing and the fine actors that get the resonance of life into what they do is because they are thinking about somebody. Like when Dustin Hoffman did Ratsy in Midnight Cowboy, and I know Hoffman, and I finally had an opportunity to ask him and he said, "Yeah, when I was a kid there was an old bastard that used to go down, shuffling along," and then in the book . . . he said the description was of this guy's walk, that it was like a baby carriage

with a flat part in one wheel . . . and I remembered an old guy that went down our street. . . . And so, a fine actor asks life to help him too, and that's where you get that life resonance in anything.

CARRUTHERS: What influences would you say that Hemingway, Joyce or that whole Imagist theory had on your writing?

MITCHELL: None at all. . . . And I'll tell you why. . . . The extent to which other writers . . . the influence of other writers, upon other writers is not so great as scholars and critics think it is. Not much greater than it is on readers who are not writers. Our reading does change all of us for good or bad so what a writer reads must eventually have an effect upon what he writes. I can, however, recall conscious recognitions and understandings of technique and craft which perhaps might have been important to my writing. I think of reading the Russian writers--Turgenev, Tolstoy, Chekov--and being quite excited, perhaps at the time wondering, "How in the hell did they do that?" I certainly owe Virginia Woolf for calling my attention to the necessary inner dimension of the envelope of consciousness and to the importance of stinging all the readers' senses: the connotative word that will make him smell or feel or touch or taste or see. It doesn't have that much effect, not all that much more effect, and it was not Joyce that

called my attention to the inner dimension at all.

It was Virginia Woolf, who, incidentally . . . it was Virginia Woolf who still did it first and better than Joyce did. Joyce carried it to an excess, I think.

I think Joyce is highly over-rated. What other writer did you mention?

CARRUTHERS: Hemingway.

MITCHELL: Hemingway. Now in my generation, there were all kinds of pseudo-Hemingways and they all imitated Hemingway. Hemingway bothered me because it was the other end of it. You get no inner dimension with Hemingway, so much so that Wyndham Lewis hurt Hemingway dreadfully when he said "Hemingway subscribes to the 'dumb oxen theory' of explaining human behavior." You just get what they do, the muscles, the macho, and everything else. And also Hemingway's style of the short periodic sentence which a mentor of mine, Salter, pointed out was the "string and fish hook style" of a kid taking out a piece of string and there's a hook on the end of it, and that's caught onto a key chain, and that's caught on to an elastic, and on and on, and when you look at Hemingway, and Salter showed me a quotation, . . . , something about the sea, that was the last word, and the waves of the sea on the beach. The beach was covered with tourists who were walking along by the hotels. The hotels-- and that's the Hemingway "fish-hook and string style."

It's a very limited thing. And I was not, even as a reader, moved by Hemingway. On the other hand, Mark Twain is another thing. And through reading him, I guess I came to an awareness that I was also a "new world person." Steinbeck, Katherine Mansfield, Hardy, Conrad and, but that's a pretty long-winded answer to your question. . . .

CARRUTHERS: I was just trying to look at it, well in Jake and the Kid it is kind of a "don't tell them, show them" style. It is present in that glass thing, that's the only way I was looking at the Imagists, that they had that kind of theory too--don't talk about it, do it. . . . In all of the 13 stories, I checked them against the MacLean's versions and you only changed two very short phrases in all of them.

MITCHELL: I didn't really have too much to do with that. . . . Kildare Dobbs was at MacMillans and he did all the editing and everything. . . .

My daughter-in-law is doing a paper in this area but with Who Has Seen the Wind, and, I didn't know it,-- the Bantam Seal versions and some later editions of Who Has See the Wind are all based on the American edition, and at that time, you see, it was Atlantic Little Brown that brought it out, really the arrangement was first through them, though they came out almost simultaneously. And I remember John Gray at MacMillan's pointed out to me, I didn't know this. . . .

I didn't know that all subsequent editions, after the first edition are 40 pages shorter which was for crass commercial reasons to bring it in at 300 instead of 340 pages, and paper and print and everything else. It made it possible for them to lower the retail price of the book. I didn't know that. . . . Things were different then. It was just not usual--it wasn't, a lapse or failure to do something that they should have been doing, it was just not usual, the editing and everything. Now so much has changed. In my last two or three books, with Hugh Canaan and Doug Gibson at MacMillan's, I was right in on the thing. Doug would be sending me down page proofs to show me the type of print they would be using. Especially in How I Spent My Summer Holidays, in which there were, when you got the old voice and a kind of shift from now to the past, he wanted me to see the print he had decided for the old voice and the use of italics and all kinds of design things. . . . Anyway, I was called in right in the beginning. . . .

Publishers more often now get in touch--well, also contradictorily, they don't, with a certain type of book. I never heard of such a thing, of people sending in a précis and an outline and several chapters and everything. They never did that, and no publisher does that with me because I am not interested in having people's opinions during the creative process of what

will be done,--just do it, send it in and they like it or they won't. And then you get into the marvelous relationship between an editor and a writer and if it's somebody who's good and not a poacher and you are not a poacher, and moving into their territory, it's, to mix a metaphor, it makes a lovely marriage, and the same relationship as a playwright with a director. . . . Had I been involved as I would be now, you would have seen many changes.

I remember Sylvia Fraser--I'm the Head of the Writing Division at Banff--and about two weeks into the thing in the seminar, one of the writers, a woman said, "Jesus, when do you know when you're done and you're finished and it's completed? When?" Because in two weeks you suddenly realize, "Jeez, it is more complicated than I realized, there are false starts, there are redrafts. . . ." And Sylvia said something very interesting. She said you never finish anything, you simply abandon it. And that is so true. Except that you never do look back. But over the years of doing film, the short story, novel, radio drama versions. My stage play Back to Beulah about three mad women was done first as a film for television, then I did it as a stage version, and now Eric Till and I are doing a feature film of it. So I have come back at that thing about five bloody times, and oh, Jesus, how it has continued to grow though the other

thing had been a finished and satisfactory . . . so that had I been involved with the Jake and the Kid stories you probably would have seen a lot of changes, both taking away and adding to, you see. 'Cause it's an on-going continuing process but you don't look back.

CARRUTHERS: . . . How long was Jake and the Kid in the first draft? The chapters before you sent them to MacLean's?

MITCHELL: Well, Jake and the Kid is different from anything I ever wrote. They were done first as short stories with the same principals and people, more or less, and new people as each new short story happened,-- so that what you see were short stories written probably over a period, altogether over a period of at least 10 years, though they weren't all written in a 10 year span. And very early in my writing, because, Jesus, 20 years at least since I worked within the short story medium though I have gone back to it in this past summer and done a couple. So, they were written over a very long time span. . . .

CARRUTHERS: Was there a great difference between the radio dramas and the short stories? . . .

MITCHELL: The radio dramas were erected upon the foundation of the short stories. 1950, I think, that Harry Boyle came to me and said, why don't you try and do them. I used them in the adaptation and they

are quite different because it is a different sort of medium. . . . You do have the actual voices and much more of it is conducted, virtually all of it, though I did use the child as a narrator with Morris's music behind it for the atmosphere, for the emotional staining, and we broke the rules of radio drama which was quite a few passages of narrative with the Kid saying "Hey, Jake's a great guy, but Old Man Gatenby and Pete Botten he stinks" and on like this and then using it for tie bridges and everything else. The reason for it is not, you see, it is difficult to do a drama and only carry it on in dialogue. So, many people at that time thought Mitchell is typical of a prose writer who feels it necessary to use a narrator because he can't translate it into dramatic form and that wasn't it at all. It was because of the deficiency of drama where you only had the outer and [could only] hear the dialogue, and what about the thoughts? So what I did was to use the narration dimension in order to tell that the Kid was thinking about something. And then when I could get Morris to do music . . . under it, that would add the emotional flavour of apprehension or delight or sadness or whatever he felt. . . .

CARRUTHERS: Did you see the point in Jake and the Kid only after it was completed?

MITCHELL: . . . Let's put it this way: a writer is

very often asked, "Do you blueprint a novel, or a book or whatever and plan it all out and then do drafts and drafts and drafts?" You don't. And when you read C.E. Montague and his analogy to a visual artist's painting he much better describes the growth process. You start with a vague concept. It's--you know whose it is, you know where it is, you probably know the universal truth about pride or snobbery or greed or avarice or generosity or whatever it is you want to be at the heart of what you do. Now this is very big. Then you find your people, as I have earlier described. They are unreal eventually, but you believe in them, and you can't have them do or say something for plot or narrative purposes. Now, about an earlier plan: they determine to a certain extent how they will respond in a human relationship. So the form grows and I have used the analogy it's as though you have a seed. . . . "I gotta plant these bloody radishes. Jesus, that's no radish, it's a cabbage. At least I think it's a cabbage. No it isn't. Jesus, it's a vine. It's a watermelon. No, it's sweet peas. No, it's a bloody tree." Now, implicit in the original concept that you don't know until you work at it and keep coming back at it and everything, it's a growth--teleological--I think that's the fine sounding word for it: that the end determines the cause, sort of thing. It's not logical,

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the teleological principle. But implicit in that seed was what it would inevitably become even though you didn't know it. So I think this really answers your question about, "Do you know the point afterwards?" It's inevitable that it will, if it's successful. . . . You don't blueprint it right at the beginning and then cover it over. . . . the genesis of one novel and as a matter of fact it's my last one since Daisy Creek is based on a thing I heard about with a grizzly bear back in 1952. I returned to it again and again and again. I'm telling you, there ain't instant genius. It's time, time, time.

CARRUTHERS: I have lists, of course, of your beautiful images, but some other writers can make nice images too. So I looked--was it a break in the rule? No, it's not a break in the rule. It is just you finding the exact way to say something. I have one example I just grabbed . . . : "beardy ol' bulls." It describes something fierce just the same, but the threat is taken off. It's a kid [saying it] and then when you said "soapy throw-out," I think of that often. I think there is no other way to say that anymore, once you have heard Mitchell say it, there is no other way to say it.

MITCHELL: Well, it isn't "Mitchell" saying it. It is either Jake or the Kid. See, there are the limitations. Not just a child, but of somebody who is not

extremely intellectual, then you rule out the use of more precise intellectual words to communicate your meaning so you've got to work in argot you see. But, at the same time, great faith, there is a natural wisdom and a natural wit that when Jake is speaking of racism for instance but they're talking about horses, and he says, it don't matter whether it is a pinto or a paint or a shaganappy or whatever, the colour of the horse don't matter a damn, it's whether he can pull, or whether he can hang in there or whatever he does, is another way of saying what a more learned person would be saying speaking to the matter of equal rights amendments or something else, you see.

CARRUTHERS: I didn't come across a lot of similes, and I wondered. . . .

MITCHELL: Now, come on, you did come across a lot of similes. But you are not recognizing them as similes or metaphors. Jake is a great handler of simile and metaphor. When somebody says, "That's enough to give a gopher the heartburn," now, incidentally, the real phrase is not "to give the gopher the heartburn," the life phrase, but in the context, decades ago, the real phrase, is "that's enough to give a gopher's ass the heartburn." That's connotative and connotative is covered simile or metaphor. When somebody says "if she was to drown,"--she's a stubborn woman--"if she was to drown you'd have to search for her body

"upstream," that's connotation and simile and metaphor, but it's homespun. . . . And connotation is one of the last things I look for when I am writing as part of the later process and it happens during the rest of it too. . . . in fact, I disagree with you. I use them a great deal.

CARRUTHERS: Yes, but not with "like" or "as".

MITCHELL: That doesn't change it from being simile or metaphor. The thing is a simile because it uses "like" or a metaphor because it doesn't use "like", that's really irrelevant to whether it is metaphor or simile.

CARRUTHERS: Yes, but you don't say a thing is "like", you say it is.

MITCHELL: Because in fact metaphor is much more direct, and much more effective than "like" . . .

CARRUTHERS: That was what I was getting at. You use the metaphor because it is more direct. You don't say it is like something you say it is.

MITCHELL: I use "like" a lot too, but it is not a deliberate thing. It is what is more effective. . . .

CARRUTHERS: Although each story was ~~was~~ written separately, when you put them together in the novel very little was changed. There is a great deal of repetition in each story. Jake is introduced and the mother, and the Kid, and Miss Henschbaw . . .

MITCHELL: . . . Because they were done as short stories.

CARRUTHERS: Well, in the novel, they come across to me as a refrain.

MITCHELL: Don't forget this is also character building. . . . I am very cautious about it. I don't know how many times writers I have known have heard me say "life ain't art." . . . They are repeating [individuals]: not just Repeat Golightly, but also Jake and the Kid. And it is part of the style. Again, I am not trying to justify it, but it is so that they are very repeating individuals, these people that I am writing about. Including myself. I mean right now, I get, "Yeah, you told me that."-- It's supposed to be limited to aging. In fact, it is a very common rural thing. I have run across it in other people's writings again and again and it's universal: Eudora Welty or Robert Drake or Elizabeth Spence who is also a protege of Eudora Welty's. It is also a very southern characteristic, that when the family gathers on occasions and everything, you've got the same people telling the same bloody stories over and over again about the time the pigs got loose and ate my little brother, or whatever the hell it is.

CARRUTHERS: The repetition that is in the speech that he gives about the refugees, when you read the straight linguistics books on "how do you give a speech", it says you must repeat.

MITCHELL: Oh, that's "You Gotta Teeter," isn't it?

CARRUTHERS: Yes, well, that speech, I could show you how it fits into the linguistic book "here is how you are supposed to give a speech" and pick up "You Gotta Teeter" and it is right out of the book.

MITCHELL: Really?

CARRUTHERS: Yes. This is what I am getting at.

MITCHELL: Do you want to know the genesis of that?

. . . My grandfather came over at the time of the potato famine from near Belfast with two brothers.

In the eulogy that the minister gave at his funeral, he said his readings from the poets charmed everyone.

So my grandpa was a ham. . . . He [Mitchell's father] was what was called an elocutionist at the turn of the century, inherited I guess, from my grandpa. . . .

And so, when we ended up in Florida and my father died when I was five, my mother's bound and determined:

"Billy? He looks ham to me and he's a smart ass performer." So she enrolled me in Madame Wilkinson's School of Dance, Drama, Music and Elocution. I didn't get it out of a book; I got it from [Miss Wilkinson]

. . . she told me these things. Now, that was my life model, right? However, I am going to impute this to Jake. Now Jake has seen politicians and the dreadful ones, William Lyon MacKenzie King and the rest of them, how they hook their hands in here and how they got to teeter. You see, and so out of life . . . and there is another instance "art follows life", [sic]

that's very interesting and you say it comes out of a book. Mine didn't come out of a book. it came from Miss whatever the hell her name was telling me how to.

CARRUTHERS: Well, I had said [to colleagues at Carleton University that] he [Mitchell] . . . doesn't tell you how to write and give a speech and say it he shows you how to do it. . . . It has a speech in it. in Repeat Golightly [as in linguistics books it can be seen that] if you repeat too much you'll lose credibility . . . Repeat Golightly is the only one Jake brushes off and doesn't take seriously, he says "yeah" "yeah" "yeah" "uhuh, uhuh" . . . Anybody else he listens to except Repeat Golightly.

MITCHELL: I hadn't realized that.

CARRUTHERS: When Matthews is trying to win the girl, there's another book out on if you can't hold your place in a conversation you'll never get anywhere . . . you've got to learn space-holding and don't let anybody take your place. Well, Matthews can't do it. And so he loses to the jerk, for a while, but then finally, he wins when he gets mad enough. But that's right out of the text book. . . .

MITCHELL: I hadn't realized that. Well, "life follows art", Kid! . . . Incidentally, the barber, Repeat Golightly, is another instance of life following art. Initially, I knew . . . [a ranch foreman] a guy named

Charlie Glass, who always repeated himself. And I'd be riding with him and he'd say, "That's Bruin Creek, Billy. I say, that's Bruin Creek." You wanna get bears, you go up Bruin Creek, because Bruin means bear y'know, and if you want bears or bruins, you go up Bruin Creek. I say go on up Bruin Creek if you're after bear. But of course, you don't hunt bear, do you Billy? But if you did hunt bear, go up Bruin Creek, if you want bear, because that's where the bears are." That's Charlie Glass, a ranch foreman. Later, when this barber began to emerge and everything [snap of fingers] . . . and then of course the nickname Repeat Golightly. And when I was fiction editor of MacLean's for three years, and I'd written these short stories and they had appeared before I went down there and a guy where we lived said, "You know a barber, eh?" and I said "No." And he said, "Well, Christ, he's down on James Street, there . . . and by God, you had to have been there if it was only once because he was always repeating himself." And I couldn't shake him on that. And I've had an awful lot of people say, you know such and such a guy--a barber and a barber! Life follows art. And then you come right back to the first thing when you were speaking of the "see through window" of the answer, you can't take credit for it really. Except that you plagiarize life, but then you take a creative leap and you end

up with a totally fictional character. I never did know a bloody barber who repeated himself. . . . The genesis of it was a ranch foreman talking about Bruin Creek. I guess there would be many instances of that in any writer's work. And this can become embarrassing. It has been extremely embarrassing and upsetting (not upsetting because she can take it) for Alice Munro. Somebody said, "how can you hold up your Aunt Elizabeth to ridicule and contempt and blame?" . . . She hadn't talked about her Aunt Lizzie, and I heard her giving an interview on this and the relationship between life and art which is a difficult one to explain to other people, and evidently, it hung on a crystal glass elephant that her Aunt Elizabeth had. And then she took this less than commendable character, woman, who did have such a glass elephant. Well, then people make the whole leap. And I'm not knocking it because it's that fragile a link that makes them believe it's a real person, you see, because they're recognizing the glass elephant that did belong to Aunt Lizzie, therefore she's making fun of Aunt Lizzie. How could you do that to your cousin Shirley? . . . Just because Shirley had a cast in one eye, and this fictional character had a cast in one eye. But people do it all the time. All the time.

CARRUTHERS: I just thought that . . . using the repetition makes it like a refrain. I keep going

over to the idea that it's so tight, it seems close to a poem.

MITCHELL: That's another thing . . . Are you familiar with E.M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel, at all?

That's another good book that may be of use to you.

In it he speaks of flat and round characters and speaks, as a matter of fact, this is a very "in" book and most people in University probably are familiar with it and misinterpret it and if they are interested in writing they say go and sin no more I'll never write another flat character. That's where a character is a name and an eccentricity and the guy who repeats himself is that kind of thing and that's all you get of him. . . . Dickens has many, many of these what Forster refers to as flat rather than rounded characters, characters who have contradictory qualities. But he points out, Forster does, that they are absolutely necessary, otherwise the bloody novel would be 5000 pages long, instead of the length of time it is. And that in actual life you see people and you are so little involved with them you may just see them on a bus or on a street corner or you see them last year the last time and that and that one salient characteristic is all you know about them. Well, that's life-like. . . . [Phone call interrupted the interview.]

[Questioned about his use of Canadianisms]

MITCHELL: . . . What bothers me is "Canadianism" and

especially since I'm doing this thing and addressing this business [that] culture and art really know no boundaries and this is a tricky thing in what I'm doing, in that the use of the word "Canadianism"--and it goes back to my original statement that all fine literature is quite regional. There's no way. You couldn't get much more regional than Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Set or much more regional than Joyce and the interior of his consciousness. That's really regional. . . .

CARRUTHERS: Well, what I was going on about is the use of Avis' dictionary and his specific definition of "Canadianisms"--words that were only used in Canada in one specific way, in which he uses you a lot and Jake and the Kid. Did you go through that? . . . Did you know what extensive use he made of your Jake and the Kid?

MITCHELL: No, no I don't know. . . . I think what I expressed is that I don't take seriously the abstract of "Canadianism." If we spoke of prairie or foothills, and then only in an artistic sense but not in the sense they mean, which is the political sense. And it's strange how many of these things you bring up. I have explosion of recognition here because of what I'm involved in here and the very tricky thing I have to deal with especially with talk of free trade, and the idea of foreign ownership of things and the effect

upon the culture but it is so chauvinistic and so utterly irrelevant to the art experience that the things that these people at the Canadian/U.S. relationships are thinking of and what this guy is just talking about had no bearing whatever on the piece of art, except insofar as they reached . . . the world of the many. . . . What I recoil from is the idea of the bloody Maple Leaf stamped on a piece of Canadian writing. . . . What might surprise him [Avis], is that my first publication was not in Canada. In spite of the "Canadianisms" he speaks of in the political sense, my first publisher was Atlantic Monthly. And then Atlantic Monthly Little Brown for the novel. The Jake and the Kid you're speaking of ran also on the BBC, South African network, the Australian network. And I guess I'm a little touchy about these artificial political divisions in the field of art on whether a thing is Canadian or not. I think it's a most inartistic approach to art, and I'm a great believer in free trade of the arts and no political or societal protectionism justifying something because [finger snap] Maple Leaf. . . .

CARRUTHERS: He [Avis] uses your words or your phrases from Jake and the Kid . . . as definitions, he uses them to back up his statement: "This is a Canadianism," W.O. Mitchell used it first. And my point was, there are so many of them, sometimes as many as 10 per page,

and does that give some colouring, some tone?

MITCHELL: Hope not. . . .

CARRUTHERS: . . . Well, what I was getting at here and my other point that you could use Jake and the Kid as a handbook to teach ESL to kids that didn't know Canada because

MITCHELL: You're right on there, because I just did a benefit for 25th Street Theatre in Saskatoon last week and the woman who thanked me afterwards came from East Germany, and went through horror and, I think she was 10 or something when she came back over, and she said she had wanted to know the country and she read Canadian books and things and wasn't getting anywhere and then she started to listen to Jake and the Kid on the radio. She said, "That, for some strange reason, I could understand." So you must be dead on there in some way.

CARRUTHERS: Well, as I say there are up to as many as 10 per page, what he [Avis] considers "Canadianisms."

MITCHELL: And I prefer to think of them as "short-grass culturisms." And that he would find the same thing in Wyoming, in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas because that short grass culture that runs down the whole continent, is no respecter of that horizontal boundary. I'm going to tell them, whoever drew that boundary made a mistake. It shouldn't have gone horizontally, it should have

gone up and down. And separated East and West properly, but anyway, don't let me spoil your chapter. Go on.

. . . and incidentally, it doesn't really matter what I figure, what his observation is is fine except, where I differ is, I don't like couching it in the terms of "Canadianism" because I remember, I was Writer-In-Residence in an Italian University last winter, in Turino in Northern Italy, and then at a conference where I took great delight, in that context, of saying (and I knew they'd understand), saying that there's no such thing as an Italian literature. As a matter of fact (and this was the first time I'd been in Italy). . . . I even questioned the existence of an Italy. I think there are precisely 13-17 different areas and cultures and family groups that go back at least to the Renaissance and that I question even the concept of Italy. And they knew what I was talking about. And I said there isn't any Italian literature. There's no Irish literature. There's no English literature. There's no Canadian or American literature. There's literature. So. That's where I was coming from. . . .

CARBUTHERS: I found that in reading Jake and the Kid you didn't use the words that made people run for the dictionary.

MITCHELL: That's because of the kind of people who are talking. But I assure you, they sure as hell run

for the dictionary when they read How I Spent My Summer Holidays and certainly for the one set within a fictional university because that's the kind of people I'm talking about. . . . it's very simple. It's got nothing to do with me as a writer in the function and the persona of a writer so much as it is within the kind of people it is about and also explains why that German lady had no problem and that actually she came to understand Canadians through years of Jake and the Kid and use of the language.

CARRUTHERS: . . . I say it doesn't chase people to the dictionary, but your definitions, you give the definition: if you mention "clod-buster" somewhere within that paragraph you explain what "clod-buster" means.

MITCHELL: Oh, yes, yes. And it's got to be done with sleight of hand and without seeming to do it because in real life these people would not be explaining that that's what is. Ok. Good point.

CARRUTHERS: Well, that is what I am saying, the marvelous sleight of hand of W.O. Mitchell. I am saying that you give us a very graphic dictionary, almost an encyclopedia, without anybody noticing it.

MITCHELL: Well, just change it from "Canadian" to "prairie" or whatever you want, or region, then I'm with you. . . and because the very use of words in that fashion enables it to contradict being Canadian

and to transcend the borders of time and of space so that you can speak not to your own little friends, relatives, blood relatives and family, but also outside.

CARRUTHERS: It allows an outsider to understand; you're inviting an outsider to become part of it. . . .

MITCHELL: That's why you're dead on that. . . .

CARRUTHERS: He [Avis] has several [instances] where he uses only Jake and the Kid as his reference, that's his only reference . . . that's the end of it or at least one out of three. "Rain," when you say Jake is going to "rain" he has that as his only reference and he has "rain" down as a "Canadianism" not used anywhere else in that particular context. Some are obvious like "quarter section". . . . I have here 126 of what we will call "prairie-isms" rather than "Canadianisms."

MITCHELL: I think I've helped you here. I think that rather than "Canadianism" though he refers to it, the more regional, geographic location on the earth's skin and the way in which those people talk, in such a way that it will transcend that, and appeal to other people, and then your second language, second nationality, second culture thing is valid.

CARRUTHERS: So, you weren't aware of those particular words at the time, as being "Canadianisms/prairie-isms?"

MITCHELL: No. No.

CARRUTHERS: Did you know that Wing's Cafe [Avis] has

it in there as a Canadian phenomenon, the "Chinese Cafe?"

MITCHELL: But it isn't. It also happens to be American, New Zealand and Australian because the Chinese travelled all over. . . .

CARRUTHERS: Did you ever consider Jake and the Kid as a children's novel?

MITCHELL: No. . . . Now, again that's another interesting thing. What other novel might I consider a children's novel--Who Has Seen the Wind?

CARRUTHERS: I don't think so.

MITCHELL: Because in foreign rights, there was a German publisher that was going to bring it out and I called it off because they insisted they were going to publish it in German as "juvenile." I would feel the same way about Jake and the Kid. I know it speaks and means a great deal to young people: it was not written as such. I don't like these divisions and I labour, maybe it's under a misunderstanding; I think older people are interested in things that involve people who are younger than they are . . . I'd have been up the creek if only kids listened to Jake and the Kid. It had a greater listening audience in the States than it had in Canada, even then, along the border and this was true of many CBC things and still is true today. Evidently, CBC is doing something right.

CARRUTHERS: I had just mentioned in my writing that you touched all five senses which we went over before

MITCHELL: Touched?

CARRUTHERS: . . . all the five senses. . . .

MITCHELL: You're dead on. I yap about this with writers all the time, that you must provoke smell, sight, sound, taste. . . . These stories do not take place all at the time of the Second great War.

"Jubilee Citizen"--Jubilee Year was 1967. War Ended in '45. "The Princess and the Wild Ones" took place later.

CARRUTHERS: Well, I think we did it.

MITCHELL: Well, thank you very much. And I mean that. I mean thank you very much because anybody willing to fly all the way down from Ottawa and back. that's very flattering.

CARRUTHERS: It's kind of a treat for me.

MITCHELL: And indeed, your letter was quite engaging, and nice.

APPENDIX B

CANADIANISMS

Gleaned from Jake and the Kid

as Defined by

The Dictionary of Canadianismson Historical Principles

<u>A</u>	DC	J&K
acre	3	147
<u>B</u>		
back forty	22	105
bald headed prairie	26	126
bee	45	21
beer parlour	45	160
below	46	35
binder twine	49	95
bison	51	24
blackstrap	53	100
blizzard	56	33
blow dirt	57	162
bluff	60	3
bobsleigh	62	41
border	69	22
buckboard	84	93
buckskin	84	107
buffaloes	85	65
buffalo beans	86	171

<u>B</u> (Cont'd)	DC	J&K
buffalo jumping pound	87	66
<u>C</u>		
caboose	103	157
Canada	110	6
Canada honker	112	184
caragana	126	126
C.C.F.	138	167
cents	139	163
chinook	146	3
clod-busting	155	98
clout	155	67
coal oil	156	121
combine	161	64
Community Hall	163	85
consolidated school	168	91
corral	173	164
correction line	174	2
coulee	175	3
councillors	176	166
coyote	182	74
crick	186	3
crocus	187	65
crow-hopping	188	126
curling	191	7

<u>D</u>	DC	J&K
democrat	202	9
dime	207	64
district	208	18
dollar	214	64
Dominion Day	215	146
down east	218	28
<u>F</u>		
fall	246	172
fallow	247	127
federal member	252	180
Penian	253	88
field pitchers	255	146
four-bits	272	134
<u>G</u>		
game warden	290	184
gold-eye	297	180
gopher	299	44
grain elevator	301	138
grizzly	310	178
<u>H</u>		
habitant	319	164
half-section	322	90
haywire	329	4
hockey	338	176
hockey stick	338	31

<u>H</u> (Cont'd)	DC	J&K
Hudson's Bay Catalogue	351	154
<u>I</u>		
Indian paint brush	379	171
<u>J</u>		
jumping pound	398	72
jack (rabbit)	389	33
<u>L</u>		
Liberal	426	133
lumberjack	450	100
lumberyard	452	134
<u>M</u>		
Maple Leaf	463	2
meadow lark	470	61
mocassin	480	67
molasses	482	100
mounties	492	72
municipal	497	44
<u>N</u>		
nickel	510	164
North Shore	516	2
Northwest	516	178
<u>O</u>		
O Canada	351	154
oats	523	163

<u>P</u>	DC	J&K
parliament (federal)	252	9
parliament (provincial)	594	9
peace pipe	552	65
pemmican	554	66
ound	583	67
Prairie	585	4
prairie chicken	586	137
prairie-itch.	587	105
province	593	174
provincial	594	166
<u>Q</u>		
quarter	599	44
quarter section	672	17
<u>R</u>		
rain	609	151
reserve	627	160
rink	633	172
root house	641	28
run-off	648	103
<u>S</u>		
Saskatchewan	658	182
Saskatoon berry	659	32
school board	663	84
Senate	674	177
shaganappi	680	2

S (Cont'd)

	DC	J&K
sheepherder.	686	78
shoe-packs	689	37
skunk	707	4
sleigh	712	86
slew	714	17
slough	716	3
sod-buster	731	138
spikers	738	146
stampede	747	68
stoneboat	753	21
stook	754	7
stubble-jumper	759	138
stumping powder	760	103

T

taffy	772	64
teepee	776	67
toque	792	29
town council	795	181
trapline	805	79
tumbleweed	814	102

W

windbreak	859	3
Winnipeg couch	860	113
Winnipeg gold-eye	860	162
wolf-willow	866	65

2
END

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FIN