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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine some elements of an agricultural myth in several mid- to late-twentieth-century texts of the Canadian prairie. One of these elements of the agricultural myth is the figure of the farmer and the way it functions as a mediator between nature and our perception of it. I also trace the farmer's domination over, yet subservience to, the land through agriculture and how literature represents that contradiction. The third strand considers the evolution of agriculture to agribusiness. And finally, I trace how all of these ideas are manifested in the agrarian site--the house, barn, field, and garden--and the various movements between and among them. I offer a socially-oriented counterpoint to previous works that have been, on the whole, psychological and thematic, such as Henry Kreisel's and Laurence Ricou's studies. As well, I draw on Robert Thacker's "great prairie fact" and Dick Harrison's focus on writing as a cultural phenomenon in order to position an agricultural myth. My main texts, which I examine in detail, cover an array of genres: Sinclair Ross's *The Lamp at Noon and Other Stories*, W. O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*, Robert Kroetsch's "Seed Catalogue," and 25th Street Theatre's *Paper Wheat*.