CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Tracing the trajectory of Davies’s works, this dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on Davies’ life and career. The chapter examines various formative influences. Review of critical literature indicates many-sided genius of Davies. The sub topics under purview are the novelistic vision of Davies, rationale and significance of the study, objectives of the study, Hypothesis, scope and limitations and methodology. One of the formative influences on Davies is the study of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud. The theories of Jung have profoundly influenced his work. The collective unconscious, various types of archetypes and myths, and religion and legends can be examined while critically examining his novels. Further, it is to be noted that The Salterton Trilogy does not bear out archetypal patterns; only Freudian elements could be noticed in a novel like Leaven of Malice. In the first trilogy, Davies has not seriously focused on the use of mythic themes, symbols and archetypal patterns to structure the narrative and illuminate the development of the characters.

The Second chapter deals with the theoretical framework adopted for the subsequent analysis of the novels. It begins with a study of various psychologists and theoreticians such as Sigmund Freud, Carl G. Jung and
Erikson. The origin, meaning and types of archetypes have been noted. The principles and the ideas of Jung have been carefully examined. The concept of the archetype relies on the works of three scholars, Jung, Campbell and Frye. Jung is the pioneer in the field of psychology who focused on the psychoanalytic features of archetypes. Archetypes are collective, they are held in common by a social group. Archetypes appear simple on the surface, but they are complex in nature. In the concluding part, limitations of the study of archetypes have been noted down.

The third chapter focuses on *Deptford Trilogy*, consisting of *Fifth Business*, *The Manticore* and *World of Wonders*. *Fifth Business* chronicles 60 years in the life of Dunstan Ramsay, an assistant headmaster at a Canadian school. Davies weaves into the story many religious and psychological themes. It is followed by another Deptford novel, *The Manticore*. Set amongst the Canadian upper classes, the novel deals with David Staunton, an alcoholic attorney, on a spiritual odyssey of self-discovery. The third novel in Deptford trilogy was *World of Wonders*. In two successive novels, *The Manticore* and *World of Wonders* Davies continues to explore the implications of this single moment, which forces a variety of characters to confront their own compound of good and evil.
The fourth chapter is all about *The Cornish Trilogy*, consisting of *The Rebel Angels, What’s Bred in the Bone* and *The Lyre of Orpheus*. The trilogy revolves around the biography of Francis Cornish. The trilogy deals with the upper class of Canadian life. University life strongly influenced Davies and he decided to write a novel in which it would function as setting and theme. He viewed it as one of the great institutions of Western civilization. This first university novel, *The Rebel Angels* deals with several faculty and staff of the fictional College of St. John and Holy Ghost. The scholars are invited to participate in interdisciplinary discussions and High Table dinners. The novel touches on a number of themes, among them gipsies, tarot divination, violin repair, Jungian psychology, Hermetic alchemy and scatology.

As with the previous trilogy, issues fundamental to Davies such as individuation, myth, knowledge, the collective unconscious and artistic creation were of supreme importance. *What’s Bred in the Bone* tells the life story of Francis Cornish from a variety of posthumous perspectives. The biography begins, however, two generations before Cornish’s actual birth, thus demonstrating the truth of the proverb that ‘what is bred in the bone will be borne out in the flesh’. *The Lyre of Orpheus* is the last of the three connected novels of *The Cornish Trilogy*. The executors of the will of Francis Cornish find themselves at the head of the “Cornish Foundation.” The executors, Simon Darcourt, Arthur Cornish, and Maria
Cornish, are called upon to decide what projects deserve funding. They decide that a hitherto-unfinished opera by E.T.A. Hoffmann will be staged at Stratford, Ontario; to this end, they hire a brilliant young composition student, Hulda Schnakenburg, to complete the opera, while Darcourt is charged with the completion of the libretto, which James Planche had attempted to write. Davies touches upon various subjects such as life and art, homosexual relationships, the significance of music, the Arthurian legend in terms of modern life.

The concluding chapter takes into account the researcher’s observations based on the study of the three trilogies, namely, The Salterton Trilogy, The Deptford Trilogy, and The Cornish Trilogy. Davies’s three novel trilogies deal with life in fictional Ontario villages. The first trilogy is a satiric romance that explores Canadian life and culture. The second is a richly plotted study of three individuals’ journeys to self-discovery that mingles humour, mystery, magic, grotesqueries, and the Jungian theory of archetypes. The third explores the life and influence of Francis Cornish. In each novel of the trilogy, Davies looks at how underlying medieval patterns surface in modern lives.

Davies is a regionalist who conveys Canadian identity through developing fictional microcosm. Davies, Margaret Lawrence and Alice Munro write in the tradition of novelists such as Walter Scott, Thomas
Hardy and William Faulkner who created their fictional kingdoms of Waverley, Wessex and Yoknapatawpha County. Laurence, Davies, and Munro each create a fictional microcosm in Manawaka, Deptford, and Jubilee based on their actual hometowns of Neepawa, Manitoba, and Thamesville and Wingham, Ontario, respectively that encapsulates in miniature what they see as defining features of a typical Canadian community.

Davies conveys the social stratifications of his microcosm through a delineation of his town’s religious and social denominations. Each of Davies’s trilogies marked a new stage in his description of Canadian society. In his several interviews, he has explicitly stated that his novels are the explorations of passionate under life of the Canadian people. Davies is a writer who wants to describe contemporary experiences in which people discover the meaning of their lives by discovering the ways those lives conform to ancient patterns. Davies portrays “real life” and “the life of legends and myth” (Thompson 7). In his interview with Gordon Roper, Davies says that “life has a strong mythic and fairy tale quality. And people do not recognize that they are living out myths, mythic patterns, or archetypal situations. It all seems new to them. It is new to you when you are living it” (Roper 34). A great deal of work is done by Roman Catholic saints and miracles, Jungian archetypes and primitive bear-worshippers. Davies used mythic themes, symbols and
patterns. He employed mythic systems, mythic motifs, and personification of mythic figures. In each volume of the trilogies, Davies uses diverse ways of myth. Myth is used to illuminate the development of each character and to structure the evolution of the plot. Myth was so abundantly used that the readers, the critics and the colleagues of Davies began to question about the implication of myth. Gordon Roper, the colleague of Davies, was one of the questioners who desired to know the implication of the myth. Davies responds to him:

. . . when I talk about myth I really mean patterns, archetypes and very often when people talk about myths they only mean classic myths. . . . but the patterns you discover in fairy tales, and fairy tale is our own sort of people, Celtic, Tontonic, northern people. . . . (50)

Another device Davies used to illustrate the characters is the use of archetypes. In his interview with Elisabeth Sifton, Davies admits the influence of Freud and Jung. Of Jung, Davies says:

. . . his disposition to regard myth and legend as feeding life and springing from life, as well as being a constant source of reference and refreshment in the living of life, seemed to me to be wonderfully enriching. I became a great devotee of Jung without ever rejecting or pooh-poohing Sigmund Freud, who is one of the great liberators of the human mind. (Sifton 33)
Davies was one of the very few authors who really understood what Jung was talking about. In the 1950s when he first began to read Jung, he saw him primarily as a professor of insights that might assist his ongoing voyage of self-discovery. That Davies has been considerably influenced by the theories and ideas of Carl Jung is evident in the mystical, magical and mythical themes, which pervade his work. Characters are clear examples of Jungian archetypes and events demonstrate Jung’s idea of synchronicity. Individuation is another important idea of Jung. By emphasizing the importance of the individuation of the human psyche, Davies’ painting *The Marriage at Cana* acts as the visual culmination of the artist’s inner being. It represents the ultimate visual realization of the artistic sensibility. Davies inculcated from Jung that “mythology, art, literature, and even religion were of profound importance for self understanding because they manifested the archetypes, and therefore the hidden reality, underpinning our humanity” (*MW* 90).

Imagery and symbolism is another important device that Davies used to explore the patterns of human behaviour. This device is used by the author to further plot, to link the past, present and future, and to reveal the inner most thoughts and emotions of various characters. Mythical creatures are used to represent a human being’s multifarious existence – humanity as good and evil, creative and destructive, powerful and weak. The manticore and the chimera are the two powerful mythical creatures
used by Davies. The manticore is a strange and fabulous creature with the body of a lion, the face of a man, and a sting in its tail. It is therefore a noble, if somewhat confused and dangerous, creature. This is the symbol Davies employs in his latest novel, *The Manticore* to convey his considered opinions about the condition of man. The chimera was a fire-breathing monster, having the head of a lion, a goat’s body, and a dragon’s tail. The term Chimera is figuratively used for an illusory imagining of fancy. Both these mythological creatures are used to symbolize various forces, which govern human kind’s good and evil desires. Both these mythical creatures are composed of three different earthly creatures and each of these three has its own particular meaning; consequently, the meaning of each mythical creature is altered. Davies uses such images as illustrations of how the psychological and philosophical aspects of man’s existence are melded together to create modern myth.

To conclude, Davies asserts that one must delve deep into the realm of the unconscious in order to discover truth. It is within the unconscious that personal myths become melded with moral truths, and an enlightened self-awareness occurs. Davies has complained that the fear, dread, and splendour of wonder have been banished from the modern world. The modern mind is quite reluctant to accept the traditional religion, the legends, the myths, and the archetypes. In *The
Deptford Trilogy, the worlds of wonder within the human psyche make a triumphant return. In Fifth Business, Dunstan Ramsay goes soul-searching. Fascinated by myth and magic, he pursues saints, meets devils, explores illusion and reality, and finally, after sleeping with the devil, finds himself.

Thus, it can be stated that Robertson Davies has made a brilliant use of various archetypes in order to make his characters complex in nature and thereby comments on the recesses of human psyche, which governs human behaviour in diverse ways. Davies, in this way, occupies the significant place in the tradition of modern Canadian novelists in particular and the modern novel in English in general.

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