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### David Canaan and Buckler's Style in *The Mountain and the Valley*

Toward the end of the Epilogue in *The Mountain and the Valley* (1952) Ernest Buckler mentions, parenthetically, David Canaan's awe in the face of " 'Nude Descending a Staircase' patterns."<sup>1</sup> The reference to Marcel Duchamp's famous painting is remarkable because it is the only reference in the novel to a specific painting, and because it is one of the rare explicit indications in the novel of David's learning. In a novel sometimes valued mainly for its nostalgic appeal, Duchamp's painting suggests the modernity of Buckler's style and theme, and the geometric precision of his structure. But I begin with "Nude Descending a Staircase" particularly because the painting provides an excellent image of Buckler's difficult, multiplying style.

The momentary thought of Duchamp's painting intensifies David's wonder and bewilderment. "What is the mind of a man who would draw like that?" (296). In the same spirit, amazed and perplexed by Buckler's prose, I would vary the question only slightly: What is the meaning of a man who would write like that? *Like that*, more specifically, is the prose Claude Bissell describes as "the high metaphysical style,"<sup>2</sup> and which one of the readers of the manuscript judged, less kindly, "an uncontrollable spate of words"<sup>3</sup>; the prose which, according to Alan Young, contains tortured sentences which make questionable demands upon a reader,<sup>4</sup> and which Buckler himself feared might seem to be written by "a Thesaurusitic bastard."<sup>5</sup> Buckler is also, of course, quite capable of a plain style, for example in such narrative sections of the novel as the pig-killing, but I choose to concentrate on the exuberant style for two reasons: first, the occasional appearance of the plain style in *The Mountain and the Valley* only emphasizes more prominently the high style; and second, whatever else it may be, the plain style is certainly not David's style, although it may be the style David is looking for. My simple objective, then, is to examine closely the prominent features of Buckler's style, and to discuss some typical passages, passages which are so compacted with meaning that they seem to contain the germ of the whole novel within them.

Because I am interested in style as it reflects or implies David Cannaan's perception, I must leave aside detailed mention of the other characters although the novel places much emphasis on the closeness of the family. I will be emphasizing less the degree to which David changes and develops and more the extent to which he remains the same. Framed by the Prologue and Epilogue, in which David is 30 years old, *The Mountain and the Valley* follows David's development from age 11, with occasional reminiscences of his earlier childhood. This pattern, and David's artistic sensibility, places the novel in the *Kunstlerroman* tradition, and has focused critical attention on David's progress to adulthood. I find that an examination of Buckler's style forces a contrary emphasis on the ways in which David remains a child.

It is significant, for instance, that the entire novel is an answer to David's grandmother's question at the end of the Prologue, "Where was David?" (18). In its literal sense Ellen's question has only momentary interest: David has slipped out of the house without telling his grandmother, and is on his way to the top of the mountain. But her question is an ironic and resonant introduction to the novel in the sense that it asks where David is within his own mind, and, still more importantly, in the sense that it asks what David's position is in time. *When*, the question also implies, is David? Posed in this way, the question is as important to David, as to the reader. His angriest, his most disillusioned moments—at the Christmas concert, in the pig-butcher scene, in the argument with Joseph over moving the rock—centre on the insult of not being quite a man. In Chapter 26, a year after David's fight with his father, Buckler describes the subtle stages in a boy's growing up. Then he reminds us, significantly just before Joseph again suggests going to the top of the mountain, that "the conduit to childhood wasn't entirely sealed over. A child's visionary enthusiasm still surprised you at times, trapped you into delight without judgement" (173). This visionary enthusiasm, this sense of being trapped in delight without judgement, strikes me again and again as I examine Buckler's extravagant style. The conduit to childhood, I conclude, is open and flowing freely. A parallel metaphor came to mind when I was re-reading *The Mountain and the Valley*, and I scribbled this note to myself: "Then, then, methinks how sweetly flows/The liquefaction of his prose."<sup>6</sup> The allusion still seems to catch the right sense of an act or process, of a prose line which is so studiously precise, and yet which flows with the simple delights of sound and movement. The essence of Buckler's fluidity is the list; his is the aesthetic of getting-it-all-in, the spirit of exuberant profu-

sion. An idea, as David finds when he tries to write a story, will "frond suddenly like a million-capillared chart of the blood-stream" (260). To respond, the writer, like Duchamp in "Nude Descending a Staircase", must superimpose a series of slightly differentiated images, each geometrically fine in its accuracy, but lost in the larger effect of sensuous movement where time is at once frozen and non-existent.

One such series of images describes the silence of an October twilight:

As the light retreated, the silence sprang up with the same shivering stain the light had had. The feeding silence of the bluejay's dark sweep across the road . . . the partridge whirr . . . the straight flight of the dark crow against the deepening sky . . . the caution of the deer mincing out toward the orchard's edge . . . the caution of the hunter's foot on the dry leaf. And then the silence of the moment when the first faint urine smell of rotted leaves came from the earth, and the memory-smell of apples lain too long on the ground, and the sudden camphor-breath that came from any shade stepped into, the moment the gun barrel first felt cooler than the gun's stock on the palm. The breath-suspending silence of the gun sight in the second of perfect steadiness, and then the spreading silence of the gun's bark, and then the silence of the bird not flying away . . . (119).

As full as this passage might seem, it is the more remarkable because it follows seven paragraphs luxuriating in the varieties of a yellow light on that single October day of "after-ripeness". This paragraph lists thirteen types of silence and uses the word "silence" itself six times. The silence is intensified by the many sibilants, particularly by the concentration of s's at the beginning and end. Structurally the paragraph builds from visual images of silence to images of smell and then, as the sensory appeals become more immediate, to the tactile sensations of cool gun-barrel and suspended breath. This movement is neatly capped by the startling paradox of the gun's loud sound being silent, and by the ultimate silence of death. The movement of the paragraph from the carefree flights of birds to the hints of decay to the steady perfection of no breath and the peace of death is a vivid reflection of the movement of the entire novel.

Strengthening the effect of the passage is Buckler's verbal ingenuity. He describes the silence of the bluejay's flight as "feeding", an unlike participle that conveys not only the sense of a nourishing and gratifying silence but also the sense, slightly more menacing, of a silence that consumes, that must be fed. Similarly a sky which is "deepening" is not only becoming darker, but is also, rather ominously, extending itself beyond limits. And, by the simple device of showing the singular "leaf" under the hunter's foot, Buckler startles us with the sound of frozen motion.

Such unusual word-choices (other examples in this passage are "memory-smell" and "camphor-breath") add a strangeness to the trance-like effect of the list itself. Magic is as important as meaning. After the first sentence there are no predicates in the paragraph; although the silence clearly has its own internal dynamism, action, like breath, is suspended. Not surprisingly, then, the passage makes, in itself, no narrative sense, and has little connection to the narrative of the novel: we don't know which hunter, nor what bird, nor what happened to the deer which seemed to be the hunter's original quarry. Buckler added his favourite punctuation, the ellipsis, when he revised this passage<sup>7</sup> to emphasize the sense of an uncompleted "and then . . .". There is so much said, yet so much left to be said, that the reader is left slightly mesmerized.

It is worth remembering, here, that we first meet David "in a kind of spell" (14), staring distractedly through the window at the valley and the mountains. The overwhelming plenitude of things often sends David into the kind of trance we would associate with the total absorption of a child's game. Indeed his own lists, and the clamour within his own brain, are so prominent in such passages as the catalogue of silences, that it is difficult to make a complete separation between the narrator's perspective, so immediate and so much from the inside of community and family, and David's own perception.

The difficulty of making the distinction suggests, of course, that the narrator is telling the story that David yearns to tell in a way that David never recognizes is appropriate to it. The suitability of Buckler's style to David as child may also indicate why in *The Cruellest Month*, that very adult book depicting a sort of Bloomsbury in the Annapolis, the overflowing style is so much less effective, seeming to be an affectation rather than a technique closely integrated with content. On the other hand, where it is more neatly balanced with a plain colloquial style, a style based on lists or catalogues is mostly effective in *Ox Bells and Fireflies*, a fictional memoir which begins and ends in childhood.

Behind every list lies Buckler's passion for exactness, not a pared down exactness, of course, but a full and encompassing exactness. Buckler's attitude seems to be that if one verb, or modifier, or simile, will not reach a particular reader, then another will. This attitude is implicit in the memorable—to some, infamous—sentence marking the coming of Christmas Eve: "In that instant suddenly, ecstatically, burstingly, buoyantly, enclosingly, sharply, safely, stingingly, watchfully, batedly, mountingly, softly, ever so softly, it was Christmas Eve" (65). This sentence contains an adverbial phrase, and fifteen adverbs.

It's the sort of sentence which would have moved Lawrence to shout "Ernest, leave off." But the excess is the very thing which makes the sentence worth examining.

Dream, in the exaggerated spirit of David's "I-will-be-the-greatest-in the world", drifts through this passage, but there is a kind of economy too. Because the core of the sentence is the vague pronoun "it" and the bland verb "was" each adverb introduces its own possible agents and actions. "Suddenly", for example, describes the surprising way the time arrives, but "watchfully" suggests a prior time with a boy vigilantly waiting, while "softly" describes a sound and the responsiveness of one person to another. The sequence of adverbs shows some striking similarities to the list of silences, driving early to a climax of abrupt force in "burstingly", then floating unevenly through both "softly" and "stingingly", to the familiar sense of suspended breath, and an end in gentle silence. Trance is a significant effect once again, almost made explicit by "ecstatically", but deepened by the rush of paradoxes and shifts of subject. The sentence seems almost reckless, and yet there is that sense of rightness again. If we try to remake the basic sentence, placing the adverb next to the verb—"it was softly Christmas Eve"—we recognize that for Buckler passion triumphs over syntax. The drafts of the novel in the Ernest Buckler Collection at the University of Toronto Library reveal that the pattern was carefully calculated. At one point the key adverbs "batedly" and "mountingly" were placed near the beginning of the sequence, then restored to their present position.

The incremental style is particularly appropriate to David's Christmas Eve because it conveys the stretching out of an experience, and the clinging to a sensation, typical of children. Perhaps the psychologists' term *centrated*,<sup>8</sup> describing the child's over-estimation of the size and significance of a thing or event, suggests the peculiar suitability of Buckler's style to *The Mountain and the Valley*. Certainly the hypnotic magic of the lists seems to belong mainly to David, or to the narrator, who is often indistinguishable from David. And the *centrated* quality of the lists governs the style, from a two-page catalogue of the effects of light to a trio of adjectives, from a list of similes to the selection of a particular metaphor.

Consider for example, the multiple interconnections implied by Buckler's similes. The prevalence of simile, that somewhat unfashionable literary device, gives another element of quaintness to a very modern novel. Connecting two elements through *like* and *as* seems, as it were, to keep the soil close at hand, to prevent the fancy's having com-

pletely free rein. I suspect that Buckler loves simile because he recognizes that simile makes metaphor more colloquial, and more accessible. A typically ingenious figure of speech shows the need: "The sky was so purely blue from morning till night it had a kind of ringing, like the heat-hum of the locusts" (101). If this sentence is to suggest David's perception then the simile seems the more congenial poetic device for the fourteen-year-old, since it provides some bridge between things as disparate as blue sky and the sound of locusts; it gives a sense of a boy *trying* to link things together. Furthermore, if "everything seemed to be an aspect of something else" (287), as it does for both David and Buckler, then simile conveys the ordinariness of that experience in a way that metaphor cannot.

In order to see in everything an aspect of something else Buckler is willing to take great risks: "the wind plucked up waves of milk from the pail, like fans of cow urine" (73). The mind of a young boy might well leap to the comparison in appearance, but by using the adult, in this context somewhat euphemistic, "urine" Buckler takes the chance of implying other comparisons which might sink the idyll into bathos. Repeatedly Buckler will take the opportunity to push a simile to its limits: "The North Mountain rose sharply beyond the river. It was solid blue in the afternoon light of December that was pale and sharp as starlight, except for the milky ways of choppings where traces of the first snow never quite disappeared" (13). The first typescript draft of the novel, in the Ernest Buckler Collection, shows that this sentence was once straightforward description: "The North Mountain rose sharply beyond the river. It was solid blue in the sharp December light; with white patches of clearing here and there where the first snow lasted all winter."<sup>9</sup> As the sentence is revised and more figurative language is introduced, the catalogue of infinite correspondences begins to govern the sentence and completely change its effect. Buckler nicely conveys the hint of approaching evening, the touch of the cosmic with its diminishing of man and mountain, and a sense of magic, especially because "starlight" is a light which emanates rather than illuminates. Then, as Buckler draws out the simile into epic proportions, the fantastic takes over completely. "Starlight" describes the quality of light, yet "milky ways", which should be the source of exactly this sort of light, no longer describes the afternoon light but interruptions in the solid blue colour of the mountain. Hence the mountain itself seems turned into a sky, which would, presumably, be generating its own light. Either Buckler has completely lost control of his language, or he is reaching for

an impression of floating in an infinite sky, through space. Again his style carries us from immediate contact with the rural world into a dream-like trance beyond the claims of even *poetic* logic.

The same mesmerizing plenitude is found in Buckler's metaphors, even in almost incidental passages:

And now, working in the fields, the obbligato of ache in his head chimed with the quiet feeding orbits of his thoughts (each one branching immediately, then the branch branching, until he was totally encased in their comfortable delta). It isolated and crystallized him into a kind of absolute self-sufficiency (228).

This paragraph describes an older David, five years after his father's death, suffering continuing pain from his falling in the barn. The metaphors repeatedly jolt the reader out of one frame of reference into another. Thus, while the musical term "obbligato" may suitably lead to the suggestion of bells "chiming", there is no preparation for an abrupt switch to the planetary implications of "orbits", nor for the animation of these orbits in "feeding". Then Buckler uses, albeit parenthetically, a plant metaphor to describe David's thoughts, shifting in the same breath to the river metaphor and the surprising "delta". Yet while the associations of 'plain' and 'depositing' seem entirely appropriate here, we may be at a loss to explain why David should be "*encased*" in a "delta". Buckler asks his reader to follow him into a new sense of enclosing, before his other, decidedly un-enclosing, metaphor has run its course. In this context that tired metaphor, "crystallized", takes on renewed vigor, since it is so completely different from the musical metaphor at the beginning of the paragraph.

The passage is the more amazing because it describes pain and loneliness, even if these are seen in a positive light. Buckler is as likely to play his ingenious metaphorical games in gloom as in happiness. Again, the precise feelings seem less important than the literary bravado. I find a lightness in the passage, a freeing from physical realities (such as the pain), into an illusion created by clever prose. Insofar as we are within David's perception here (and again it is difficult to distinguish David from the narrator), we sense that David is protected by his own secret, yet liberating imagination.

One message conveyed by the style is clear: David is happiest when thought is suspended, when thoughts themselves combine and interrelate until everything is fused in a visionary trance. In spite of the new

element of physical pain I see a strong similarity between David's crystal isolation in the field and his fishing, while still a young boy, at the beginning of the novel. David has always had the ability to "let his mind not-think" (28), and he cultivates the ability to free himself from language and thought into a mesmerizing sensory apprehension of nature. David's first reaction to the deaths of Spurge Gorman and Pete Delahunt is to escape into imaginings (41); in a sense his reaction to the imminence of his own death is no different. He still dreams of being the "greatest". He still has no perspective: the day he spends fishing on the mountain with Joseph and Chris is "the best time he'd ever had" (29); years later the day he and Toby went to town for the beer "was the best day of all" (257). The experience is made superlative because "there hadn't been any *thinking* about it" (259).

Buckler's massed similes and metaphors move the mind in so many directions at once that the reader is left, as in the paragraph on silences, almost entranced. Many of the prominent images in the novel work to reinforce this impression. The best-known passage on style in the novel, prompted by David's reading of E.M. Forster, suggests the imagery most suitable to Buckler's intent:

At first he hadn't liked the books. They had more to do with the shadow of thought and feeling which actions cast than with the actions themselves. They seemed blurry. Reading them was like study. But now he found them more rapturously adventurous than any odyssey of action (244).

Images should make an idea or an abstraction more precise and concrete, but, paradoxically, Buckler's images are often of the most "ephemeral" (232) kind. "Shadow", the solitary image in this passage, aside from the books being described, reminds us how very common an image it is in the novel. Insubstantial and transitory things are the staple of much of Buckler's imagery: shadows, breeze, breath, smoke, light, cloud, fog, mist, snow, and the colours of grey, white and twilight. Perhaps Anna's thoughts about breathing—"It went on steadily, keeping you alive, but you weren't conscious of it at all" (226)—might also serve as a description of Buckler's images: they are usually intangible, yet obviously essential and vital, and they carry with them the idea of suspended consciousness.

When more hard-edged images are used they are often run together in celebration of a perfect, if irrational, unity: ". . . the lemon-green murmurous-needled pine overturned by the wind, its ragged anchor of roots and earth like the shape of the thunder of its own fall . . ." (286).



Again, it seems less necessary to follow through the sequence of meanings, than to immerse oneself in the cornucopia of sensations: from taste to sight to sound to touch in the first four images, then back to sight and feel and touch until the passage explodes in sound and motion. According to A.D. Vernon, in *The Psychology of Perception*, "in young children there is little differentiation of primary sensations from one another, and . . . visual, auditory and other nodes of sensation which occur at the same time become so closely linked that in later life perception of one type of stimulus is liable to arouse imagery of the others."<sup>10</sup> Buckler's intuitive psychology constantly reinforces, and then extends, the theory. His synaesthesia continues the same accumulation, and surprise, and jamming together, as we find in the larger features of his style. Given the interrelatedness of all things, the "stillness was loud and moist-smelling and clean" (268), and "shape and colour reached out to him like voices" (286).

Similarly the hyphenated compounds upon which Buckler often depends insist, in themselves, that unrelated things are really inseparable. Buckler fuses two or more things or ideas or sensations, and the resultant concept both contains the separate things and yet becomes a unity which is more than and different from each separate thing. There is an adolescent eagerness in the form, a running together of ideas and emotions, which carries one beyond the physical. Although there are examples on most every page, I perhaps need only mention Buckler's best-known compound, used three times in rapid sequence when Toby leaves for war and his death: "that maybe-the-last-time brightness rushing along with them in the trains" (276). This feeling, curiously, has closest ties with the 'certainly-the-first-time-brightness' of childhood. The resonant compound sticks with the reader, trembling just beneath the final autumn scene, when the leaves achieve their very brightest colours just before they die and fall.

Seeing the trains go by, sensing that "maybe-the-last-time-brightness", David is always a watcher rather than a doer; he learns through words rather than through touch. He contrasts his life with Chris's: "The things that happened to himself were pale, and narrative only. He stayed the same" (199). True, in the sense that David's life seems like something read about rather than something lived. But misleading if we take narrative to imply event, or story, or physical action. Of these, David's life shows relatively little; even in that most physically influential event of David's life, his fall from the barn's rafter, the emphasis is more on motive and response than on the action itself.

And of course, Buckler's, too, is a style of watching. He lingers over the tiniest detail and savours its expression in a style which interrupts and delays and almost obliterates sequence. Cause and effect, sustaining of metaphor, unmistakable meaning are less important than a feeling of absorption, trust, submission. Buckler's style is inward-looking, private, and in large part, like that of all fine literature, a reality unto itself. David even goes a step beyond Buckler's inwardness, for he is so private that he is terrified of an audience. When Toby reads a sentence of his war story, David throws the whole thing into the fire. Perhaps he is distressed, too, by the contradiction between the relatively spare, colloquial style of his story and his fronding, million-capillaried vision.<sup>11</sup> But certainly he shows again that he has not grown up: he is no more mature about his imagination and its products than he was when he kissed Effie during the school play.

"The world of the adult," observes William Empson, "made it hard to be an artist."<sup>12</sup> So David discovers, and responds by remaining a child. This is true in the most essential sense, despite the many explicit comments in the novel on the stages of David's growing up. "The essence of a childhood", the narrator intones after the shock of David's intercourse with Bess, "is that the past is never thought of as something that might have been different. He was never, even for a moment, all child again." (152). Yet it seems, for example, that David's sexual life ends, after three devastating experiences, at this level of stumbling adolescent experiment. And artistically, and emotionally perhaps, he is still at the end of the novel the sensitive but overwhelmed child, rather than the discriminating mature adult. "The inside was nothing but one great white naked eye of self-consciousness, with only its own looking to look at" (281). This is not the eye, surely, on the verge of a finished achievement, but at the beginning of an adolescent artistic consciousness. As Warren Tallman sees it, David "must create his own knowledge in the image of his arrested, his childish and childlike psychic life."<sup>13</sup> The Epilogue, then, while it clearly does not convey a wholly negative attitude toward David, does take a profoundly ironic view of where David is.<sup>14</sup> He achieves an ecstatic peace, to be sure, but it is deeply coloured by his self-indulgent and fruitless dreaming.

As he finally climbs the mountain David's mind swarms with images and memories, and faces and voices:

"Stop! he cried. Aloud.

But the voices didn't stop.

They added a new voice to their frenzied forking, to the bright singing stinging scream of clarity in the accusation of the unattended. Exactly how did the voice *itself* fluctuate, according to the exact inexactness of the listener's listening?(297).

Unlike earlier passages of exultant trance, this describes not sensations but metaphysical puzzles. In this sense, of course, it marks the extent to which David is different from the eleven-year-old in Part One. Yet it follows the most intense and massive inventory of sensations in the entire novel. Perhaps because Buckler is dealing here with abstractions the basic ingredients of his style of accumulation become more evident. Before the "infinite permutations of the possible" David cries "'stop!'" Buckler interrupts the elliptical multiplication of his prose with four simple, staccato sentences. But then the "infinite divisibility" (294) takes hold again, aurally in the alliteration and assonance, syntactically in the tripling of adjectives, and verbally in the repetition of the root words 'exact' (already used dozens of times in the Epilogue) and 'listen'. Even here, then, incantation supersedes meaning as David is enchanted by the spell of multiplication and paradox.

"'Where is that child?'" Ellen asks again when she has finished hooking her rug. In her own doting confusion she has chosen the right word and the right question. David dies in the spell of his childhood dreams—"((the morning of my first trip to the mountain, the Christmas tree, the blindman's buff . . .))"—filled with the same innocent hyperbole: "'my book won the prize!'" The many colours in David's head all become white, and he is slowly covered by the falling snow.

David's closeness to nature suggests a comparison with W.O. Mitchell's Brian O'Connell which I find so tempting that I sometimes mistakenly write Brian when I mean David. Yet how different they are, especially in this matter of their growing up. Brian learns from the spots of time (marked by his "feeling") that are scattered through his childhood; David retreats into them, and encloses himself in them. Brian will become a dirt doctor, as surely as David will *not* become the greatest writer in the whole world. *Who Has Seen the Wind* spreads out at the end through cycles of time and off toward the horizon; *The Mountain and the Valley* draws together as the last rag is tied into the circle of the rug, and the snow aggregates and unifies. Yet as the last white rag is ironically both pure and blank, the snow both warm and smothering, so the concluding flight of the partridge seems, in its suggestion of awkward ponderousness, to be an ambiguous symbol of visionary transcendence. Buckler himself confirms the depth of his ambiguity by an interpretation of the symbol which is added as the last sentence in the first draft of the novel: "It was like death".<sup>15</sup>

Not that this aspect of the partridge's flight diminishes Buckler's achievement. On the contrary, it is one last evidence of the enormous richness of his prose. Buckler's, indeed, are "'Nude Descending a Stair-

case' patterns". Duchamp's painting is the perfect image for his style: draftsmanlike precision, and, paradoxically, the impossibility of completely separating out one distinct image, the cinematic magic, the delicate distinctions among essentially monochromatic shades, the multiple overlapping images at once static and spatial yet containing the movement of time. Nor is the allusion to Duchamp out of place when we consider David as artist. Marcel Duchamp is distinctive among modern painters because he produced only a very few paintings; he is the "personification", writes William Rubin, "of Dada's refusal to distinguish between art and life."<sup>16</sup> Instead of developing experimentally through many hundreds of works, Duchamp created but one painting marking each stage of his development. Rubin, in pondering this curious development, gives a fascinating hint of the kinship between Duchamp and David: "Duchamp advances speculatively, not by painting but *by cerebration*."<sup>17</sup> And, to note just two other connections, both the sexual content of the painting and the irony of its implicit mechanization may have more bearing on where David is than first appears.

One especially illuminating reaction to "Nude Descending a Staircase" is X.J. Kennedy's intense lyric of the same title:

Toe upon toe, a snowing flesh,  
A gold of lemon, root and rind,  
She sifts in sunlight down the stairs  
With nothing on. Nor on her mind.<sup>17</sup>

Here, too, are hints as to why David should single out this particular painting: because of its suggestion of a frustrating innocence, and because of its expression of the harmony of no-thought (though David, presumably unlike the nude, arrives at this state through intense, clamorous thinking). Buckler's prose, perhaps paralleling the poem's style, though much more profusely, multiplies images rapidly, echoes and re-echoes its rhythms and sounds, and joins all the senses, to become a marvellous maze. Like Duchamp's painting, Buckler's novel is an ironic comment on naïveté, and a luminous celebration of the irrational brimming with meaning.

#### NOTES\*

\*Quotations from unpublished material by kind permission of Mr. Ernest Buckler. I would like to thank Professors Gerald Noonan and Alan Young for helpful suggestions.

1. Ernest Buckler, *The Mountain and the Valley*. New Canadian Library No. 23 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961). p. 296. Page references throughout the article refer to this edition.

2. Claude Bissell, "Introduction", *The Mountain and the Valley*, (1961), p.
3. Emily M. Beck, Trade Editorial Report on "The Mountain and the Valley", Atlantic Monthly Press, April 25, 1951. Box 15, Ernest Buckler Collection, University of Toronto Library.
4. Alan R. Young, *Ernest Buckler*, Canadian Writers Series No. 15 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 17.
5. Ernest Buckler to Dudley Cloud, Atlantic Monthly Press, May 15, 1951, Box 15, Ernest Buckler Collection.
6. Recently I discovered that Dave Godfrey had heard the same echo in his review of *The Cruellest Month*, "Buckler and Allen", *Tamarack Review* No. 36 (Summer 1965), p. 83.
7. Draft No. 1, "The Mountain and the Valley", Box 13, and Draft No. 2, "The Mountain and the Valley", Box 14, Ernest Buckler Collection.
8. M.D. Vernon, *The Psychology of Perception*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 86.
9. Draft No. 1, "The Mountain and the Valley", Box 13, Ernest Buckler Collection.
10. M.D. Vernon, *Psychology of Perception*, p. 78.
11. Presumably this is another dilemma which Buckler shares with David. Consider Buckler's admiration for Hemingway: "I think that all writers should be locked up for several weeks inside a sonnet with no food but Hemingway, so that they could at least learn the discipline of the tight line before they flout it." *Esquire*, February 1973, p. 6. Quoted in Young, *Ernest Buckler*, p. 20.
12. William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), p. 261.
13. Warren Tallman, "Wolf in the Snow", *Canadian Literature* No. 5 (Summer 1960), p. 13.
14. Alan Young suggests the necessity of taking a more ironic view of David, and provides one context for such reassessment, in *Ernest Buckler*, pp. 36-37.
15. Draft No. 1, Box 13, Ernest Buckler Collection.
16. William S. Rubin, *Dada and Surrealist Art.*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1968), p. 22
17. William S. Rubin, *Data and Surrealist Art.*, p. 23.
18. X.J. Kennedy, "Nude Descending a Staircase", *Poems/Songs/A Ballad*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), p. 69.