

SYNOPSIS

The Ontario Novels of Matt Cohen : A Thematic Study

The present dissertation modestly attempts a thematic study of the following Ontario novels of Matt Cohen:

1. The Disinherited (1974)
2. Wooden Hunters (1975)
3. The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone (1979)

Matt Cohen, though not a very prolific writer in Canada, is regarded as a prominent modernist Canadian writer. The dissertation attempts to explore the thematic aspects of the three novels mentioned above.

The first chapter of the dissertation is an introductory one and takes into account a brief resumé of the Canadian fiction. It discusses four major phases of the Canadian fiction followed by a brief biographical introduction to Matt Cohen. It briefly recounts the personal and the novelistic career of Matt Cohen. It also discusses some of the views of Matt Cohen as far as his art of novel writing is concerned. Though he is regarded as a regional Canadian novelist he is considered as a major novelist of Canada who won the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction in 1999. The first chapter further takes a brief review of the critical literature on Matt Cohen and finally defines the point of reference of the present dissertation.

The second chapter critically evaluates the theme of sexuality as reflected in the three novels under consideration. It points out how sexuality dominates the hidebound world of the people living

on the farm. It also takes into consideration how Cohen deals with the pervert forms of sexuality, particularly extramarital relationships and lesbianism. The chapter tries to highlight how the pervert sexual relations are the pointers to the decadent life of the Canadian people referred to in the novels.

The third chapter discusses the theme of violence as reflected in the novels under consideration. It states how the degenerate and pervert sexual relationships lead to the violence in the lives of such people. The violence is depicted on two levels, i.e., the personal and the social. On the social level the violence is reflected when the natives sacrifice their lives to free their land and culture from the clutches of the exploitative invasion of the loggers.

The fourth and the final chapter assesses the contribution of Matt Cohen to the tradition of the Canadian fiction. It points out the significance of the writer as far as his concern with the generic aspects of the form and the content are concerned.

Candidate


(S.Y. Hongekar)

Research Guide

(Dr. P.A. Attar)