**Anderson, Patrick (John MacAllister) (1915 – 1979)**

Molly Hall, University of Rhode Island

**Letter from Patrick Anderson to Jack McClelland (publisher) about publication of *The Colour as Naked,* 1953**

(url: http://hpcanpub.mcmaster.ca/media/letter-patrick-anderson-jack-mcclelland-mamps-re-publication-colour-naked-1953)

Canadian poet and editor Patrick Anderson was born on August 4, 1915 in Surrey, England. Though he was English by birth, and would later return to his homeland, he is often considered a Canadian poet, having produced most of his work there after immigrating in 1940. He came to Canada in 1942 to teach at a private school after attending Oxford and Columbia Universities. In this same year Anderson famously founded the Montreal literary magazine *Preview* with fellow poet F.R. Scott. Poets A.M. Klein and P.K. Page also ended up on the *Preview*’s editorial board. The work they published closely aligned with that of the English poets of the 1930s, for which they were famously criticized as having a colonial attitude, rather than attending to a native Canadian identity. John Sutherland’s *First Statement*, which led the attack, looked to nativist American models rather than *Preview’s* British paradigm. In 1945 *Preview* merged with this rival publication, bringing that localism into the fold, and becoming the much-respected *Northern Review*. The *Northern Review* published regularly until 1956, releasing several of Anderson’s books as well. During his Canadian years, he was also for a time a professor at McGill University.

**Anderson in His Later Years.**

(url: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/photo/44758157.cms)

Anderson’s work tended to be cosmopolitan, like that of the British modernists of the Bloomsbury group. Though he was married in 1940, he divorced 10 years later, traveling first to Malaysia to teach, then back to England where he began to embrace his homosexuality for the first time, entering into a relationship with a man named Alistair Sutherland. The two edited a homosocial anthology in the early 1960s, but he always treated his sexuality as a private matter, declining to be included in an anthology of gay male literature in 1972. His choice to stay in England, however, may have been influenced by his sexuality. John Sutherland had in 1943 printed a review of Anderson’s poetry which claimed it contained homoerotic themes and implying Anderson himself had homosexual experiences in the past. After Anderson threatened to sue him for libel, Sutherland printed a retraction.

During the 1990s interest in the incident between Anderson and Sutherland increased as it was considered important to the history of LGBT literature in Canada. It seems that Anderson did not feel at home in Canada as a gay man, however, choosing to remain in England from 1950 until his death. He did return intermittently as a guest lecturer to throughout the 1970s and his last volume of poetry, *Return to Canada* (1977), explored his relationship to his sometimes-homeland, sparking renewed interest in him as a Canadian poet more generally. Anderson died in Essex, England on March 17, 1979.

**Selected List of Works**

Collected Works

*A Visiting Distance – Poems: New, Revised, and Selected*  (1976)

Poetry

*A Tent for April* (1945)

*The White Centre* (1946)

*The Colour as Naked* (1953)

*Snake Wine: A Singapore Episode* (1955)

*Search Me* (1957)

*Return to Canada* (1977)

Travel Writing

*Over the Alps: Reflections on Travel and Travel Writing*  (1969)

Edited

*Eros: An Anthology of Male Friendship* (1961, with Alistair Sutherland)

**Further Reading**

Sutherland, John (1943) ‘The Writing of Patrick Anderson,’ *First Statement*, 1(19), 3-6.

New, William H. (2002) ‘Patrick Anderson,’ *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*, Toronto:

University of Toronto Press, 21.

Trehearne, Brian (1999) *The Montreal Forties: Modernist Poetry in Transition*, Toronto: U of

Toronto P.