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## Review of *The Force of Vocation*, By Adele Wiseman

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of Canadian authors, Panofsky examines Wiseman as a *public* author, one who negotiated her career through artistic agency and a stubborn refusal to revise most of her work. Panofsky accounts for the development of Wiseman's writing career, which she suggests "can be read as the progressive loss of readership and literary recognition," by studying her interactions with literary agents, editors, publishers, and mentors as well as the reception of her work in Canada, the U.S., and Europe.

Following the success of *The Sacrifice*, for example, Wiseman ignored her friends' and publishers' pleas for a second novel resembling the style and content of the first. Instead, she turned to writing plays, a genre with little market potential. Similarly, Wiseman waited twelve years before seeking to publish her second novel, *Crackpot*. The prolonged interval between novels, coupled with the discursive, female-centered structure of the text, made it difficult for Wiseman to secure a publisher. After nearly twenty rejections, Jack McClelland of McClelland and Stewart agreed to read the manuscript, after which he recommended several changes. Committed to the integrity of her artistic vision, Wiseman agreed to few of the suggested revisions. As the title suggests, *The Force of Vocation* makes clear that Adele Wiseman viewed writing as a calling, one of high moral value and responsibility.

In elucidating this claim, Panofsky has combined an impressive use of archival and primary material, including letters, personal interviews, and contemporary reviews of Wiseman's work, with an astute analysis of secondary literature. This book is not a traditional biography and there is probably less emphasis on the psychosocial aspects of Wiseman's life than some readers might like. But Panofsky's method does result in an interesting glimpse into the ways in which the enterprise of publishing affects writers' careers and shapes the cultural and literary identity of a country.

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Adele Wiseman's literary career began with the publication of her acclaimed first novel, *The Sacrifice*, in 1956. Public success and scholarly praise of the novel were followed by the Governor General's Literary Award for fiction. Though Wiseman continued to write plays, fiction, memoirs, and essays throughout her career, she never again enjoyed the success of her earliest novel. In *The Force of Vocation*, the first book-length study of Wiseman's work, Ruth Panofsky attempts to account for the rise and fall of this Jewish Canadian woman of letters.

Responding to the lack of attention to the publishing side of writers' lives in biographies