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# Stories of Canada: National Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century English-Canadian Fiction

Elizabeth Hedler

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STORIES OF CANADA: NATIONAL IDENTITY IN LATE-NINETEENTH-  
CENTURY ENGLISH-CANADIAN FICTION

By

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B.A. McGill University, 1994

M.A. University of Maine, 1996

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
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(in History)

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May, 2003

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By Elizabeth Hedler

Thesis Co-Advisors: Dr. Scott W. See and Dr. Marli F. Weiner

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented  
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The search for a national identity has been a central concern of English-Canadian culture since the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian concerns about Canadian identity and the need for distinctively Canadian stories resulted in the creation of a body of fiction that attempted to define Canadian nationhood and identity by depicting Canadian scenes, people, and situations. In the late nineteenth century, writers of fiction focused on defining the impact of Canada's unique land and heritage upon Canadian identity.

Based on an extensive reading of these novels, this dissertation explores the way English Canadians defined Canadian identity in relation to the land, race, and gender in the late nineteenth century. The intensive study of the fictional literature of late-nineteenth-century Canada gives a unique insight into the world view of middle-class English Canadians. When writing fiction, authors are especially prone to reflecting the beliefs and assumptions of their society. The investigation into the specific elements of Canadian national creation as reflected in English-Canadian fiction illuminates an important aspect of Canadian cultural history.

The national community imagined in English-language novels was based upon ideas about Canadian's relationships to their land and heritage. Authors shaped a view of Canada's climate, geography, and landscape as unifying elements in Canadian culture. They emphasized Canada's northern location and wilderness areas as unique factors in the creation of Canadian identity. Novelists also idealized the process of settlement as essential to the creation of Canadian culture. English-Canadian writers also attempted to create the idea of a shared heritage as an essential ingredient in Canadian nationality. By incorporating French history and culture into Canadian history, by describing the nation as the result of the mixture of Scottish, English, French, and Indian heritage, and by embracing a British imperial identity, English-speaking Canadian authors attempted to construct a historical and racial inheritance for a new nation. These ideas, as expressed in novels, became a basis for English-Canadian ideas about themselves and their nation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION: WRITING AND READING CANADA

In 1867 the British North American colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Canada combined to become the Dominion of Canada. With the passage of the British North America Act, a political nation had been created, but the question of how this would translate into a cultural nationality remained to be solved. As literary historian Claude Bissell pointed out in 1950:

Confederation was not so much a solution as a posing of the national problem. To many observers, the factional manoeuvring that had preceded Confederation and the grave problems that immediately followed it made it apparent that national unity had to be founded on something more stable than the niceties of political compromise. Was it not possible, they asked, to sink political divergence in a disinterested concern for the cultural life of the new nation?<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the years after Confederation, English Canadians attempted to create a distinctively Canadian national cultural identity. Both Bissell and nineteenth-century Canadians realized that nations are not just political constructs. They knew, as Benedict Anderson pointed out, that the central facet of a nation's identity was that each citizen be able to imagine that he and his fellow citizens had something in common.<sup>2</sup> In the late nineteenth century, English-speaking Canadians were engrossed in trying to imagine the common traits that all Canadians shared. English-Canadian nationalists were eager to identify characteristics that were both typical of Canadians and

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<sup>1</sup>Claude T. Bissell, "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Historical Review* 31, (September 1950): 238-239.

<sup>2</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 15.



different from any other national group. From these characteristics they hoped to define what made Canadians unique, different from all other national groups.

In their desire to describe their state as a national community, English Canadians were part of a world-wide intellectual movement—the development of nationalism as a central defining aspect of people’s lives. Beginning in Europe and the British Isles in the eighteenth century, nation-states increasingly became the primary focus of group identity throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> Scholars attribute the rise of nationalism to various factors, including industrialization and the increased mobility of people that began to take place in the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup>

An important aspect of this mobility was the creation of colonial empires by European powers. As European colonists migrated to other areas of the globe, they brought the need for national identity with them. Over time, they began to identify with their new states rather than their imperial homeland.<sup>5</sup> As defined by one scholar, “Nationalism is the desire among people who believe they share a common ancestry and a common destiny to live under their own government on land sacred to their history.”<sup>6</sup> For

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<sup>3</sup>On the development of nationalism in Britain and Europe, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Prys Morgan, “From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 43-100; Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

<sup>4</sup>See Robert H. Wiebe, *Who We Are: A History of Popular Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 12-36; Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 9-43; Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, 266-267; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 30.

<sup>5</sup>On nationalism in the colonial context, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 50-65; Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict, and Compromise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup>Wiebe, *Who We Are*, 5.

Canadians, who had their own government, the problem posed by nationalist ideology was to create a belief in their common ancestry and destiny and to link both of these to the land.

By the late nineteenth century, when Canada became a state, nationalism was such a widely accepted ideology that many educated persons regarded it as a natural and necessary aspect of human life. The idea of a state without a corresponding sense of national identity was unimaginable. This ideological construct had a profound effect upon English-speaking Canadians in the decades after Confederation. The combination of these ideas about nationalism with the culturally divided Canadian state created an anxiety to define national identity among educated English-speaking Canadians.<sup>7</sup>

As a result of the timing of Canadian statehood and the proximity of the United States, the search for national identity became the central concern that defines the national character of English-speaking Canadians.<sup>8</sup> The proximity of the culturally similar United States led English-speaking

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<sup>7</sup>For some discussion of nineteenth-century manifestations of national anxiety, see: Eric Kaufmann, "Condemned to Rootlessness: The Loyalist Origins of Canada's Identity Crisis," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 3 (Spring 1997): esp. p. 130; J. M. Bumstead, *The Peoples of Canada: A Pre-Confederation History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 383-387; Allan Smith, "The Continental Dimension in the Evolution of the English-Canadian Mind," *International Journal* (June 1976): 445; Frank Watt, "Nationalism in Canadian Literature," in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill of Canada, 1966), 236-240; Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," in *The Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 827.

<sup>8</sup>See Jody Berland, "Marginal Notes on Cultural Studies in Canada," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 64 (Fall 1995): 514; Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 8-9; Maria Tippett, "The Writing of English-Canadian Cultural History, 1970-1985," *Canadian Historical Review* 67 (1986): 554; Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 230-231; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 42; Northrop Frye, "National Consciousness in Canadian Culture," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 4th series, 4 (1976): 57-69.

Canadians to fear that the imaginative productions of English-Canadian culture were being overwhelmed by American influences. They worried that Canadians would lose, or never develop, a distinctly Canadian identity if they did not produce and consume distinctively Canadian stories. In the twentieth century, this anxiety has focused upon television and the movies, while in the nineteenth century English-Canadian intellectuals were troubled about the creation, quality, and readership of Canadian novels.

Concern over the necessity of creating and defending a Canadian national identity was specific to English-speaking groups within the population. French Canadians had their own set of anxieties regarding the survival of their culture, faith, and language within the Canadian political construct. Since the 1760s, Canadian society, culture, and historiography have been divided on the basis of language group.<sup>9</sup> French Canadians, unlike English Canadians, did not feel an overwhelming anxiety about their existence as a distinct culture. French Canada's cultural dilemma has been the preservation of their culture in the face of English dominance. French Canadians have felt confident of the existence of their culture, but unsure of whether or not it would survive in the midst of an English-speaking nation.

The desire to define a Canadian national identity was also strongest in central Canada. Educated English-speakers in both Quebec and Ontario were most likely to write about Canada and Canadians in an attempt to define a common national character. The partially-settled nature of the western provinces throughout the nineteenth century meant that western Canadians did not make a substantial contribution to the English-Canadian

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<sup>9</sup>Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 14, 93-95; Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), x, 181-186.

debate over national identity prior to 1900. Those who did write from the west, like the famous novelist Ralph Connor, were often migrants from central Canada whose views of the nation mirrored those of Ontarians. Maritimers were also less concerned with establishing a unified national identity than were central Canadians. This may have been because they had a more firmly-established regional identity, or because they were less eager for Confederation than central Canadian politicians.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Maritime writers, such as Charles G. D. Roberts, did contribute to the construction of Canadian national identity, though they often emphasized different historical events than those discussed by central Canadian writers.<sup>11</sup> Writers attempting to define Canadian identity frequently focused on their own region as typical of Canadian experience.

This nationalist anxiety was primarily expressed by those English-speaking Canadians who were members of the educated middle and upper classes of society. These people expressed their opinions about Canada in a variety of forums, including newspapers, public addresses, and novels. When the terms writer and author are used in this study, they refer to those members of the middle and upper classes who created the novels and stories that form the primary source material of this dissertation. Two other terms deserve discussion here. Nationalists and imperialists, as used in this dissertation, describe members of this group of educated English Canadians

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<sup>10</sup>Phillip Buckner, P. B. Waite, and W. M. Baker, "CHR Dialogue: The Maritimes and Confederation: A Reassessment," *Canadian Historical Review* 71 (March 1990): 1-45; James L. Sturgis, "The Opposition to Confederation in the Nova Scotia, 1864-1868," in *The Causes of Canadian Confederation*, ed. Ged Martin (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1990), 114-129; A. G. Bailey, "The Basis and Persistence of Opposition to Confederation in New Brunswick," in *Culture and Nationality: Essays by A. G. Bailey* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 93-117.

<sup>11</sup>See William Westfall, "On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15 (Summer 1980): 3-15.

who held specific ideas about Canada's present and future identity. Nationalists designates those who believed in and worked to create a unique identity for Canada and Canadians. The term imperialist is drawn from Carl Berger's work; it describes those who believed that Canada would find its true identity within the British Empire.<sup>12</sup> Although members of other social groups may have also held imperialist or nationalists beliefs about Canada, there is no evidence to indicate whether their ideas accorded with those expressed by the educated middle and upper classes.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian concerns about Canadian identity and the need for distinctively Canadian stories resulted in the creation of a body of literature that attempted to define Canadian nationhood and identity by depicting Canadian scenes, people, and situations. When English Canadians of the late nineteenth century wrote fiction, they focused on creating a sense of Canadian nationality by describing aspects of the Canadian experience that they believed were unique. Reflecting nineteenth-century nationalism, writers focused on defining the impact of Canada's unique land and heritage upon Canadian identity.

English-Canadian authors identified the land as a central aspect of the Canadian character because of its natural grandeur, agricultural potential, and northern location. They wrote about the transformative effects of both the Canadian wilderness and the Canadian settlement process upon British immigrants and thereby highlighted the centrality of the land in creating distinctively Canadian individuals out of these immigrants. In this context especially, English-Canadian authors depicted Canadian identity in gendered

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<sup>12</sup>Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

terms, specifying different characteristics and adaptive strategies for Canadian men and women.

Nationalists who wrote fiction also emphasized heritage, a combination of historical experience and racial background, as a factor in Canadian national identity. Because a unified racial identity was a critical component of nationalism as imagined in the nineteenth century, English-Canadian novelists emphasized the melding of various groups into a single Canadian race. The groups they selected for inclusion in this imagined nationality included Scottish, English, Irish, French, and Indian. As discussed in Chapter Six, these groups were frequently seen as separate races in the late nineteenth century. English-Canadian nationalist authors attempted to describe the way these disparate groups all became contributors in the development of an amalgamated Canadian race. Writers frequently used the language of race to discuss ideas about national identity in the late nineteenth century. As the list attests, English-speaking Canadians were determined to embrace their imperial identity and ties to Great Britain as one defining aspect of their national character. This embrace of imperial loyalty allowed them also to define their identity as different from that of the United States and gave them an ideological defense against becoming American. English-Canadian writers also attempted to adopt the French colonial past as part of their national heritage, in order to increase the perceived antiquity of their nation and to provide a rationale for the inclusion of French Canadians in an imagined national community.

These points about English-Canadian views of Canada and Canadian national identity were drawn from consideration of over 240 novels published in English in Canada between the 1860s and the early 1900s. These novels were selected from Reginald Watters's *Checklist of Canadian*

*Literature*.<sup>13</sup> The novels chosen were set in Canada and written about Canadian characters. English-Canadian authors most clearly addressed their concerns and expectations about Canada and Canadians in the period after Confederation in this type of novel. Although authors frequently wrote novels set in Europe, Great Britain, or the United States, such novels were unhelpful in describing the ways Canadians thought about themselves and their nation. In addition to the use of Watters's checklist, novels were identified as Canadian in author and setting through the use of literary criticism and book reviews from a variety of contemporary literary periodicals, including the *Canadian Magazine*, the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review*, and the industry magazine *Books and Notions*.<sup>14</sup> These periodicals sometimes published stories by Canadians with Canadian content that provided further evidence of English-Canadian values and attitudes.

English-Canadian authors most clearly developed their ideas about Canadian identity when they wrote about Canadian characters and Canadian places. In writing about the construction of a sense of imagined community among English-Canadian nationalists in the late nineteenth century, it made sense to focus on novels that included Canadian characters or settings. This seemingly simple decision led to the problem of how to decide whether an author and his or her work were Canadian. In solving this dilemma, J.

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<sup>13</sup>Reginald Eyre Watters, *A Checklist of Canadian Literature and Background Materials, 1628-1960*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

<sup>14</sup>*Canadian Magazine*, Toronto: Hunter, Rose (March 1893-October 1913); *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, Toronto & Halifax (January 1875-May 1887); *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review*, Toronto: Rose-Belford (December 1881-November 1882); also *Our Monthly*, Toronto (May 1896-June 1896); *Stewart's Quarterly*, St. John, New Brunswick (April 1870-January 1872); *Books and Notions*, Toronto: The Book, Stationary, and Fancy Goods Trade Association of Canada (August 1884-January 1895).

G. Bourinot's classic study, *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness*, provided some useful ideas. Bourinot described several criteria for the consideration of the Canadianness of a literary work, the most essential of which is that the work be "inspired by Canadian sentiment, scenery or aspiration."<sup>15</sup> Of lesser importance were the authors' places of birth and residence.

Nevertheless, in the attempt to identify English-Canadian opinions about Canada, the works consulted were limited to those by writers who had some period of residency in Canada.<sup>16</sup> The works of writers who were born in Canada, yet left the country prior to young adulthood and never returned either in person or in fiction, were not considered. Works of this description perhaps belong properly to the English-language mainstream rather than the specifically Canadian portion of this culture. On the contrary, writers who spent a significant portion of their life in Canada, even if it was not the land of their birth or upbringing, were often important figures in the creation of English-Canadian national identity. Novels written by such authors were included in the source material used in this study.

The number of novels consulted for this study is important because such a wide-ranging survey provides a suitable basis for a discussion of opinions shared by educated, English-speaking Canadians. While literary

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<sup>15</sup>J. G. Bourinot, *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness: A Short Historical and Critical Review of Literature, Art and Education in Canada*, (Montreal: Foster Brown & Co., 1893; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 18.

<sup>16</sup>Sources used to locate biographical details about authors of fiction included: *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volumes 10-14 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972-1998); W. H. New, ed., *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Volumes 92 & 99 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990); William Toye, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1983).



scholars have the luxury of making generalizations based upon one or two texts, the historian who wishes to use literary evidence must make a stronger case for the representativeness of his or her sources. Wide reading in the novels written in English by Canadians about Canada allowed for the identification of opinions that were typical of educated English-Canadians who published novels, as well as points of view that were unique to certain authors. In general, as Carole Gerson pointed out, very few English-Canadian authors were engaged in writing in order to shock or dismay their contemporaries.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of religious affiliation or regional background, English-Canadian authors displayed a general consensus about the characteristics that made Canada and Canadians unique.

The intensive study of the fictional literature of late-nineteenth-century Canada gives a unique insight into the world view of middle-class English Canadians. When writing fiction, authors are especially prone to reflecting the beliefs and assumptions of their society. English-Canadian authors revealed their ideas about Canada and Canadians through their plots and characters and through direct authorial statements. In the late nineteenth century, it was quite common for authors of fiction to include didactic passages within the narrative. Authorial asides were often detailed statements of beliefs about morality, gender issues, or national characteristics. Harder for the historian to interpret are the authors' intentions as reflected in their plots and characterizations. Nevertheless, this evidence can be especially revelatory of the unspoken assumptions of a given culture.

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<sup>17</sup>Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 132-151.

Fiction reflects the imaginative possibilities available to its writers and shapes those of its readers. As historian Ted Magder points out, "Ideas matter, even (perhaps especially) when they are packaged by institutions as a form of leisure and received by audiences as entertainment." Ideas, including those that are reflected in the plots and characters of fictional works, are important because, in the words of Canadian historian Doug Owram, "Man reacts to his perceptions of reality as well as to reality itself."<sup>18</sup> Because of this tendency, it is important that historians explore what people thought about their world.

The present study is an attempt to discern the world view of English-speaking Canadians in the late nineteenth century. As with all efforts of its kind, the study is necessarily limited. Though novels were a relatively inclusive format for the time period, written by both men and women and intended to be read by all social classes, the opinions reflected in them were almost exclusively those of the educated middle and upper classes. Even by the end of the nineteenth century, when more and more people were learning how to read and write, the people who did write and publish anything that recorded their way of seeing the world belonged to a social group that sent its sons, and increasingly its daughters, to university. English-Canadian fiction therefore reflected the worldview of a particular group of Canadians. This group was dominant in the construction of Canadian political and cultural life in the late nineteenth century. Indeed,

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<sup>18</sup>Ted Magder, *Canada's Hollywood: The Canadian State and Feature Films* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), x; Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 6. Also see Joan Lyall Aitken, *Masques of Morality: Females in Fiction* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987), 34; Susan Joan Wood, *The Land in Canadian Prose, 1840-1945* (Ottawa: Carleton Monographs in English Language and Literature, 1988), 14; Robin W. Winks, *The Myth of the American Frontier: Its Relevance to America, Canada and Australia* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971), 7.

most members of Parliament were drawn from the educated classes. Their view of the nation, as revealed in their fiction, was particularly important in Canadian national development.

Fiction shows us the boundaries of the imagination rather than the boundaries of reality. The historian who reads such sources with the same seriousness that is commonly given to other products of individual consciousness such as diaries and letters finds a unique insight into the beliefs and assumptions of earlier societies.<sup>19</sup> Although it is important to consider the popularity and readership of individual fictional works, the historian can also read fiction as the creation of an individual consciousness in a particular social setting. When read broadly, the characterizations and plot twists of fiction reflect the imaginative possibilities available to the writer and thus each individual's works provide insight into their culture.

This view of what the people of the past thought of themselves and their lives is important to the historian, in order to restrain what historian Peter Moogk called "that anachronistic human inclination to see past generations as people who thought and acted just as we do, but merely dressed in period costume."<sup>20</sup> Extensive reading in late-nineteenth-century

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<sup>19</sup>Robin W. Winks, "'Whodunit?' Canadian Society as Reflected in its Detective Fiction," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 17 (Winter 1987-1988): 377; Colin Watson, *Snobbery With Violence: English Crime Stories and Their Audience*, 3rd. ed. (London: Methuen, 1987), 14-15; George Woodcock, "The Meeting of the Muses: Recent Canadian Fiction and the Historical Viewpoint," *Canadian Historical Review* 60 (June 1979): 142; Mary Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada, 1899-1918: An Overview," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 24 (1979): 96-98; Francis, *National Dreams*, 14; John V. Fleming, "Historians and the Evidence of Literature," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (Summer 1973): 95, 102; Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), xi; Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 3; Carrie MacMillan, Lorraine McMullen, and Elizabeth Waterston, *Silenced Sextet: Six Nineteenth-Century Canadian Women Novelists* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 202,208.

<sup>20</sup>Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada—A Cultural History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), xviii. Also see David Lowenthal, *The*

fiction shows that the educated classes of the nineteenth-century really did not think the same way that we do. Their fiction can give some insight into what they thought and perhaps, therefore, why they acted as they did.

Historians and cultural studies scholars have begun to explore the possibilities of fiction as a source material for the consideration of ideas about gender, race, class, imperialism, and nationalism in the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> This project is an attempt to extend this type of analysis to the history of the creation of an English-Canadian idea of what it meant to be Canadian. Few Canadian historians have considered fiction written in the past as a source material for the historical development of Canadian nationalism. Canadian historians and literary scholars have been more interested in determining the existence of Canadian fiction than in examining its role in the nineteenth-century nation-building enterprise.<sup>22</sup>

One reason for the reluctance of Canadian historians to make use of novels as source material has been the tendency of the Canadian literary establishment to ignore the existence of nineteenth-century Canadian fiction. The writings of Canadian literary critics give the impression that Canadians, with a few exceptions, were not writing or publishing fiction in

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*Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xvi; Isobel McKenna, "Women in Canadian Literature," *Canadian Literature* 62 (Autumn 1974): 69.

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-174; Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

<sup>22</sup>Graham Carr, "Literary History: Convergence or Resistance?" *Acadiensis* 23 (Autumn 1993): 159-179.

the nineteenth century. This attitude is exemplified in the list of books chosen as the ten "most important" at the 1978 Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel, none of which was published prior to World War II.<sup>23</sup> The resulting lack of awareness of the existence of Canadian fiction in the nineteenth century helped to discourage its use by historians.

Yet novels and other fiction were an important factor in the creation of the imagined community of modern nations. Cathy Davidson discusses this in the context of the early national period of the United States. Her work is a perceptive analysis of "the ways in which a small body of Americans used the novel as a political and cultural forum, a means to express their own vision of a developing new nation."<sup>24</sup> She sees the novels of the Early Republic as central to the creation of an American national identity. In their own early national period, between 1867 and 1900, English-speaking Canadians also turned to fiction as a means of creating and declaring a Canadian national identity.

In the period between Confederation and the turn of the century, English Canadian nationalists believed that the creation of a national literature would be an important contributor to the creation of a national cultural identity. Nationalistic groups such as Canada First emphasized the importance of a national literature to the creation of national identity.<sup>25</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, as the literary scholar Carole Gerson

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<sup>23</sup>Lawrence Mathews, "Calgary, Canonization, and Class: Deciphering List B," in *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value*, ed. Robert Lecker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 151.

<sup>24</sup>Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 11.

<sup>25</sup>Berger, *Sense of Power*, 50; Bissell, "Literary Taste," 239; A.G. Bailey, "Canada First: The Dissident Press and the Public Image," in *Culture and Nationality*, 175.

notes, educated English Canadians “strove towards the creation of a national literature that distinctively and appropriately referred to Canada.” Prior to 1900, in other words, Canadian writers represented a nation that was “both seeking and creating its identity through its literature.”<sup>26</sup> With this in mind, the utility of fictional sources for historians and others interested in the early development of Canadian nationalism and national identity becomes obvious.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian nationalists consistently looked towards their literature to reflect and create national identity and a sense of national pride and patriotism. English-Canadian intellectuals frequently wrote about the nationalist and literary quality of Canadian literature, to the point that one wag quipped, in 1897, that “We will soon be able to compile a bibliography of what has been written about Canadian literature, more voluminous than the literature itself.”<sup>27</sup> In all of this discussion of Canadian literature, English-Canadian critics were unanimous in calling for a literature that expressed distinct aspects of Canadian life and character.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Gerson, *Purer Taste*, ix, xiii. See also Jonathan Kertzer, *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), which deals mainly with the twentieth century; Mary Lu MacDonald, “A Very Laudable Effort: Standards of Literary Excellence in Early Nineteenth Century Canada,” *Canadian Literature* 131 (Winter 1991): 88; Graham Carr, “Design as Content: Foreign Influences and the Identity of English-Canadian Literary Magazines, 1919-1939,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 18 (1988): 181-182; A. D. Gilbert, “‘On the Road to New York’: The Protective Impulse and the English-Canadian Cultural Identity, 1896-1914,” *Dalhousie Review* 58 (Autumn 1978): 408-409; A. G. Bailey, “Literature and Nationalism in the Aftermath of Confederation,” in *Culture and Nationality*, 58-59, 68, 71; Frye, “Conclusion,” 823.

<sup>27</sup>Evelyn Durand, “A Further Word on Canadian Literature,” *Canadian Educational Monthly* (April 1897): quoted in Gerson, *Purer Taste*, 15. For examples of this early Canadian literary criticism, see Carl Ballstadt, ed. *The Search for English-Canadian Literature: An Anthology of Critical Articles from the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

<sup>28</sup>Examples of this include: the Introductory statement of the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 1 (January 1872): 1; Bourinot, *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness*, 28-

This desire for a national literature that would create national identity was also obvious in book reviews of novels by Canadian authors. In addition to the criteria of plot and literary style that were typical of book reviews of the time period,<sup>29</sup> English-Canadian reviewers of Canadian books were concerned with identifying the book or the novelist as Canadian; they identified novels that told “a distinctively Canadian tale” and that were “Canadian in spirit, theme and association.” They commonly recommended such novels to their readers, saying that these characteristics made such books “deserving of, and guarantee[d] a favorable reception at the hands of the public.”<sup>30</sup>

Equally revealing of nineteenth-century English-Canadian nationalists’ belief in their fiction as part of their national development were reviewers’ reactions to stories that they claimed failed to live up to the literary or moral standards they expected of Canada and Canadians. One such novel, *The Captain’s Cabin: A Christmas Yarn*, was dismissed by one

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<sup>29</sup>William Douw Lighthall, *The Conditions of a Colonial Literature* (Montreal: Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, 1897), 6; John A. Cooper, “The Strength and Weakness of Current Books,” *Canadian Magazine* 13 (May 1899): 13; S. E. Dawson, *The Prose Writers of Canada: An Address Delivered Before the Teachers of the City and District of Montreal* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1901; CIHM 12531), 32-33, 37-39; Thomas Guthrie Marquis, “English Canadian Literature,” in *Canada and Its Provinces*, ed. Adam Shortt and A. B. Doughty (1913; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); 493.

<sup>29</sup>Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

<sup>30</sup>Review of *Archie of Athabaska*, by J. Macdonald Oxley, in *Books and Notions* 9 (December 1893): 10; Review of *A Daughter of Patricians*, by F. Clifford Smith, in *Toronto Saturday Night* 13 (Oct. 13, 1900): 4; Review of *The Canadian Senator*, by Christopher Oakes, in *Books and Notions* 7 (February 1891). Similar comments appeared in other reviews, including: Review of *For King and Country*, by Agnes Maule Machar, in *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 6 (December 1874): 571-572; Review of *Crowded Out*, by S. Frances Harrison, in *Book and Notions* 3 (February 1887): 117; Mary Agnes FitzGibbon, review of *A Lover in Homespun*, by F. Clifford Smith, in *Our Monthly* 1 (May 1896): 81; Review of *Judith Moore*, by Joanna E. Wood, in *Toronto Saturday Night* 11 (March 12, 1898): 7; Review of *The Forest of Bourg-Marie*, by S. Frances Harrison, in *Toronto Saturday Night* 12 (December 24, 1898): 14.

critic as “a coarse and vulgar travesty of Canadian character, as devoid of artistic merit as it is of truthfulness.”<sup>31</sup> Reviewers expressed a desire for a Canadian-produced fiction that would depict Canadians to themselves, but they worried when this fiction did not produce an admirable picture of Canada as a society. These nationalists desired a fiction that met criteria of morality rather than reality. They wanted a Canadian fiction that would create and reinforce a moral, patriotic, and unique Canadian identity.

It is obvious that the novelists shared the concerns of literary critics. Indeed, some of these literary critics were also novelists, including Thomas Marquis, William Douw Lighthall, Robert Barr, and Sara Jeannette Duncan. Many novelists emphasized the contribution they hoped their work would make to Canadian national development. William Withrow, Methodist minister, novelist, and editor and book reviewer for the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, stated this clearly when he described his aims in writing his 1879 novel, *The King's Messenger*:

It is an attempt to depict, from personal observation, phases of Canadian life with which the writer is somewhat familiar—with what success others must decide. If it shall inspire in Canadian readers a stronger love of the noble country which is ours, and a desire to live for its moral and religious progress, it shall not have been written in vain.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Review of *The Captain's Cabin: A Christmas Tale*, by Edward Jenkins, MP, in *Canadian Methodist Magazine* 7 (February 1878): 189. Also see the Review of *Bluebell: A Canadian Society Novel*, by Mrs. G. C. Huddleston, in *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 8 (August 1875): 184.

<sup>32</sup>William Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation: A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 32392), Preface. Similar sentiments were expressed in the author's introductions or prefaces in the following novels: Rosanna Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing: A Canadian Tale* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864; reprint, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989); Grodenk, pseud., *My Own Story: A Canadian Christmas Tale* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1869; CIHM 06368); William Withrow, Neville Trueman, *The Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1880; CIHM 34398); William Douw Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur; or, Nation-Making* (Montreal: Wm. Drysdale & Co., 1888;



Moreover, 29 of the 242 novels consulted for this study—almost 12 percent—included references within their title to their Canadianness. Such subtitles included “A Canadian Story,” “A Canadian Tale,” and “A Story of Canadian Life.”

English-Canadian nationalists and literary critics desired a Canadian literature that would be distinctively Canadian, yet equal to the literary standards set by British novelists and critics. Though the critics had doubts about the ability of Canadians to produce such a literature, English Canadians continued to attempt to write novels that would meet these standards. In choosing this genre, English-Canadian authors were echoing the spirit of the age. In the late nineteenth century, fiction was swiftly becoming the most popular of all literary genres. As the Canadian literary critic S. E. Dawson pointed out in 1901, “literature, in the opinion of the majority of the present day, consists mainly of fiction.”<sup>33</sup> One reason for this new prominence of fiction as one of the most read of all literary genres was the increasing literacy that was typical of English-speaking Canadians during the late nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> As more and more children were able,

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CIHM 24305); Robert Sellar, *Gleaner Tales Volume Two* (Huntingdon, Quebec: Canadian Gleaner Office, 1895; CIHM 24305).

<sup>33</sup>Dawson, *Prose Writers of Canada*, 32. Also see W. Kent Power, “The Reading of Canadian Students,” *University Magazine* 8 (February 1909): 128.

<sup>34</sup>On literacy and schooling in nineteenth-century Canada, see Harvey J. Graff, “Respected and Profitable Labour: Literacy, Jobs and the Working Class in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Essays in Working Class History*, ed. Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 65-66; Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 19-20; Delores Broten and Peter Birdsall, *Paper Phoenix: A History of Book Publishing in English Canada* (Victoria, British Columbia: CANLIT, 1980), 4-6; George L. Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 131, 196; John A. Wiseman, “Silent Companions: The Dissemination of Books and Periodicals in Nineteenth-Century Ontario,” *Publishing History* 12 (1982): 41; and Jim Blanchard, “Anatomy of Failure: Ontario Mechanics’ Institutes, 1835-1895,” *Canadian Library Journal* 38 (1981): 396.

even compelled, to go to school, larger percentages of the population became literate. Many of these new readers preferred fiction over more serious literature because they turned to reading for relaxation rather than for education.<sup>35</sup> The overall popularity of fiction with readers was reflected in the circulation statistics and the overall holdings of public libraries and their predecessors, Mechanics' Institutes and subscription libraries. In some cases, two-thirds of all books circulated were fiction.<sup>36</sup>

However, the fiction that Canadians read was overwhelmingly not Canadian in authorship, setting, or characters. Scholarly examinations of best-seller lists, reading habits, and the Canadian book trade are unanimous in declaring that throughout the nineteenth century novels written by British and American writers dominated the Canadian market.<sup>37</sup> George Parker explained the reasons for this predominance in his study, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada*. He pointed out that Canadian

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<sup>35</sup>Graff, "Respected and Profitable Labour," 64; Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 34.

<sup>36</sup>Wiseman, "Silent Companions," 30-31; Blanchard, "Anatomy of Failure," 397. Similar statistics are noted in Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 128; Lorne Bruce, *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 13, 43, 84-88. On library holdings, see, for example, *Rules and Regulations and Catalogue of Books of the Brantford Free Library, established 1884* (Brantford, Ontario: W. J. McHaffie, 1894; CIHM 01090); *The Official Catalogue of the Books Contained in the Free Library, Vancouver, B. C.* (Vancouver: Budget Presses, 1897; CIHM 16313); *The London Mechanics Institute Library: Catalogue, Subscription* (London, Ontario: Herald, 1881; CIHM 18605); *Catalogue with the Rules and Constitution of the Citizen's Free Library* (Halifax: W. Macnab, 1876; CIHM 08516); *Catalogue of the Portland Free Public Library* (Saint John, New Brunswick: J. & A. McMillan, 1882; CIHM 12096); *Catalogue of the Books in the Circulating Library, Toronto Public Library* (Toronto: "Week" Office, 1889; CIHM 24856); *Catalogue of Books in the Scarborough Public Library* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1898; CIHM 12633).

<sup>37</sup>Elizabeth Waterston, "Books and Notions: The Canadian Popular Novel in the Nineteenth-Century," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 9 (September 1982): 440; Mary Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada, 1899-1918: An Overview," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 24 (1979): 96-119; Power, "The Reading of Canadian Students," 130-131; Bissell, "Literary Taste," 246.

publishers in the nineteenth century supported themselves by publishing school textbooks and government documents and by reprinting British and American novels. Due to imperial and Canadian copyright laws British and American works could be printed without any financial recompense to their authors. Canadian publishers like John Lovell of Montreal and J. Ross Robertson of Toronto sold such novels for prices ranging from five to twenty-five cents. Reprints of British and American novels were therefore more available to English Canadian readers than those of their own writers, as the reprints were both cheaper and more widely distributed.<sup>38</sup>

Apparently, the English-Canadian book buyers were less worried about the creation of Canadian culture and nationality than were those who wrote book reviews and novels. At the least, they were not concerned enough to pay higher prices for books by Canadian authors. English-Canadian nationalists perceived this lack of interest in paying higher prices for entertainment as unpatriotic. Such lack of popularity of their own works led them to a greater concern with the nationalistic sentiments of their fellow Canadians and increased their desire to create such beliefs by whatever means necessary. This may have been an important motivation for their writing, especially in the absence of monetary incentives. Most

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<sup>38</sup>George L. Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Fraser Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines, 1789-1989* (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989), 27; Broten and Birdsall, *Paper Phoenix*, 10-11, 15; George L. Parker, "The Canadian Copyright Question in the 1890s," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (May 1976): 43-55; Elizabeth Hulse, "Copp, William Walter," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 12: 212-213; George L. Parker, "Lovell, John," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 12: 569-573; Elizabeth Hulse, "Rose, George Maclean," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 12: 921-924; Douglas Lochhead, "J. Ross Robertson—Publisher: Aspects of the Book Trade in Nineteenth-Century Toronto," in *Book Selling and Book Buying: Aspects of the Nineteenth-Century British and North American Book Trade*, ed. Richard G. Landon (Chicago: American Library Association, 1978), 73-86; Douglas Lochhead, "John Ross Robertson, Uncommon Publisher for the Common Reader: His First Years as a Toronto Book Publisher," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (May 1976): 19-26.

English-Canadian authors did not support themselves primarily through their writing in the nineteenth century. With a very few exceptions, they gained their primary financial support through other means such as alternate employment or family connections. Sometimes, in order to get their book printed, authors had to pay for its printing themselves.<sup>39</sup>

Why did these writers write, then, if they could not expect significant financial remuneration? English-Canadian authors often addressed this question in prefaces to their novels. Of those who wrote prefaces, most indicated that they wrote out of a desire to communicate something to their countrymen and women. Some hoped to convey eternal religious truths or the evils of drinking alcohol, or to provide a wholesome alternative to the immoral and sensational dime novels that many people were reading.<sup>40</sup>

Most significantly for this study, other English-Canadian authors who stated their purpose revealed that their motives for writing fiction were nationalistic. These authors said that they wrote in order to convey basic truths about Canada to their fellow Canadians, as did one writer who

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<sup>39</sup>Parker, *Book Trade*, 54-56, 67, 144, 183, 233-234; James Doyle, "Canadian Women Writers and the American Literary Milieu of the 1890s," in *Re(Dis)covering Our Foremothers: Nineteenth-Century Canadian Women Writers*, ed. Lorraine McMullen (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990), 30-36; Gilbert, "On the Road to New York," 405-417; Carole Gerson, "Canadian Women Writers and American Markets, 1880-1940," in *Context North America: Canadian/U. S. Literary Relations*, ed. Camille R. Labossière (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 110-112.

<sup>40</sup>Rev. Robert Wilson, *Never Give Up; or, Life in the Lower Provinces* (Saint John, New Brunswick: *Daily News* Steam Job Office, 1878; CIHM 32337), Preface; J. W. Griffin, *Help in the Distance: A New Dominion Story* (Elora, Ontario: for the author, 1868); W. A. C., *Tim Doolan, The Irish Emigrant* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1869; CIHM 13409); Rev. William Cheetham, *Lights and Shadows of Clerical Life* (Montreal: Lovell, 1879; CIHM 00596); W. H. Withrow, *Life in a Parsonage; or, Lights and Shadows of the Itinerancy* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1886; CIHM 34395); Thomas B. Smith, *Young Lion of the Woods; or, A Story of Early Colonial Days* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1889; CIHM 15222); J. Shinnick, *The Banker's Daughter; or, Her First and Last Ball* (Montreal: *The Gazette* Printing Company, 1891; CIHM 13611); Cornelius Wilson, *Rescued in Time* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1894; CIHM 25976); Coll McLean Sinclair, [Malcolm, pseud.], *The Dear Old Farm: A Canadian Story* (St. Thomas, Ontario: *The Journal* Publishers, 1897; CIHM 09517).

“intended to crystallize some phases of Canadian life into our literature.”<sup>41</sup> This attempt to write about Canadian experience was motivated by nationalism. By describing scenes and people that were uniquely Canadian, these authors believed that they were encouraging their fellow Canadians to feel nationalistic pride. In addition, writing about Canadian subjects was believed to be an important component in the construction of Canadian national identity.

Such indications of the intentions of English-Canadian authors are important to the historian attempting to discuss the “cultural work” done by these fictions about Canada and Canadian life. The term cultural work is borrowed from Jane Tompkins, the literary scholar who argued for a new understanding of literature whereby works of fiction would be evaluated based on their function in the culture that created them, rather than by modern literary standards that demand originality. She believes that individual works of fiction attempt to address and possibly solve the social problems of the time in which they were written and that they should be evaluated on how successful they were in doing this cultural work, one determination of which is their popularity in their own time period. This is an argument that presents profound difficulties for the scholar of English-Canadian culture, because it is difficult to the point of impossibility to

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<sup>41</sup>Richard Lanigan, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada, Fifty Years Ago* (Montreal: Lovell, 1888; CIHM 28408), Explanatory. Other authors who identified a desire to convey a nationalist message included: Grodenk, pseud., *My Own Story: A Canadian Christmas Tale* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1869; CIHM 06368); W. H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation: A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 32392); W. H. Withrow, *Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1880; CIHM 34398); William Douw Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur; or, Nation-Making* (Montreal: Wm. Drysdale & Co., 1888; CIHM 24305); Robert Sellar, *Gleaner Tales, Volume Two* (Huntingdon, Quebec: Canadian Gleaner Office, 1895; CIHM 33029); Blanche Lucile MacDonell, *Diane of Ville Marie: A Romance of French Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898; CIHM 09409).

determine the readership of books written by English-Canadian authors. Sales can be estimated by noting how many editions a book went through, who it was published by, and how energetically it was advertised in newspapers and in other books, but sales of books written by Canadians for a Canadian audience cannot be quantitatively determined.<sup>42</sup>

For the modern scholar, it is even more challenging to find out what English-speaking Canadians thought about the fiction they read. With the exception of book reviews, which were generally written by the same group of people who wrote the novels, very little reader commentary on English-Canadian novels survives. Even novelists only very rarely commented upon other Canadian novels, with the exception of William Kirby's 1876 novel about New France, which was referenced in three other novels.<sup>43</sup> This makes it very difficult for the historian to discuss Canadians as "consumers" of literature, to use Mary Vipond's phrase, or to do the type of integrated study of books and reader's responses to them that Cathy Davidson undertook for the early United States.<sup>44</sup>

In the face of this lack of information about readership, authorial intention becomes the clearest indication of the cultural work done by novels about Canada in post-Confederation English Canada. Therefore, instead of embarking on the elusive task of finding out what Canadians

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<sup>42</sup>Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, 38, 200; Waterston, "Books and Notions," 437-439; Lochhead, "John Ross Robertson, *Uncommon Publisher for the Common Reader*," 19-20.

<sup>43</sup>William Kirby, *The Golden Dog: A Romance of Old Quebec* (New York: Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Co., 1877; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969); which appeared in: Margaret Marshall Saunders, *The House of Armour* (Philadelphia: A. J. Rowland, 1897; CIHM 13298), 185; W. D. Lighthall, *The False Chevalier; or, The Lifeguard of Marie* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1898; CIHM 26273), 123, 162; Mabel Clint, *Under the King's Bastion: A Romance of Quebec* (Quebec City: Frank Carrel, 1902), 13-14, 55-58.

<sup>44</sup>Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada," 96; Davidson, *Revolution and the Word*, viii, 4-6.

thought about what they read, this study concentrates upon what English-speaking Canadians were writing. Such a study is, Vipond asserts, equally important as a key "to comprehending at least partially the 'mind' of middle-class English Canada." By reading the stories that they wrote and published about themselves, the historian can identify what Daniel Francis calls "the master narrative which explains the culture to itself."<sup>45</sup>

The story of Canada that appeared in these novels was relevant to the creation of Canadian national identity regardless of their level of popular readership. The authors were not a culturally marginalized group within English-Canadian society. Instead, they were from the educated social classes that provided Canada with religious leaders, politicians, newspaper publishers, educators, lawyers, and influential merchants.<sup>46</sup> Several of the

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<sup>45</sup>Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada," 96; Francis, *National Dreams*, 10.

<sup>46</sup>Novelists who were ministers or the children of ministers included Margaret Marshall Saunders (Carole Gerson, "Margaret Marshall Saunders," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), 327-330); Margaret Murray Robertson (Lorraine McMullen, "Robertson, Margaret Murray," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 12: 904-906); Charles G. D. Roberts (Patricia Morley, "Charles G. D. Roberts," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 92*, 301-308); and Agnes Maule Machar (Carole Gerson, "Agnes Maule Machar," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 92*, 220-221). Politicians and officeholders who wrote novels included Lucius Seth Huntington (J. I. Little, "Huntington, Lucius Seth," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 11: 437-439); Alexander Begg (D. R. Owsram, "Begg, Alexander," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 11: 81-84); and Duncan Campbell Scott (see "About the Author" in the New Canadian Library Edition of Scott's *In the Village of Viger*). Newspaper publishers and journalists, and their children, who wrote novels included Robert Sellar (Robert Andrew Hill, "Sellar, Robert," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 14: 919-921; C. C. L. "Sellar, Robert," *Standard Dictionary*, 461-463); Lily Dougall (Lorraine McMullen, "Lily Dougall," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 92*, 85-87); and Joseph Edmund Collins (M. Brook Taylor, "Collins, Joseph Edmund," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 12: 204-206). Lawyers who were novelists included James MacDonald Oxley and Thomas Stinson Jarvis, both so identified in Gordon Roper, S. Ross Beharriell, and Rupert Schieder, "Writers of Fiction (1880-1920)," in *The Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 321. Authors who were merchants or the children of merchants included William McLennan (Neil K. Besner, "William McLennan," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 92*, 242; Leslie G. Monkman, "McLennan, William," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 13:665); Jean Newton McIlwraith (Misao Dean, "Jean Newton McIlwraith," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 92*, 239); and Sara Jeannette Duncan (Thomas E. Tauskey, "Sara Jeannette Duncan," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 92*, 97).

authors considered were college professors, including Thomas Marquis and James De Mille.<sup>47</sup> Many of the authors were ministers, including Reverend Charles William Gordon, who wrote as Ralph Connor, and Reverend William Withrow, editor of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*.<sup>48</sup> Other authors included an Ontario judge and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Halifax.<sup>49</sup>

The cultural influence of these authors cannot be measured solely by the dollar amounts earned from their writing, even if those figures were available. Instead, their novels were indicative of the opinions held by the social groups who were instrumental in shaping the Canadian nation. These novels were only one means by which that shaping was accomplished. Nevertheless, the novels remain particularly useful sources for illuminating the opinions of those who were influential in creating Canadian national identity in the late nineteenth century.

In this period, national identity was qualified and contested by other identities. Gender, race, and class both competed with and were important in the creation of a national sense of self. As Joan Wallach Scott pointed out, gender ideals, like national identities, are cultural artifacts. These

<sup>47</sup>Marquis was identified by Carman Miller, in *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 18. On De Mille, see Patricia Monk, "James De Mille," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 99, 92-94; Minerva Tracy, "De Mille, James," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 10: 223-224.

<sup>48</sup>Michael Hurley, "Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon)," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 50-55; Paul Matthew St. Pierre, "William Henry Withrow," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 99, 344-347; G. S. French, "Withrow, William Henry," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 13: 1103-1105.

<sup>49</sup>The Ontario judge wrote under the pseudonym of Christopher Oakes. This identification is from a column on "Canadian Books and Authors," *Books and Notions* 9 (March 1893): 7. On the Archbishop of Halifax, see R. V. B., "O'Brien, Cornelius," *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who Was Who*, ed. Charles G. D. Roberts & Arthur L. Tunnell (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1934), 384-386.



identities are “produced, reproduced, and transformed in different situations and over time.”<sup>50</sup> Race, gender, and national identities interact and influence each other as they are all imagined and created. It has become a truism in American women’s history that race and gender interact in the formation of an individual’s identity, to the point that these can be separated as ideas only with difficulty. The same is true of ideas about gender and race in the creation of national identity.<sup>51</sup>

In nineteenth-century Canada, national identity was gendered in a complex way. Canada as a nation was generally imagined as a woman in political cartoons and one allegorical novel in which the young girl, Canadia, needed the protection of John Bull, Britain, against the importunities of Brother Jonathan, the United States.<sup>52</sup> In the late nineteenth century, women were also seen as essential to the creation of the Canadian nation in that they were the civilizers of the nation. Women would transform the nation from a trackless wilderness into a settled, agricultural, productive nation. In novels, even the ethnic makeup of the nation was seen in gendered terms, as the outcome of a process of intermarriage between different ethnic and racial groups.

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<sup>50</sup>Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 6. On national identity see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 13-15.

<sup>51</sup>One study of a gendered creation of national identity is Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998). Also see Carter F. Hanson, “‘Working’ in the West: The Canadian Prairies as Playground in Late Victorian Literature,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31 (Winter 2001), 657-659, on Ralph Connor’s use of work to define a Canadian masculinity.

<sup>52</sup>R. Urtica, *The Story of John and Jonathan* (Ottawa: Bell & Woodburn, 1871; CIHM 32317); J. L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996).

At the same time, Canadians constructed a view of their nation as a profoundly manly, virile place. Canada was seen as being characterized by its Northern location and its wilderness areas, both of which were presented as primarily masculine. Even in the portrayal of the settlement process, masculine traits were emphasized. Novelists depicted clearing land, farming, and fighting to maintain one's right to the land as profoundly masculine aspects of the Canadian experience. As the author William Withrow said, in his editorial preface to the poetry anthology *Songs of the Great Dominion*, "to hunt, to fight, to hew out a farm, one must be a man!" At the same time, he continued to use feminine terms to describe the nation as "Eldest Daughter of the Empire."<sup>53</sup>

The following chapters explore the English-Canadian world view and how authors defined Canadian identity in relation to the land, race, and gender in the late nineteenth century. Three chapters explore the various representations of Canadian identity as based upon a relationship to the land. Chapter Two discusses the characterization of Canada as a northern place, with an identity based upon a unique landscape and climate. The following chapter examines the representation of Canada as a nation determined by its wilderness past. In this view of Canada as a wilderness nation, Canadian identity was believed to be based upon a continuing relationship with wilderness areas. Such relationships were seen as primarily masculine. The fourth chapter considers the novelistic ideal of the settler experience as a determinant factor in Canadian identity. This view of Canadian identity made a sharp distinction between male and

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<sup>53</sup>Quoted in Eric Kaufmann, "Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (October 1998): 683.

female Canadians. Each sex was shown as having a different, yet equally necessary, relationship to the settlement process.

The second section of the dissertation consists of three chapters that consider the various ways in which Canadian identity was seen as a result of Canadian heritage. Heritage, in this case, included both historical experience and racial identity. Chapter Five discusses the influence of Canada's British imperial heritage upon its national identity. English-speaking Canadians defined their identity both through a racial heritage of Britishness and through a continuing rejection of the United States. Chapter Six includes a more detailed consideration of the use of Canada's racial makeup as part of the English-Canadian creation of national identity. The final chapter in this section contemplates the English-Canadian embrace of the French heritage within the Canadian nation.

Although the concepts of land and heritage are studied separately, they intersected in many ways in the creation of Canadian national identity in the late nineteenth century. The belief that Canada was a northern nation influenced ideas about the racial heritage of Canadians. The characterization of Canada as a wilderness landscape was based upon a particular view of Canada's past as well as of its land. Novelists described the Canadian settlement process in terms of the transformation of the land and of the people who settled it. In this view, settlers were shaped by their contact with the land at the same time that they transformed it. Yet settlers were also changed by their relationship to each other. Novelists portrayed the Canadian experience of settling a northern continent as one in which national identity was formed through the combination of various racial groups, i.e. English, Scottish, French, and Indian, into a unique national type. In their view, Canadians' unique national identity was the result of

the blending of the best characteristics of all these groups combined with the influence of the Canadian landscape and of Canadian history.

## Chapter 2

### NORTHMEN OF THE NEW WORLD: LANDSCAPE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADIAN CHARACTER

Canada has long been seen as a nation defined by its unique geography and climate. As early as the 1820s residents of British North America were basing their sense of identity around their experience of the landscape. Cole Harris's 1966 observation that "English-speaking Canadians tend to explain themselves in terms of land and location" was as valid throughout the nineteenth century as it is today. Indeed, landscape was a powerful factor in the creation of various national identities in the nineteenth century, but in Canada the association of landscape with national character was especially strong and necessary.<sup>1</sup>

In the late nineteenth century Canadians were faced with the necessity of creating an imagined national community in the face of deep divisions of language, culture, and religion. They had created Canada, now they had to create Canadians.<sup>2</sup> English Canadians found that, by emphasizing the land, something that all Canadians shared in common, they could minimize differences in language and culture. Therefore

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<sup>1</sup>M. Brook Taylor, *Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans: Historiography in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 49; Cole Harris, "The Myth of the Land in Canadian Nationalism," in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 27; Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 5; Allan Smith, "American Culture and the Concept of Mission in Nineteenth-Century English Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1971): 169-170, 179.

<sup>2</sup>These concepts of the imagined and created nature of national identity are drawn from: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263-308. The phraseology is borrowed from Hobsbawm, 267.

English-Canadians often emphasized the common experience of their unique geography as a central factor in Canadian national identity.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian writers of fiction were important contributors to the creation of this sense of Canada as a nation defined, literally, by its place in the world. In their fiction, Canada was defined by a geography that was imagined in two basic ways. The most prevalent was “the idea that Canada’s unique character derived from her northern location, her severe winters, and her heritage of ‘northern races.’”<sup>3</sup> Secondly, English Canadians felt that the future of their nation would be based upon the agricultural and mineral wealth that would be found in their vast national territory. The very size of the nation became a source of national pride, as evidenced by the work of painters, poets, and politicians as well as writers of fiction.<sup>4</sup>

The most prevalent idea of Canada was as a northern nation. English-Canadian writers of fiction characterized their nation as a northern land whose northern climate gave the nation, and its people, a unique national identity. The identification of Canada with cold weather was so strong that writers often used it to give a distinctively Canadian setting or feel to their books. Writers often made sure that the first impressions readers or characters got of Canada showed it as a place of ice and snow. In

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<sup>3</sup>Carl Berger, “The True North Strong and Free,” in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 4. Also see Eric Kaufmann, “‘Naturalizing the Nation’: The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (October 1998): 680-686; Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 115.

<sup>4</sup>For example, consider the production of a volume of 540 illustrations, *Picturesque Canada*, in 1882. This volume was expected “to stimulate national sentiment” through pride in the landscape depicted. See the discussion of this work in J. M. Bumstead, *The Peoples of Canada: A Pre-Confederation History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 385-386.

one example among many, the very first lines of the novel recognize Canada as a land of ice and snow:

The January moonlight lay white upon the Canadian college town of Ithica. In fields and vacant lots, where the crust of snow was unbroken, the eye was conscious of vast stretches of ethereal purity which stirred in a sensuous way the moral faculty and flooded the emotions like a strain of lofty music. Only the hard glitter, when the moon's rays fell upon a bit of icy coating here and there, brought a reminder of the edged cold that was cutting the face.<sup>5</sup>

This portrayal of Canadian winter weather also indicates another important aspect of the English-Canadian idea of their northern character. The ethereally pure virgin snow indicates the moral aspect of Canada's northern character. In this aspect of the ideology of northern identity, Canada's harsh climate would ensure moral purity because it lacked the steamy heat that led to moral degeneration in more southerly climates.<sup>6</sup> English-Canadian authors emphasized the moral benefits of their climate without minimizing the discomforts associated with Canada's winter weather.

For nineteenth-century English Canadians, north was not simply a direction. Within Canadian culture, the North signifies a complex set of ideas about the world and Canada's place within it. Daniel Francis's discussion of the idea of the North in Canadian culture reveals the basic dualism inherent in this idea. The North is simultaneously a place, the

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<sup>5</sup>Albert R. Carman, *The Preparation of Ryerson Embury: A Purpose* (Toronto: The Publisher's Syndicate, 1900; CIHM 03840), 1. Also Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt*, passim; Margaret Murray Robertson, *Stephen Grattan's Faith: A Canadian Story* (London: Religious Tract Society, n. d.; CIHM 17020), 15-19; Marie Edith Beynon, *Saints, Sinners, and Queer People* (New York: Author's Publishing Association, 1897), 250; Joanna E. Wood, *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co., Limited, 1898; CIHM 26047), 56; M. Amelia Fytche, *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* (Boston: Arena Publishing Company, 1895; CIHM 06051), 12, 18.

<sup>6</sup>Carl Berger, "The True North Strong and Free," in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 9-10.

Canadian Arctic, and the fundamental characteristic of the entire Canadian nation. Thus Canadians define themselves as a northern people without feeling that direct contact with the Arctic is necessary. As Francis argues:

From the creation of the country the North has been central to our sense of ourselves. Our national anthem declares Canada to be "The True North strong and free." Our most popular sport is played on ice. Thinking of ourselves as northern gives us a unique place in North America. . . . It doesn't matter that most of us never travel there, that those of us who know nothing of the North far outnumber those who do. There is "a north of the mind" which exists independently of the geographic North and has always provided an identifiable marker for Canadianness.<sup>7</sup>

The idea of Canada as a northern nation has had a variety of effects upon Canadian national identity. Nineteenth-century English Canadians articulated a view that Canada's moral and racial purity depended upon its northern climate, which made it superior to the effeminate South, including the United States. Canadian winter sports were seen mainly as an indicator of this moral purity and as a means of ensuring the masculine virility that the climate also encouraged. In addition, the definition of Canada as a northern nation provided a basis for racial unity within Canada. Both French and English Canadians were defined as northern races, fundamentally related by their racial heritage and ability to cope with the inhospitable Canadian environment.<sup>8</sup>

The idea of Canada as a northern nation provided a rationale for anti-Americanism. Nineteenth-century Canadians compared their northernness to the southernness of the United States and thereby defined themselves as

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<sup>7</sup>Daniel Francis, "Great White Hope: The Myth of the North," chap. in *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 153.

<sup>8</sup>Berger, "True North," 3-26.



superior. The southern climate of the United States was believed to encourage the moral and racial degeneration of Anglo-Saxon immigrants and to attract unfit immigrants from Africa and southern Europe. As a northern nation, Canadians inherited the ideas of liberty that had originally appeared in northern Europe and could put these ideas into practice without having them debased by southern races.

In addition, many Canadian nationalists believed that Canada's northern location made it the ideal location for the continuation of their superior Anglo-Saxon heritage. This heritage had its basis in Great Britain, the historical home of the northern races. Canada's northern location would allow Canadians to improve upon this British heritage of liberty. At the same time, they used their idea of the Canadian climate to differentiate themselves from the British. The transformative power of Canadian geography was believed to improve British stock and make it uniquely Canadian, by imparting greater vigor and virility. Canada's northern climate therefore ensured its national vigor, purity, and unity.

Canadian historians have generally discussed these ideas in the context of the statements of a group of Canadian nationalists who called themselves Canada First. The group was active in the 1870s. The definitive historical consideration of the concepts that made up this ideal of Canada as a northern nation remains Carl Berger's 1966 essay, "The True North Strong and Free." Many historians, including Daniel Francis and Eva Mackey, have relied upon Berger's descriptions of Canada First's ideas of the North.<sup>9</sup> One member of this group, Robert Grant Haliburton, was one of the first explicitly to describe Canada as a northern nation and its people as "the

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<sup>9</sup>Berger, "True North"; Francis, "Great White Hope," 153-155; Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 30-31.

Northmen of the New World." The men who made up Canada First were quite representative of the educated classes within Canada at the time, being largely college-educated men, especially lawyers, teachers, and other intellectuals. Though the group failed to become a noticeable force in Canadian political life, their nationalist ideas had a lasting impact on Canadian intellectual life.<sup>10</sup>

Though the idea of Canada as northern became and remained an important component of Canadian national identity, the specific components or ramifications of this idea have varied substantially over time and between people. The members of Canada First were not the only people to comment upon the ways in which Canada's northern climate influenced its national identity, as Berger noted in his study of the idea of the north. He observed that "The image of Canada as a northern country with a strenuous and masterful people was reinforced and sustained in the novels, travelogues, and works of scientific exploration that abounded in the period."<sup>11</sup> He mentioned novelists such as J. MacDonald Oxley, Gilbert Parker, Ralph Connor and Agnes Laut, who reinforced the northern idea by setting their works in the Canadian North or North-West. In the absence of any detailed evaluation of the works of science and fiction that were written about Canada's northern identity, Berger's reader is left with the conclusion that the ideology of these works was an echo of that produced by the group

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<sup>10</sup>For a detailed discussion of the membership and ideas of the Canada First movement and their legacy, see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 49-77. On the ideological legacy of Canada First, see A. G. Bailey, "Canada First: The Dissident Press and the Public Image," in *Culture and Nationality: Essays by A. G. Bailey* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), 175-176.

<sup>11</sup>Berger, "True North," 20. For a detailed discussion of the nationalist ideas of one writer of fiction see Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Moral Nationalism in Victorian Canada: The Case of Agnes Maule Machar," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (Spring 1985): 90-108.

of men who commented specifically upon nationalist questions in essays and addresses.

A detailed examination of the idea of the north in Canadian fiction published between Confederation and the turn of the century reveals that the English-Canadian idea of their northern national character contained ideas that both were and were not revealed in the direct statements of nationalists. Some of the major themes of the idea as described by Carl Berger in "The True North Strong and Free" do not appear in the body of fiction written by Canadians about Canada, including the explicit notion that Canada's northernness makes it superior to the United States. Instead, the authors of fiction seemed to be most concerned with how Canada's northern climate distinguished Canadians from the less hardy English. Nor did authors of fiction emphasize the idea that northernness was an essential component of liberty and political freedom. In fiction, the attempt to create national unity by embracing the French as a northern people or race was not as marked as in political and historical writings. Authors of fiction emphasized the idea that Canada's northern climate as uniquely healthy and capable of producing a particularly hardy, virile race of men. Novelists also associated Canadian identity with an ability to play winter sports, especially tobogganing, snow-shoeing, ice-skating, and sleighing, but not yet hockey.

English-Canadian authors participated in the belief that Canada's cold and bracing weather was uniquely strengthening and healthy. One of the most striking examples of this appeared in a novel written by a Canadian woman whose life experience actually contradicted the idea. In Lily Dougall's 1893 novel, *What Necessity Knows*, a Canadianized English

immigrant attempted to convince a more recent immigrant that the snow she saw out of her window was actually a sign of a wonderful climate.

This snow is not cold, it is warm. In this garden of yours it is just now acting as a blanket for the germs of flowers that could not live through an English winter, but will live here, and next summer will astonish you with their richness. Nor is it cold for *you*; it is as dry as dust; you can walk over it in moccasins, and not be damp: and it has covered away all the decay of autumn, conserving for you in the air such pure oxygen that it will be like new life in your veins, causing you to laugh at the frost.<sup>12</sup>

This description of the climate downplayed the discomforts associated with the extreme cold, focusing instead on the health benefits of the clean, pure, and frozen air. This was a climate that would transform the weak English into strong Canadians, whether they were flowers or women. Ironically, this paean to the health benefits of the Canadian climate was written by an author who did not find the Canadian climate at all healthful. Lily Dougall, born in Montreal of Scots parentage, lived intermittently in England and in Montreal throughout the 1890s. Although Dougall wished to live in Canada, she could not tolerate the climate and she permanently relocated to England in either 1900 or 1903.<sup>13</sup> Dougall's continuing belief in the Canada's

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<sup>12</sup>Lily Dougall, *What Necessity Knows* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1893; CIHM 05750), 106. This view of the northern climate as healthful also appeared in other novels, notably: Richard Lanigan, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada, Fifty Years Ago* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1888; CIHM 28408), 97; Thad. W. H. Leavitt, *The Witch of Plum Hollow* (Toronto: The Wells Publishing Company, 1892; CIHM 08682), 113; Agnes Maule Machar, *Marjorie's Canadian Winter: A Story of the Northern Lights* (Boston: D. Lathrop, 1892; CIHM 09597), 309; William McLennan and J. N. McIlwraith, *The Span O'Life: A Tale of Louisbourg and Quebec* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899; CIHM 53209), 137; Hampden Burnham, *Jack Ralston; or, The Outbreak of the Nauscopees: A Tale of Life in the far North-East of Canada* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1903), 12, 192.

<sup>13</sup>"Dougall, Lily" in *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who was Who: Vol. 1, 1875-1933*, ed. Charles G. D. Roberts and Arthur L. Tunnell (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1934), 157; Lorraine McMullen, "Lily Dougall," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), 86; Katherine L. Macpherson, "Lily Dougall and Her Work," *The Canadian Magazine* 27:5 (September 1906): 480.

northern climate as a shaper of a more hardy Canadian people was a tribute to the ability of a national self-image to shape an individual's view of the world. In emphasizing the health benefits of a climate that did not bring her health, Dougall demonstrated the power of ideas even when they are contradicted by experience.

Yet there were other aspects of this idea of the health benefits of Canada's northern climate that make Dougall's ability to overlook her own experience more understandable. One of these was the developing Darwinist idea that the Canadian climate was only beneficial for those who were already fit; the other the assumption that Canada's climate was especially suited to the production of strong, virile men. One of the most explicit examples of this view appeared in a historical novel written by another woman, Agnes Laut. In the 1903 novel *Heralds of Empire*, the historical figure Pierre Radisson, speaking to the English king and his court, said that the fur-trading lands owned by the Hudson's Bay Company were "a world that grows empires—also men."<sup>14</sup> Agnes Laut's readers would not have been oblivious to the implications of Radisson's inference that Canada's northern climate created virile, manly men. This connection of the climate to masculinity was reinforced by novels that emphasized the necessity of men adapting to and coping with the climate in order to become true Canadians. In some cases, there was an additional implication that women needed to be protected from the climate.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>A. C. Laut, *Heralds of Empire: Being the Story of One Ramsay Stanhope, Lieutenant to Pierre Radisson in the Northern Fur Trade* (1902; reprint, Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 323.

<sup>15</sup>Mary Leslie, [James Thomas Jones, pseud.], *The Cromaboo Mail Carrier: A Canadian Love Story* (Guelph: Jos. H. Hacking, 1878; CIHM 25870), 185-186; Jessie A. Freeland, "John Bentley's Mistake," *The Canadian Magazine* 2 (December 1893): 142-143.

In addition, as the social implications of Charles Darwin's ideas of evolution began to be more widely discussed in Canada, Canadians increasingly viewed their climate as one that would only benefit those who were already strong enough to survive its rigors. Although Darwin's ideas were widely discussed in Canada from the 1860s on, their influence was not apparent in Canadian fiction until the early 1900s.<sup>16</sup> The first direct mention of evolutionary ideas in fiction occurred in this 1908 description of Manitoba's climate.

Nowhere on earth does Nature so rigorously apply the "survival of the fittest" test to man as in the wilds of Manitoba—that illimitable area of exhaustless resources. . . . A wonderful, fertile land, but one whose alkaline soil and extremes of heat and cold make it habitable only for the "fittest."<sup>17</sup>

Jessie Kerr Lawson's confident use of the "survival of the fittest" imagery in relation to mankind shows that by the time she wrote Darwinist ideas had deeply penetrated Canadian intellectual life. The ideas of Darwin, made commonly available to English Canadians through magazine articles and universities, gave a different emphasis to ideas about the relationship between Canada's northern climate and the Canadian people.

Nineteenth-century ideas about Canada's climate and its people were also influenced by the current anthropological discussions of the character of various races. In the late nineteenth century, anthropologists and

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<sup>16</sup>For a full discussion of the reception and impact of Darwinism and Social Darwinism within nineteenth-century Canada, see A. B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979); Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

<sup>17</sup>Mrs. J. K. Lawson, *The Harvest of Moloch: A Story of To-Day* (Toronto: John M. Poole, 1908), 200.

ethnographers were debating the source of differences between national groups. Darwin's ideas influenced this debate, which considered whether racial characteristics were inherited or culturally and geographically determined. At the time it was common for national and ethnic groups to be described as separate races, for example in the contrast drawn between the French and the English races in Canada.<sup>18</sup> The various racial groups were commonly discussed as being superior or inferior to each other on the evolutionary scale. In general, northern, white races were seen as more civilized than southern, darker races. The French, in most Anglo-American discussions about race, were ranked as an inferior southern race.<sup>19</sup> In Canada, however, the French were imagined as a northern race. Canadian nationalists emphasized the French-Canadians' supposed Norman heritage.<sup>20</sup> This emphasis served to allow English Canadians to imagine themselves and the French as similar races who could combine harmoniously into a single nationality. This was necessary in order to convince themselves that the current, and continuing, divisions and political conflicts between French and English within Canada would not destroy the nation. However, this vision of the French as a northern race

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<sup>18</sup>On nineteenth-century anthropological attitudes towards races, see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Norton, 1996); Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). A study of these racial ideas at work in Canada is Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990). One example of the discussion of French and English in Canada as separate races is André Siegfried, *The Race Question in Canada* (London, 1907; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966). A more extensive discussion of race in Canadian novels may be found in Chapter Six, "Ethnicity and Race in the Construction of Canadian Identity."

<sup>19</sup>Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1710-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 5.

<sup>20</sup>Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), 110; Berger, "True North," 12-13.

was not particularly evident in fiction. French Canadians were frequent characters in English-Canadian fiction, but they were not generally described in terms of Norman descent or northern racial heritage.

French Canadians were, however, generally associated with an ability to withstand and enjoy the rigors of Canada's northern climate. In one story of two lumbermen, Charlie Saunders and Narcisse LaFontaine, Narcisse was described as "a typical French-Canadian lumberman." One aspect of this identity was that, no matter how cold the winter in the lumber shanties, "the weather never affected him." For the newly-arrived Englishman, however, "it was different. He was not accustomed to Canadian winters," and therefore was frequently ill and needed to be helped by his friend. After their second winter in the lumberwoods, however, Charlie became inured to the climate and thought of himself as a Canadian.<sup>21</sup> In addition to being a touching story of the power of friendship, this story was a fantasy of Canadian unity. The mutually devoted friendship of these two men from Canada's two major language groups displayed the writer's hope that these groups could overcome their current political and religious conflicts and become fast friends within a single nation. As Charlie and Narcisse showed their Canadian identity by their innate or acquired adaptation to Canada's

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<sup>21</sup>Clifford Smith, "Narcisse's Friend," *The Canadian Magazine* 3 (May 1894): 51-57. Other instances in which the French ability to withstand the climate was emphasized were: Blanche Lucille MacDonell, *Diane of Ville Marie: A Romance of French Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898; CIHM 09409), 19-20; W. D. Lighthall, *The False Chevalier; or, The Lifeguard of Marie Antoinette* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1898; CIHM 26273), 17; A. C. Laut, *Lords of the North* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 41-43; Hampden Burnham, *Marcelle* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905), 123-124. Other examples of the use of adaptation to the climate to indicate an Englishman's successful metamorphosis into a Canadian are: Rosanna Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing*, ed. John Stockdale (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864; reprint, Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1989), 161-164; Leslie Vaughan, *Charlie Ogilbie: A Romance of Scotland and New Brunswick* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1889; CIHM 25320), 39.



winter climate, so the Canadian climate would act as a common factor in the identity of all Canadians.

English Canadians viewed themselves as a people shaped by their winter weather. Thus one aspect of their national identity was their skill and endurance when faced with cold and snow. Indeed, as Lily Dougall noted, Canadians did not let a little snow stop them from going about their daily business. In one of her stories, an English traveler got stranded in a snowstorm because he had learned this lesson too well.

In England no one would set out in such a storm; but this traveller had learned that in Canada the snowy vast is regarded as a plaything, or a good medium of transit, or at the worst, an encumbrance to be plodded through as one plods through storms of rain. He had found that he was not expected to remain at an inn merely because it snowed, and, being a man of spirit, he had on this day, as on others, done what was expected of him.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, on this occasion the custom of the country let him down and he had ventured out in a snowstorm that turned into a blizzard. Therefore he sought shelter in wayside home, in consequence of which he was suspected of burglary and had to go through all sorts of adventures in order to prove his innocence. Among these travails was an unsuccessful attempt to use snow-shoes, which served to intensify the distinction thus made between the English and the Canadians. Canadians were considered to be characteristically hardy winter travelers, while the Englishman's attempt to emulate this Canadian ability leads him into a very difficult situation. This story indicates that the idea of Canada as a northern nation was used to distinguish it not only from the United States, but also from Great Britain.

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<sup>22</sup>Lily Dougall, *A Dozen Ways of Love* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897; CIHM 27354), 296.

Canadians believed that they differed from the English by being more able to withstand the hardships imposed by their climate.

This contrast between English and Canadian winter weather and winter abilities was echoed by Margaret Murray Robertson. In one of her novels, she explicitly contrasted an English Christmas and a Canadian Christmas. Her Canadian characters, visiting England at Christmas time, were astonished to see that the lawns were still green and many flowers continued to bloom. In contrast:

In their own country at Christmas-time the snow lies thick on the ground. . . . The skaters are out on the ice, and the snow-shoe clubs are beginning to think of long tramps over the fields. Hundreds of sleighs are gliding along the city streets, and over the country roads, and the air is full of the music of sleigh-bells, and the merry voices of people enjoying the holidays.<sup>23</sup>

This description indicates the central role that various winter sports played in Canadians' vision of themselves as a northern people. For Margaret Murray Robertson, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister who emigrated to Canada with her family at the age of thirteen, Canadian winter weather was automatically associated with sleighing, skating, tobogganing, and snowshoeing. Nor was Robertson alone in this association. English-Canadian writers of fiction frequently associated Canadian identity with skill at these winter sports. Many novels that portrayed Canada in the winter included some allusion to winter sports such as tobogganing, snowshoeing, and sleighing.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Margaret Murray Robertson, *The Perils of Orphanhood; or, Frederica and Her Guardians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1875), 365-366.

<sup>24</sup>For autobiographical information on Robertson, see Lorraine McMullen, "Robertson, Margaret Murray," in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Volume 12, 1891-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 904-906. Other instances of the association of winter sports, including snowshoeing, tobogganing, skating, and sleighing, with Canadian identity

English-Canadian authors saw skill at winter sports as an aspect of Canadian identity. They believed that these skills as emerged out of their unique relationship with their northern land. Indeed, many of these sports did emerge from Canada's pre-industrial past, when such activities were important as modes of transportation in addition to being enjoyable, as sports historian Colin Howell points out. As Canada industrialized, these sports were institutionalized in Canadian cities, especially in Montreal.<sup>25</sup> As they embraced such winter sports as archetypally Canadian, English Canadians based their identity on a relationship with the land, even as that relationship was eroding with the growth of Canadian cities. By associating their identity with winter sports, Canadians again linked their national character to the North.

In modern times, this connection of Canadians to winter sports has been best demonstrated by the Canadian relationship to the sport of ice hockey. Hockey has consistently been portrayed as a sport that emerged from and symbolized Canada's northern identity. The ice upon which hockey is played, whether frozen pond or urban ice rink, is seen as a symbol of Canada's northern landscape and the game "speaks to us of winter,

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can be found in the following novels: Margaret Marshall Saunders, *The House of Armour* (Philadelphia: A. J. Rowland, 1897; CIHM 13298), 181-183; Susan Jones, *A Girl of the North: A Story of London and Canada*, 2nd. ed. (London: Greening & Co., 1900; CIHM 01368), 325-330; Christopher Oakes, *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* (Toronto: National Publishing Co., 1890; CIHM 30422), 11-12, 104; Agnes Maule Machar, *Marjorie's Canadian Winter: A Story of the Northern Lights* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1892; CIHM 09597), 81-87; Paul Tsy, *G. Dwyer, K. W.* (Montreal: Lovell, 1895; CIHM 24978), 1; William Douw Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur; or, Nation-Making* (Montreal: Wm. Drysdale, 1888; CIHM 24305), 25-26; Dougall, *What Necessity Knows*, 147; Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt*, 38-47, 136-138; A. L. O. M., *The Brock Family* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890; CIHM 30197), 179.

<sup>25</sup>Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 24-25; Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 48-51.

Canada's season."<sup>26</sup> In addition, hockey as a national game accorded particularly well with the identification of Canada's northern climate as productive of strength and virility.

The acceptance of hockey as the definitive Canadian game has been aided by hockey's manly image. Hockey has been seen as a game in which boys and men learned and proved their masculinity. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, men proved their respectable, Christian manliness by maintaining their self control in the face of the violence of other players.<sup>27</sup> On the two occasions when hockey appeared in nineteenth-century novels written by Canadians, the authors emphasized this aspect of the game. In J. MacDonald Oxley's 1898 novel, *Standing the Test*, the main character's religious regeneration was shown not to have spoiled his skill at hockey; in Ralph Connor's 1902 stories of *Glengarry School Days*, young Hughie's religious regeneration allowed him to keep his temper throughout a rough game of shinny.<sup>28</sup> This religious emphasis was partially a result of the authors' personal circumstances. Connor was a Presbyterian minister and Oxley, although a lawyer and businessman, published many of his

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<sup>26</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, 167; Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 3, 25; Michael A. Robidoux, *Men at Play: A Working Understanding of Professional Hockey* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 3, 44, 47.

<sup>27</sup>J. A. Mangan, "Discipline in the Dominion: The 'Canuck' and the Cult of Manliness," in *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), 163; Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, 45; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 67-68.

<sup>28</sup>J. MacDonald Oxley, *Standing the Test* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1898; CIHM 34582), 71-72; Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *Glengarry School Days: A Story of Early Days in Glengarry* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1902), 295-330. Shinny was a game similar to, and regarded as a predecessor of, hockey. It was played on frozen ponds rather than in rinks, had fewer rules and a more flexible number of players.

numerous books, as in this case, with the Religious Tract Society in London, England.<sup>29</sup>

Another interesting aspect of these portrayals of hockey in English-Canadian fiction was their timing. The modern game of hockey is believed to have first been played in 1875 by McGill University students at the Victoria Rink in Montreal. From there, it spread rapidly to the cities of Quebec, Ontario, and the Maritime Provinces, so that by the mid-1880s there were several active teams in each Canadian city. Hockey's popularity continued to grow, as both a recreational and a spectator sport.<sup>30</sup> Despite this popularity, writers of fiction had not accepted the game as the primary Canadian winter sport prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, as reflected by the infrequency of its mention in their stories. Instead, they emphasized other winter sports as central to Canadian identity.

Prior to the turn of the century, English-Canadian authors emphasized women's skill at ice skating as most indicative of Canadian northern identity. This emphasis on women's ability at winter sports contradicted the general trend of describing Canadian northern identity in masculine terms. The identification of ice skating as characteristically Canadian allowed for the inclusion of women within this ideal of northern identity. Indeed, the novelists who described ice skating were primarily

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<sup>29</sup>Michael Hurly, "Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon)," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 50-55; Gillian Thomas, "Oxley, James MacDonald," *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, ed. William Toye (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1983), 628; Gordon Roper, S. Ross Beharriell, and Rupert Schieder, "Writers of Fiction (1880-1920)," in *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 321.

<sup>30</sup>Brian McFarlane, *One Hundred Years of Hockey* (Toronto: Deneau, 1989), 1-11; Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, 61-73; Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, 3, 28, 44; Robidoux, *Men at Play*, 44; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 31-55.

women and they emphasized both its feminine grace and its connection with Canadian identity.<sup>31</sup>

In fiction, all true Canadian women were extraordinarily skilled skaters. This skill was shown as a means of distinguishing Canadians from the British. Canadians both at home and abroad were depicted as having greater skating skill and grace than their British counterparts. In one story of a Canadian girl in Paris, "Dorothy immediately became a marked woman, distinguished among all the other foreigners for her graceful figure-skating, which she had learned when a child in Canada."<sup>32</sup> Dorothy's skill marked her as a Canadian, while her grace preserved her femininity. Descriptions of Canadian women's skating ability generally do emphasize the feminine grace and daintiness of the women's skill, thus ensuring the acceptability of this accomplishment in gender as well as national terms.

Ice-skating was generally presented as a typically Canadian courting activity. In fiction, Canadian women attracted and captivated men through their grace and beauty on skates. In one exemplary novel, a Canadian girl initially charmed her English husband by her skating ability. The main character of the novel, a girl named Bluebell, was the daughter of an English army officer and his Canadian bride. Early in the novel, the author describes the meeting and courtship of the parents of the heroine, Theodore Leigh and Lesbia Jones. Theodore saw Lesbia skating at the rink one day and "was

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<sup>31</sup>The two exceptions to the femininity of those who wrote about women's ice-skating as typically Canadian were: Richard Lanigan, *They Two*, 42; Zero, pseud., *One Mistake: A Manitoban Reminiscence* (Montreal: Canadian Bank Note Company, 1888; CIHM 30578), 92. The second of these might also have been a woman, but there is no evidence either way.

<sup>32</sup>Maria Amelia Fytche, *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* (Boston: Arena Publishing Co., 1895; CIHM 06051), 245. Other references to the exceptional skating ability of Canadian women include: Jones, *Girl of the North*, 202; Helen Boggs, *When the Shadows Flee Away: A Story of Canadian Society* (Montreal: Lovell, 1891; CIHM 06251), 56-57.

'regularly flumoxsed,' as he expressed it, by the vision of Miss Lesbia Jones skimming over the ice like a swallow on the wing. And when she proceeded to cut a figure of 8 backwards, and execute another intricate movement called 'the rose,' his admiration became vehement."<sup>33</sup> He demanded an introduction and their courtship continued through winter sports, as she taught him how to skate and rode in his cutter during sleighing parties. This was enough to indicate their attachment to each other and in time they married. The Canadian girl had won herself a husband through her skill upon ice skates. The couple completed a courtship ritual that was seen as uniquely Canadian because it was shaped by the Canadian winter climate and Canadian facility at winter sports.

Thus English-Canadian writers embraced the idea that Canada was a land of ice and snow and used it for their own purposes to provide a national identity for Canadians based around their unique northern climate. In their novels and stories, these writers helped to create a vision of Canada as a northern nation. By doing so, however, they found that they had also contributed to the creation of a negative image of Canada as a land always buried under snow and ice. When they characterized Canada as a northern climate, it was to emphasize the magnificent qualities that such a place produced in the people, Canadians, who inhabited it. All too often, when outsiders portrayed a wintry Canada, they associated it "with Indian savages, and bitter cold, with stories of rude pioneer life, and tales of ice-palaces, and a winter that reigned during half the year," as one novelist has an English

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<sup>33</sup>Mrs. George Croft Huddleston, *Bluebell* (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1875; CIHM 08584), 4. Another example of skating as a courting activity appeared in May Agnes Fleming, *Kate Danton; or, Captain Danton's Daughters* (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1876), 128.

character describe Canada.<sup>34</sup> Canadian writers contributed to this portrayal of Canada, particularly in adventure novels such as those written by J. MacDonald Oxley.<sup>35</sup>

English-Canadian authors wrote against this portrayal of Canada as a wasteland of ice and snow. They believed that Canada was destined for future greatness because of the excellence, grandeur, and sheer size of the nation. They consistently pointed out that descriptions of Canada as constantly cold and snowy were not true. English-Canadian authors especially liked to do this by having a visiting British or American character betray total ignorance about Canada. They would then have a Canadian character ridicule this ignorance and explain the true possibilities of the Canadian landscape.<sup>36</sup>

English Canadians particularly resented misconceptions that portrayed their nation as an icy wilderness because they believed that the land was the basis for Canada's future greatness. This was the second of the two basic ways in which Canadians based their national identity upon the unique geography of Canada. They saw their nation as a land of unlimited space and natural resources. In the minds of English-Canadian nationalists,

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<sup>34</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *The Heir of Fairmount Grange* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1895; CIHM 09601), 40. Also see Thomas Stinson Jarvis, *Geoffrey Hampstead* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1890; CIHM 07420), 315.

<sup>35</sup>R. G. Moyles and Doug Owsram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975). Novelists who commented on the role of Canadians in producing this view of their nation included: Lanigan, *They Two*, 130; Austin Potter, *Wealth to Poverty; or, The Tricks of the Traffic: A Story of the Drink Curse* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884; CIHM 12098), 130-133; R. and K. M. Lizars, *Committed to His Charge: A Canadian Chronicle* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Co., 1900; CIHM 09186), 102-103.

<sup>36</sup>Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt*, 26-27; Saunders, *House of Armour*, 16-23; Beynon, *Saints, Sinners*, 195; M. Amelia Fytche, *The Rival Forts: or, The Velvet Siege of Beauséjour* (Halifax: Alex Neil, 1907; CIHM 73437), 12-14.



several frontiers would assure Canada's future prosperity by providing fertile soil for the development of agriculture and mineral resources for the development of industry.

Two imagined frontiers were particularly important in the creation of Canadian identity in the late nineteenth century. In keeping with the emphasis on Canada as a northern nation, one of these was the Canadian North. For the purposes of this discussion, the North begins at the southern end of Hudson Bay and continues into the Arctic islands as far as the North Pole, reflecting nineteenth-century Canadians' evolving ideas of the North. This territory officially became part of the Dominion of Canada between 1870 and 1880, with the annexation of the Hudson's Bay Company's territory in 1870, and of the Arctic Islands and any remaining British territory in North America in 1880.<sup>37</sup> As Daniel Francis points out, "Canadians have always imagined the North to be their frontier, a place of almost limitless potential wealth. The 'conquest' of the North, by which is meant the extraction of all this wealth, is believed to be our national destiny."<sup>38</sup> The North has held a particular place in the Canadian imagination, being both a place from which wealth could be drawn to enrich the nation and an important indicator of national identity. Canada was a northern nation and it had a North from which to draw resources that would ensure the nation's future greatness.

In the late nineteenth century, English Canadians looked toward the development of the vast resources of the Canadian North, including the Arctic, to assure the future greatness of Canada. This confidence was most

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<sup>37</sup>Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), xi, 1-29, 249-254.

<sup>38</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, 169-170. Also see Zeller, *Inventing Canada*, 161.

clearly displayed in utopian novels that depicted Canada's glorious future. One of these, published in 1883, imagined Canada in 1983. Its pseudonymous author Ralph Centennius predicted that by 1983, "One of our most interesting cities . . . [will be] Churchill, Hudson Bay, that most charming of sea-side resorts." Centennius described Churchill as a city of 200,000 people, in which "heat from the depths of the earth" would be used to provide power for enormous "conservatories, or rather parks under cover," as well as two luxury hotels and a sanitarium. Great Canadian cities of 1983 would also include Electropolis, on Lake Athabaska, with 100,000 inhabitants, whose

great idea is to work everything by electricity, and to them belongs the credit of all the latest discoveries in electrical science. [The] beautiful city is a great center of attraction for scientific men, and many European electricians make a practice of coming over every Saturday to stay till Monday.

In this vision of the future, the role of the Arctic was not just to export electricity to the rest of Canada. Here, the Canadian North would become an independent center of scientific development and give Canada international prestige. Centennius went on to say that

While speaking of cities in the far north, that of Bearville, on the shores of Great Bear Lake, in latitude 65°, must not be passed over. Bearville is the metropolis of one of the finest mineral districts in the world. . . . And it would astonish people who seldom come to the North to see how the ingenuity of man has made life not only tolerable, but enjoyable, in the neighborhood of the Arctic Circle.

In Centennius's vision, the North would not only assure Canada's greatness by having its resources extracted; it would also become the scientific center

of Canadian civilization. The Canadian North would support world-renowned cities that would bring Canada wealth and international respect.<sup>39</sup>

Ralph Centennius was not the only writer to envision Canada's future as based in the development of the North. Writing in 1913, the Presbyterian minister Hugh Pedley was equally sanguine about the future development of the Canadian North. He described Prince Rupert in 1927 as "one of the greatest seaports of the world," and North Bay, Ontario as "the centre of no small trade, having connections not only with East and West, but also with the North as far as Hudson Bay."<sup>40</sup> Nor was this the main theme of Pedley's book, which focused on the benefits that Canada would gain from having all its Protestant churches united into one. He mentioned the future of the North, as does Centennius, not as questionable, but as such a certainty that it required no discussion. There was no question in their minds that future northern development would bring prosperity and prestige to Canada.

English Canadians also looked to their western territories as a source of Canada's future greatness. This part of the territory acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company, that became the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, was known colloquially as the North-West. Canadian nationalists, including those who made up Canada First, saw this frontier as crucial to the future development of the Canadian nation and had been urging its annexation since the 1850s.<sup>41</sup> By 1870, when this territory was annexed by the Dominion government, English Canadians

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<sup>39</sup>Ralph Centennius, *The Dominion in 1983* (Peterborough, Ontario: Toker & Co., 1883; CIHM 00529), 14-15.

<sup>40</sup>Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward: The Strange Experiment of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 212, 158.

believed that the region was a fertile and mineral rich region with great potential for agricultural development. The Riel Rebellion was one consequence of this point of view, as the Métis of the Red River colony objected to Dominion attempts to create laws that favored white agricultural settlement. English-Canadian nationalists believed that the development of the North-West was an integral factor in the growth of Canada because this western area would give Canada room to expand. In addition, the agricultural North-West would become a hinterland, producing agricultural products and consuming the industrial output of eastern and central Canada. Canadian Prime Minister John A. Macdonald reinforced this ideology through the National Policy, which erected tariff barriers against American manufactured goods, partly in order to encourage western farmers to trade exclusively within Canada.<sup>42</sup>

To English Canadians in the 1880s and 1890s, the development of the North-West was necessary in order to ensure the future greatness of the entire British Empire, not just Canada. Many Canadians believed that the center of the British Empire was fated to shift westward. A developed North-West would strengthen Canada and ensure that the center of Empire migrated to Canada.<sup>43</sup> In an 1890 novel, a resident of Winnipeg made this argument to a visiting Canadian senator. The character described the Canadian North-West as follows: "The vast possession of this vast Empire, the future home of teeming millions, even now affording a main highway

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<sup>42</sup>Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 3; R. Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Responses to the Canadian Prairies* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989); Berger, *Sense Power*, 52; Zeller, *Inventing Canada*, 271.

<sup>43</sup>This point is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, "Imperialism, Anti-Americanism, and Canadian Nationalism."

to her commerce." He felt that the North-West would become granary, park, and parade ground for the Empire. Further, this character believed that as "the possessor of the larger, and I believe, the better half of this great continent," Canada was entitled to an equal voice on imperial policies within an Imperial Federation of Great Britain and her colonies.<sup>44</sup> These views reflected an English-Canadian confidence that their land, specifically the North-West, would allow their nation to take its rightful place as an equal partner within the British Empire.

With the annexation of the North-West in 1870, the sheer size of the Dominion became an important ingredient in Canadians' national self-image. English-Canadian nationalists believed that the vast size of the North-West meant that it potentially had an equally vast future.<sup>45</sup> In an 1884 temperance novel, one character described Canada's future potential as dependent upon the development of the North-West.

And then we have the great North-West, that is just opening up, which they say has as fine land as the world possesses, and to an extent that is practically illimitable. This is settling rapidly, and will be in some future day the home of countless millions.<sup>46</sup>

English-Canadian nationalists believed that the agricultural potential and sheer size of the North-West ensured their national future. In addition, the location of this territory, combined with the entry of the colony of British

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<sup>44</sup>Christopher Oakes, *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* (Toronto: National Publishing Co., 1890; CIHM 30422), 26.

<sup>45</sup>Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 107-108; Francis, *Images of West*, 73-105.

<sup>46</sup>Austin Potter, *Wealth to Poverty; or, The Tricks of the Traffic: A Story of the Drink Curse* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884; CIHM 12098), 131. Other instances of the discussion of the North-West as a source of Canadian greatness appeared in: Julia W. Henshaw, *Why Not Sweetheart?* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901), 17; Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Man From Glengarry* (Toronto: Westminster, 1901; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960), 271, 284.

Columbia into Confederation in 1871, allowed Canada to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific and become one of the geographically largest nations in the world.

English-Canadian writers were particularly convinced of the great future awaiting Canada when they contemplated the vastness of their nation. Nationalists felt sure that such a physically large land was meant to be materially successful as well. This connection between nationalistic pride and Canadian geography was made clear by one nationalist character. This character castigated his niece and nephew for their lack of national pride. He set his argument in the context of the variety and richness of a large nation. He emphasized Canada's natural beauty, dwelling on the seacoasts, the mountains and valleys, the plains and the frozen north:

All; all these, are comprehended within the mighty scene,  
whose vastness and grandeur might well inspire a patriotic  
ardour, a true Canadian pride; and give an exultant ring to the  
voice which proudly says— "This is my Country!"<sup>47</sup>

The author, an anglophone living in Quebec, hoped to base national pride and identity upon a shared wonderment at the variety of beauty and natural resources comprehended within the nation's boundaries. As an anglophone Quebecker, he or she was probably particularly attuned to the problems that prevented the construction of Canadian identity around shared language or religion.<sup>48</sup> This author felt that the Canadian land could

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<sup>47</sup>W. H. Brown, *She Might Have Done Better* (St. Johns, Quebec: News Steam Printing House, 1877; CIHM 13748), 1: 10. Also see Cornelius O'Brien, *After Weary Years* (New York: John Murphy & Co., 1885), 323; Robert Sellar, *Hemlock: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1890; CIHM 13445), 3, 8; Hampden Burnham, *Jack Ralston; or, The Outbreak of the Nauscopees: A Tale of Life in the Far North-East of Canada* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1903).

<sup>48</sup>I have no biographical information on W. H. Brown, so I base my contention that he or she was an anglophone in Quebec upon the author's name, choice of language in which to write, and publication in St. Johns, Quebec.

provide a source of future greatness that would create a shared sense of national identity.

The vast size of the Dominion implied future success based upon the unlimited resources that were thought to exist within such extensive boundaries. These resources included mineral wealth that would enable Canada to industrialize and fertile agricultural land that would attract settlers. Canada's agricultural potential was presented as an important difference from Great Britain. English-Canadian authors depicted Great Britain as a place where agriculturalists were prevented from succeeding by a lack of land and the high rents they had to pay when they could find farms. They believed that these same farmers would be able to become wealthy in Canada due to the availability of agricultural land without crippling rents. This belief was reinforced by the passage of the Dominion Lands Act in 1872, which allowed heads of families to acquire title to 160 acres of land in the North-West after three years' settlement. This was the central plot of one novel about a young Scot who was unable to survive as a farmer in Scotland, but who became a landed proprietor, able to hire others to tend his fields, after his emigration to Canada.<sup>49</sup> Writers of fiction mirrored the politician's opinions that, by assuring the prosperity of such immigrants, Canada's agricultural land would contribute to the future prosperity of the nation. Once again, Canada's future greatness depended upon the size of the nation.

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<sup>49</sup>Leslie Vaughan, *Charlie Ogilbie: A Romance of Scotland and New Brunswick* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1889; CIHM 25320), 14, 148. Also see Robert Wilson, *Never Give Up; or, Life in the Lower Provinces* (Saint John, New Brunswick: Daily News Steam Job Office, 1878; CIHM 32337), 45-46; Elizabeth S. MacLeod, *Donalda: A Scottish-Canadian Story* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905), 199, 275.

English Canadians of the late nineteenth century believed that the extent of their nation not only assured its future, but provided a source of national pride. When they contemplated their nation's geography, English Canadians could feel that they were a unique nation, not merely an adjunct of Great Britain. This was particularly clear in a fictional conversation between a young Canadian returning home from England and an impoverished English gentlewoman, Miss Ethel Howard. As their steamer approached Quebec City, Kavanagh, the young Canadian, exclaimed eagerly:

"There it is, there's Quebec! . . . We Canadians are far prouder of Quebec than you are of London. It's the central point of our country's history."

"I didn't know you had a country, distinct from Britain," said Miss Howard. Kavanagh laughed as he replied:

"Oh, I assure you many of us think we have! When you live in a country that stretches across a continent, over a few million square miles, you may be excused for thinking it a *country*, and not merely a *colony*."<sup>50</sup>

Here again, Canadian national pride was grounded upon the geographical size of the nation. Kavanagh based his claim to Canadian nationhood directly upon the size of the country. In addition, Canadian geography served to distinguish Canadians from their British counterparts. In the nineteenth century, English-speaking Canadians emphasized their descent from British forebears, but they turned to their unique landscape in order to differentiate themselves from this heritage.<sup>51</sup> Though they brought British traditions with them, they believed that these traditions were altered and

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<sup>50</sup>Machar, *Heir of Fairmount Grange*, 93-94.

<sup>51</sup>These topics will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Five, "Imperialism, Anti-Americanism, and Canadian Nationalism," and Six, "Ethnicity and Race in the Construction of Canadian Identity."



improved by the Canadian landscape and environment in order to produce their young, vigorous, and unique nation.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian nationalists attempted to create a unified Canadian identity based upon Canadian geography, landscape, and climate. In doing so, they were reacting to the many real divisions of religion, language, ethnicity, and region within the new nation. In the period immediately following Confederation, nationalists began to attempt to define a Canadian identity that would be able to transcend these divisions. The identification of Canada with its land and climate was an important aspect of this attempt. They were Canadian because of the land. Everything that Canadians were or would become was seen to be a result of their geographic location.

A primary ingredient in this idea of geography as destiny was the idea that Canada was a northern nation. In their attempt to define Canada's northern character as central to Canadian identity, nationalists created the unifying myth of the North. In fiction, poems, speeches, magazine articles, and scientific monographs, they emphasized northern regions and winter climactic conditions.<sup>52</sup> Fictional descriptions of Canada's northern location emphasized the health benefits of the climate, especially for those who were racially fit to enjoy them. Canada's winter weather was also depicted as a positive good that would make Canadians into a uniquely hardy people by improving those who emigrated there. French Canadians were seen as being already adapted to the climate by virtue of their longer residence in Canada and thus as fit partners within Confederation. All of the benefits of

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<sup>52</sup>Berger, "True North," 22; Francis, *National Dreams*, 152-171, in the chapter entitled, "Great White Hope: The Myth of the North."

a northern climate and location were symbolized and stimulated by Canadians' abilities at winter sporting activities, especially ice skating.

English-Canadian nationalist writers of fiction also depicted the geographical diversity and extent of the Canadian nation as a source of national pride. They believed that Canada's future greatness was assured by the natural resources encompassed in a nation that stretched *Ad mare usque ad mare*, from sea to sea.<sup>53</sup> This national motto articulated an ideal. English Canadians in the late nineteenth century felt a nationalistic pride in the size of their nation. Writers and politicians believed that this size would be translated into national greatness through the development of the natural resources of the North and the North-West. Novelists portrayed a future in which the North-West would provide an agricultural frontier that would attract immigrants who would provide agricultural wealth and a market for Canadian manufactured goods. These goods would be made with the mineral resources to be extracted from Canada's northern territories, the development of which would ensure national greatness in the twentieth century. John A. Macdonald's National Policy was designed to encourage these developments.

English Canadians of the late nineteenth century had great faith in the future of their nation, a faith that was based upon the possibilities inherent in the character of their land. English Canadians saw themselves and their fellow Canadians as united by their place in the world. They were Canadian because they lived in Canada. This was the primary factor in the imagination of the national community of Canada. When Canadians tried to imagine a relationship with others of their nationality, the relationship they imagined was based upon place. The idea of the land gave them a

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<sup>53</sup>Psalm 72:8.

sense of shared identity that ideas of religion, language, and heritage could not. Thus the land became the central factor in their definition of an ethnically-inclusive Canadian identity. In the late nineteenth century English-Canadians nationalist writers devoted much thought to their discussions and fictional representations of exactly how the land defined Canadian identity, but they never doubted that Canadian climate and geography were crucial to the present and future character of Canada.

### Chapter 3

#### WILDERNESS AND GENDERED CANADIAN IDENTITY

English-Canadian writers of fiction believed that their nation could best be defined and characterized through those aspects of its history and geography that made it different from other nations. In the late nineteenth century many English-Canadian authors and nationalists felt that Canada's wilderness heritage was an important source of their unique identity. Here again, English Canadians defined themselves in terms of their land. In this case, however, the emphasis was not on the future development of the land, but upon its historical and present wildness. This wild land was seen as a source of national strength and virility that set Canadians apart from other national groups, such as the English and the Americans.

Between Confederation and the turn of the century, Canadians writing fiction in English embraced a vision of their nation as growing out of and taking its essential character from the North American wilderness. Many Canadian historians have noted, with W. L. Morton, that the "alternate penetration of the wilderness and return to civilization is the basic rhythm of Canadian life, and forms the basic elements of the Canadian character."<sup>1</sup> And in the 1990s a scholar of Canadian culture, Daniel Francis, identified what he called "the myth of the wilderness, the belief that our

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<sup>1</sup>W. L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 5. Other historians who considered the wilderness aspect of Canadian construction of their national identity include the historians Harold Innis, Arthur Lower and Donald Creighton, discussed in Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Writing Since 1900*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

link to the land is a defining national characteristic" as one of the central themes of Canada's imagined cultural identity.<sup>2</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, English Canadians began to see their unsurpassed wilderness as a source of national pride and uniqueness. In the nineteenth century, English-Canadian intellectuals felt that their short history and minor literary and artistic traditions made it difficult to create Canadian pride, especially in contrast to Great Britain's history and literary tradition. As Roderick Nash points out, Americans had a similar problem in their quest to define a national identity. English-Canadian authors believed that the Canadian wilderness was inferior to none on the planet, which made it an ideal source of Canadian pride. One example of this appeared in a novel by Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald. Both of these writers were extremely active in the formation of a Canadian literary culture in the Toronto area in the late nineteenth century, although this was the only novel either of them wrote. Adam was an important publisher, while Wetherald wrote many short stories and essays for Canadian periodicals. In an early scene in their 1887 novel, Adam and Wetherald contrasted England's settled, garden-like landscape with Canada's wilderness. Their Canadian hero was clearly attuned to the wilderness and saw England's garden civilization as dull and over-ripe,

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<sup>2</sup>Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 149. Other scholars of Canada who have discussed Canada's wilderness identity are: Northrup Frye, "Conclusion," in *The Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 826; Douglas Cole, "Artists, Patrons and Public: An Enquiry into the Success of the Group of Seven," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 13 (Summer 1978): 69; Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 109; Jonathan Bordo, Peter Kulchyski, John Milloy, and John Wadland, "Introduction," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 33 (Summer 1998): 4; Jean L. Manore, "Wilderness and Territoriality: Different Ways of Viewing the Land," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 33 (Summer 1998): 77-84; Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 40.

while Canada's wilderness character showed the interesting promise of vigorous growth.<sup>3</sup>

This embrace of the wilderness as a central aspect of Canadian culture has been studied by many twentieth-century literary scholars, virtually all of whom conclude that the uniquely Canadian response to their wilderness setting was, and is, marked by fear and loathing. These scholars have not considered Canadian fiction of the period between 1867 and 1900. Their examples typically include only two or three books from the nineteenth century, with the bulk of their evidence drawn from fiction of the 1930s and later. Generally, literary critics discuss only John Richardson's *Wacousta* (1832) and Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) when they consider nineteenth-century Canadian reaction to the wilderness. The wilderness was seen as an enemy of civilization and progress in these two books.<sup>4</sup>

In the period between Confederation and the turn of the century, English-Canadian fiction reflected a generally positive view of nature and the wilderness. This changing view of wild land within Canada was

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<sup>3</sup>Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 67; Carole Gerson, "Graeme Mercer Adam," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 99: Canadian Writers Before 1890*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1990), 3-4; Robert L. McDougall, "Adam, Graeme Mercer," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 14: 5-7; Carole Gerson, "Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 99*, 341-343. Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald, *An Algonquin Maiden: A Romance of the Early Days of Upper Canada* (Montreal: Lovell, 1887; CIHM 00008), 14.

<sup>4</sup>Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), 32, 114; Margot Northey, *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 23-25, 30; Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 39-45; John Richardson, *Wacousta; or, The Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas* (London: T. Cadell, 1832; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991); Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush* (London: Richard Bentley, 1852; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990).

consistent with international views of wilderness. Between the eighteenth and the late nineteenth centuries, changing intellectual fashions had begun to emphasize the picturesque and romantic aspects of virgin land, in opposition to earlier views that characterized undeveloped land as the abode of Satan. In Canada, this celebration of untamed nature began to appear rather late, in the middle of the nineteenth century and was not fully accepted until the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup>

This led to a duality in nineteenth-century Canadian depictions of the wilderness character of the nation. On the one hand, Canada's wild heritage was seen as a source of hardiness and national unity; on the other, it was a valuable stage that led to a more civilized, settled, and agricultural nation. Positive views of the wilderness appeared in historical novels, especially those about the period of French exploration and settlement and in stories about Canada's resource-extraction industries, such as lumbering and the fur trade. In both of these genres the wilderness was shown as a place of racial unity, in which the Canadian nation was forged from French-Canadian and Indian wilderness skills. The resource frontiers were shown both positively, as places where men gained strength and character, and negatively, as mere fore-runners to a more civilized condition. Graeme Mercer Adam and Ethelwyn Wetherald, for example, described the central conflict in the development of Canada as "Man versus nature—the successive assaults of

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<sup>5</sup>Ramsay Cook, *1492 and All That: Making a Garden out of a Wilderness* (North York, Ontario: Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, 1993), 16-18; Eric Kaufmann, "Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (October 1998): 666-669, 679-680; George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (August 1976): 22. On international aspects of this re-evaluation of untamed nature, see: Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 141-160; David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 194-195, 206-207.

perishing humanity upon the almost impregnable fortresses of the eternal forests.”<sup>6</sup> In this view, Canada was a nation that developed out of a battle with the wilderness, in which primeval forest was tamed to the good of humanity by the valor of successive generations of Canadians.

English-Canadian authors also saw the wilderness as a positive influence on modern Canada. They believed that Canada continued to have a wilderness character despite increasing urbanization. In this view, Canada was characterized by “the ease with which you leaped from Canada’s greatest city into the freest and most primitive kind of life.”<sup>7</sup> In novels of the period between 1867 and 1900, Canadians were seen as a people who continued to love nature and spent much of their time in the wilderness. Writers also recognized the association of Canadians with their wilderness heritage by emphasizing foreign identifications of Canadians with wilderness. The Canadian abroad was depicted as being recognizable because of his or her outdoor skills, especially canoeing ability.

The English-Canadian vision of their nation as a wilderness was most popularly expressed in historical fiction and adventure novels. The historical wilderness was especially popular in fiction written for readers in Great Britain and the United States. The two Canadian authors who reached best-seller status in both these nations, Gilbert Parker and Ralph Connor, produced fiction that portrayed Canada as a uncivilized frontier of fur-trappers, miners, and lumbermen. Similarly, popular literature for boys such as that produced by the Canadian J. MacDonald Oxley, portrayed Canada “as either a land of snowy wastes or a vast ‘billowy prairie,’ filled

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<sup>6</sup>Adam and Wetherald, *An Algonquin Maiden*, 9.

<sup>7</sup>Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward: The Strange Experience of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 50.



with wolves and bears . . . where adventure lay beyond every muskeg and mountain."<sup>8</sup> All three of these writers were taking part in an international surge in the production and popularity of romantic adventure novels at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Readers in Britain and America enjoyed Canadian adventure fiction in which Canada was depicted as a savage land in which only the strong survived, as Canadian writer Alice Jones protested when the *Winnipeg Telegram* panned her book *Bubbles We Buy* for including insufficient Canadian content. She replied that, "While the Americans are willing to read of Canada as a wilderness inhabited by Indians and French peasants, they do not care to hear of its civilization or progress."<sup>10</sup> This preference was reflected in the sales records of Parker and Connor and reinforced the identification of Canada with wilderness both within and outside Canada.

English Canadians also enjoyed reading adventure tales of the wild areas of Canada. The works of adventure writers such as Oxley, Parker, and Connor were very popular within Canada.<sup>11</sup> While this British and

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<sup>8</sup>R. G. Moyles, "A 'Boy's Own' View of Canada," *Canadian Children's Literature* 34 (1984): 41. Also see Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2001), 88.

<sup>9</sup>Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); Mary Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada, 1899-1918: An Overview," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 24 (1979): 106.

<sup>10</sup>Quoted in Gwendolyn Davies, "Alice C. Jones," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), 167. Other indications of this continuing British and American preference to view Canada as a wilderness are discussed in R. G. Moyles and Doug Owram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975).

<sup>11</sup>Elizabeth Waterston, "Books and Notions: The Canadian Popular Novel in the Nineteenth-Century," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 9 (September 1982): 437-448; Vipond, "Best Sellers"; and W. Kent Power, "The Reading of Canadian Students," *University Magazine* 8 (February 1909): 127-134.

American preference for wilderness works created a powerful incentive for Canadian writers, their continued use of the wilderness to characterize Canada's past was equally an indication that Canadians shared the British and American tendency to identify their nation with its wilderness. The ubiquity of this identification of Canada was an indication of its cultural power. The most influential ideas about any nation's identity are those that create belief both inside and outside the nation.<sup>12</sup>

English-Canadian writers associated wilderness with the national past and primarily portrayed it in historical novels. In these works they tended to imagine their characters surrounded by a trackless forest. The success or failure of such characters to survive indicated their worthiness to become Canadians. For Canadians of the late nineteenth century, to enter the wilderness was to re-enter their primitive past and thus their national past. In a canoe, for example, one was supposed to see the country as the early French explorers had seen it.<sup>13</sup>

The association of the wilderness with the primitive and the national past led to a further association of both Indians and French Canadians with the wilderness, as indicated in Alice Jones's comments above on the depiction of Canada as a wilderness inhabited by these two peoples. Both of these groups were imagined as typical of Canada's wilderness past and thus as crucial to the development of the Canadian national character. Through this connection with the wild past, they were both included in and excluded

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<sup>12</sup>Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>13</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, 150; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 64, 82, 132. A good example of this tendency occurred in "The Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias," in Stephen Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (Toronto: Bell and Cockburn, 1912; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 62-63.

from the imagined Canadian identity. French Canadians and Indians were seen as uniquely wilderness-capable and therefore as essential elements in a national character based around the idea of Canada as a wild land. At the same time, they were implicitly excluded from the development of modern Canada through their association with the primeval land.

Although they wrote about the romance of the French and Indian past, many English-Canadian writers expected both groups to vanish by assimilating with white, English-speaking Canadian society. This expectation lent a particularly safe nostalgia to writings about French Canadians and Indians. One example of this attitude appeared in *The Girl of the North*, in which the title character and her governess loved to walk in the woods. In these walks they often came upon “lakes whose solitude and silence filled one with a sort of apprehension, that whispered of horrors, past or to come—the ghosts of dead braves might wander there as a foretaste of the happy hunting grounds.”<sup>14</sup> Not only was the wilderness explicitly associated with Indians, but it was clear that these Indians had vanished from the landscape. There was no terror in these images, only a nostalgic regret.

In the late nineteenth century, Indians were believed to be closer to nature than other peoples. They were frequently seen as part of the

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<sup>14</sup>Susan Jones, [Helen Milecete, pseud.], *A Girl of the North: A Story of London and Canada*, 2nd. ed. (London: Greening & Co., 1900; CIHM 01368), 11-12. On the expectation of Indians disappearing, see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992); Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 19, 39-44. On the Indians as representative of a primitive past, see Francis, *Imaginary Indian*, 97, 107; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 3, 19, 132; Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 40; Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Wilderness: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 194. On the French as aspects of a national past, see Francis, *National Dreams*, 131; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 64; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 98, on Francis Parkman.

wilderness.<sup>15</sup> One good example of this was the English-Canadian tendency to depict Indians as wild animals, whether in a positive or negative way. One relatively positive example was Edmund Collins's novel, *Annette, the Metis Spy*, in which the Métis heroine, Annette, was likened to a kitten and a swallow. A negative use of this stereotype appeared in an earlier novel, *The Peace-Killer*, in which the evil Indian was named Le Serpent and his description linked to those reptiles. This linking of unfriendly Indians with snakes appeared again at the turn of the century, when Agnes Laut, a writer of novels and histories, likened the Indian villain of her novel *Lords of the North* to a snake and described the members of his tribe using similar imagery.<sup>16</sup>

The use of such similar imagery in both positive and negative stereotypes of native peoples was indicative of the dualistic image of the Indian in nineteenth-century Canadian thought. One trend was the portrayal of Indians as noble savages, whose society and culture was indicative of the essential goodness of human nature when uncorrupted by the evils of civilization. In contrast, other contemporary historians and anthropologists saw the native peoples of Canada as immoral, brutal, filthy, and degenerate examples of a lower evolutionary stage of humanity. These two views of the Indian co-existed in Canadian fiction, sometimes even to the point of being simultaneously espoused by a single author. Edmund Collins, for example, while characterizing Annette and her faithful maid in

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<sup>15</sup>Francis, *Imaginary Indian*, 118, 123. Also see Frye, "Conclusion," 840.

<sup>16</sup>Edmund Collins, *Annette, The Metis Spy; A Heroine of the North-West Rebellion* (Toronto: Rose, 1886; CIHM 02152), 42, 62, 75, 132; Samuel J. Watson, *The Peace-Killer, or The Massacre of Lachine*, in *The Canadian Illustrated News Series of Original Novels*, 1 (Montreal: George E. Desbarats, 1870), 54-84 ; A. C. Laut, *Lords of the North* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 77-97.

positive terms, characterized other Métis and native characters as brutal, cruel, and cowardly. The two stereotypes are essentially variations on a theme, differing only in the value placed on primitivism. In the stereotype of the noble savage, the primitive life was seen as a positive antidote to modern civilization; conversely, the savage stereotype regarded civilization as the highest attainment of humanity and primitive life as falling short of that goal.<sup>17</sup>

In both of these descriptions, however, the association of Indians with animals and wilderness rather than people was unquestioned. In an 1898 novel, set in the early nineteenth century, the author imagined the Muskoka region of Ontario as a place where “One could drive for hours and not see a living thing save, perhaps, a gaunt wolf, a frightened deer, a bear, a lynx or a wildcat”; yet “the human aborigine was frequently met.”<sup>18</sup> The connection of the idea of the Indian with the wilderness was so strong in Canadian culture that it was plausible to both writer and readers that Indians would be found in otherwise uninhabited places. Yet instead of erasing the Indian from the idea of Canada, their inclusion as part of a wilderness landscape assured that they would be included in the developing vision of Canada as a nation that was uniquely defined by its wilderness heritage. By being part of the wilderness and the past, the Indian became part of the Canadian character.

The embrace of Canada’s character as a wilderness nation allowed and required English Canadians to embrace both French and Indians as part of

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<sup>17</sup>Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers*, 21, 26, 35-38; Donald A. Wright, “W. D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English-Canadian Imperialism, 1880s-1918,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32 (Summer 1997): 140.

<sup>18</sup>James Donald Dunlop, *Forest Lily* (London: F. Tennyson Neely, 1898; CIHM 32194), 6.

their national character, at least in the imagined community that is the modern nation. In historical novels about the Canadian wilderness, English-Canadian authors did this by emphasizing the wilderness capabilities of both French-Canadian and Indian characters. The most common example of this wilderness ability was a scene in which an Indian or French Canadian led an English, Scottish, or English-Canadian character through a forest. In one such scene, a British officer, Captain Morton, was being guided toward his regiment by an Indian named Hemlock. In the forest:

Morton vigorously exerted himself to keep up with [Hemlock] and, as he did so, admired the deftness with which the Indian passed obstacles which he laboriously overcame. The ease and smoothness with which the red man silently slipped through thickets and fallen trees, he compared to the motion of a fish, and his own awkwardness to that of a blindfolded man, who stumbled at every obstacle.<sup>19</sup>

Morton's inability to keep up in the forest was indicative of English-Canadian ideas about their own capabilities in the wilderness and the way they used these abilities as a means of distinguishing themselves from the British. Morton's wilderness skills were non-existent not because of his race, but because of his nationality.

In this view, true Canadians were men who had either been born with wilderness skills, like the Indians and the French, or those who learned these skills through years in Canada and association with Indians or

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<sup>19</sup>Robert Sellar, *Hemlock: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1890; CIHM 13445), 22. An identical instance of a British officer's inability to keep up with his Indian guides occurred in Jean N. McIlwraith, *A Diana of Quebec* (Toronto: Bell & Cockburn, 1912), 143-144. Other good examples of this Indian ability in the woods appeared in Watson, *Peace-Killer*, 65; Charles Shrimpton, *The Black Phantom, or Woman's Endurance: A Narrative Connected with the Early History of Canada and the American Revolution* (New York: James Miller, 1867; CIHM 13614), 188.

*coureurs-de-bois*.<sup>20</sup> This was evident in a similar scene of wilderness travel, from Agnes Laut's novel, *Lords of the North*. This novel dealt with the rivalry between the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company for control of the fur trade in North America.<sup>21</sup> The central plot of the novel concerned the kidnapping of a Scots fur trader's white wife by his Indian arch-enemy. In an early effort to track the Indian kidnapper, a Canadian-born friend of the trader sought out a *habitant* who was known to be an especially good tracker.<sup>22</sup> The *habitant*, Paul, agreed to help the narrator and the pair set off into a wooded landscape full of freshly-fallen snow, in which "no one but Paul would have found and kept that tangled, forest path." In addition to his skill in tracking, Paul was apparently tireless. The narrator mused:

How often had I known my guide to exhaust city athletes in these swift marches of his! But I had been schooled to his pace from boyhood, and kept up with him at every step, though we were going so fast I lost all track of my bearings.<sup>23</sup>

In this case, the narrator kept up because he has been born in Canada and had acquired wilderness skill through his Canadian upbringing. Even so, he

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<sup>20</sup>As used in nineteenth-century novels, this term referred to any French Canadian who had left Quebec to work in the fur trade. Strictly speaking, it referred to an independent fur trader. Avis, Walter S., et. al., *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* (Toronto: Gage, 1991), s. v. "coureur de bois."

<sup>21</sup>For descriptions of this conflict, see J. M. Bumstead, *Fur Trade Wars: The Founding of Western Canada* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 1999); Daniel Francis, *Battle for the West: Fur Traders and the Birth of Western Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1982).

<sup>22</sup>The term *habitant*, as used by English-speaking Canadians in the late nineteenth century, referred to any French-Canadian who lived in a rural area. Its connotations included time spent working in the fur trade, and renting a farm from a seigneur. Avis, *Dictionary of Canadianisms*, s. v. "habitant."

<sup>23</sup>Laut, *Lords of the North*, 41-43.

could not quite measure up to the skills of a French Canadian who had married a Huron and who was once a *coureur-de-bois*.

English-Canadian authors often linked French-Canadian skill in the wilderness to their presumed associations with the Indians. In the quote above, the *habitant* had lived among Indians for many years. Another example appeared in *The Peace-Killer*, when the French officers discussed the utility of men from New France in dealing with the Indians. As one of these French officers said: "You require men born in the colony to cope with the Indians. These men possess the natural bravery of the French race, combined with a thorough knowledge of the ways of the savage races; and thus their services are invaluable." One of his fellow French officers agreed, saying that "These [colonial] gentlemen have always been associated with the savages, and know their habits better than a European soldier could ever hope to know them."<sup>24</sup> In this view the French Canadians were a sort of hybrid, combining the heritage of French civilization with the wilderness skills of the native peoples of Canada. English-Canadian writers persisted in characterizing the Canadian French as more wilderness-capable than the European French. Thus the wilderness skills of the Canadian French were transformed into a Canadian national skill.

Throughout the nineteenth century, English-Canadian writers associated French Canadians, and French Canada, with wilderness rather than civilization. In their historical fictions, they ignored the French settlement process and focused on the land as a wilderness and the men as

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<sup>24</sup>Watson, *Peace-Killer*, 56-57, 59. Similar views were expressed by Maud Ogilvy, *The Keeper of Bic Light House, A Canadian Story of To-Day* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1891; CIHM 11501), 16; Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Forge in the Forest* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1896); Blanche Lucile MacDonell, *Diane of Ville Marie: A Romance of French Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898; CIHM 09409), 197.



beings who were only comfortable in the wilderness. The archetypal French Canadian, in late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian fiction, worked in the Canadian North-West as a *voyageur* (canoeman) or a *coureur-de-bois*. Reading this fiction, one receives the impression that French-Canadian men never attempted to create family farms, but left for the fur trade or the lumberwoods at the slightest opportunity. A good example of this tendency was the French-Canadian lumberman that a young Methodist boy met in William Withrow's 1879 novel, *The King's Messenger*. This French Canadian, Jean Baptiste la Tour, "was a characteristic example of the *voyageurs* and *courreurs du bois* [sic] who, ever since the settlement of Canada by the French, had found the fascinations of the wild forest life too strong to permit them to remain in the precincts of civilization or engage in any steady agricultural labour."<sup>25</sup> Thus the typical French Canadian in English-Canadian fiction was so fond of the wilderness that one begins to think that it was a wonder French Canada was ever settled at all. In reality, French-Canadians have primarily been farmers who worked as *voyageurs* and *coureurs-de-bois* in order to supplement, rather than replace, their agricultural life and income, as the historian Allan Greer made clear in his study of rural New France.<sup>26</sup>

English-Canadian novels about the early period of French Canada also emphasized the wild character of the land rather than the efforts of *habitants* to create settlements. For instance, in one novel written by a professor of English Literature at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario,

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<sup>25</sup>Rev. W. H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation. A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 34392), 32. Another example of this type of French Canadian appeared in MacDonell, *Diane of Ville Marie*, 16.

<sup>26</sup>Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), Chapter Seven, "Habitant-Voyageurs," 177-193.

the French King granted an explorer, de Roberval, titles as well as funds. The King made de Roberval Lord of Norembega, Viceroy and Lieutenant-General in Canada, Hochelaga, Saguenay, Newfoundland, Belle Isle, Carpunt, Labrador, the Great Bay, and Baccalaos. One of his prospective crew, a man who had been to Canada before, recognized the absurdity of these titles when applied to the Canadian wilderness. As he listened to the King read out de Roberval's new titles, "The rugged, uninviting land which he knew so well rose vividly before him; and the high-sounding terms which were heaped upon it in no way lessened its ruggedness."<sup>27</sup> Admittedly, this novel described Canada before any attempt at settlement had been made, but the English-Canadian vision of French Canada as a wilderness also includes the period after the arrival of settlers.

For English-Canadian writers the most effective example of the failure of French attempts to create a settler society centered around the Fortress of Louisbourg. In 1874 James DeMille, Professor of Rhetoric at Halifax's Dalhousie University, published a novel in which Louisbourg was surrounded by woodland in which Indians roamed at will and white men moved only with the aid of these Indians. By the end of the nineteenth century, the English-Canadian view of Louisbourg had not changed, as indicated in a novel written by William McLennan and Jean McIlwraith, both Ontario-based writers. In *The Span O'Life: A Tale of Louisbourg and Quebec*, a Scottish officer serving with the French army characterized

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<sup>27</sup>T. G. Marquis, *Marguerite de Roberval: A Romance of the Days of Jacques Cartier* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899), 57. Marquis is identified as a Professor at Queen's in Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 18.

Louisbourg as “shut in . . . by an unbroken wilderness of rock and firs.”<sup>28</sup> To these writers, it was clear that the Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island had fallen to the English not just once, but twice, because of the French failure to create settlements upon the island.<sup>29</sup> The English settled the land, which led to an empire, while the French failure to create settlements led to a failure of their imperial plans.<sup>30</sup> In the English-Canadian mind of the late nineteenth century, New France stood for the wilderness that was one of the central facets of Canadian national identity.

New France, however, was only one aspect of the wilderness ethos that was beginning to be a defining factor in English-Canadian ideas of Canadian identity. Wilderness Canada was also closely associated with various types of resource extraction frontiers, such as lumbering, mining, ranching, and the fur trade, as well as the societies that grew up around these activities. Canadian historical scholarship on these resource frontiers was both early and abundant, including Harold Innis’s histories of the fur trade and the mining frontier, A. R. M. Lower’s examination of the interaction between lumbering and settlement in Eastern Canada, and David Breen’s analysis of the ranching frontier.<sup>31</sup> The concept of “the

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<sup>28</sup>James DeMille, *The Lily and the Cross: A Tale of Acadia* (Boston: Lee and Sheppard, 1874; CIHM 02632), 88-89, 162, 172, 232-237; William McLennan and J. N. McIlwraith, *The Span O’Life: A Tale of Louisbourg & Quebec* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899; CIHM 53209), 68.

<sup>29</sup>The fortress of Louisbourg fell in 1745 to a force made up of New England militia led by Massachusetts Governor William Shirley. The return of the fort to France in the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was one American grievance against the British in the period before the American Revolution. In 1758, during the Seven Years or French and Indian War, the fortress was taken and destroyed by a British naval force.

<sup>30</sup>DeMille, *Lily and the Cross*, 179. Also see Hampden Burnham, *Marcelle: An Historical Novel* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905), 18, 106, 132.

<sup>31</sup>Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930); A. R. M. Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada*, and Harold Adams Innis, *Settlement and the Mining Frontier*, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement Series, Vol. 9 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1936); David Breen,

frontier" has been debated by historians of the Western United States, ever since Frederick Jackson Turner's groundbreaking 1893 essay on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Historians of Canada have been concerned with the question of whether, and how well, Turner's theory of the significance of the frontier in providing a democratizing element in American life applied to the development of Canada. The classic response to this dilemma was to emphasize the differences between western development in the United States and Canada and to argue that Canada never really had that lawless period on the edge of settlement that led to democratization in Turner's argument.<sup>32</sup>

English-Canadian writers in the nineteenth century saw the resource extraction frontier as the places surrounded by unsettled wilderness, in which white men sought resources that had value outside the wilderness, such as furs, timber, diamonds, and valuable or precious metals. All of these products were sought, and found, in the wilderness portrayed in English-Canadian fiction. These resource extraction frontiers exhibited

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*The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). The various resource frontiers in the United States are discussed in Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987).

<sup>32</sup>Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, (Dec. 14, 1893); reprinted, in Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (1920; reprint, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962). The best overview of this discussion is the collection of documents in Michael S. Cross, ed., *The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment*, Issues in Canadian History Series (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970). The argument for the dissimilarity of the American and Canadian frontiers appears in: Frye, "Conclusion," 829; Robin W. Winks, *The Myth of the American Frontier: Its Relevance to America, Canada and Australia* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971), 19-28. Arguments against this dissimilarity include: R. Douglas Francis, "The Frontier and Images of the Canadian West in the Settlement Era," *Journal of American and Canadian Studies* [Japan] 9 (1992): 19-36; David H. Breen, "The Turner Thesis and the Canadian West: A Closer Look at the Ranching Frontier," in *Essays on Western History*, ed. Lewis H. Thomas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), 147-156.

many of the characteristics of the wilderness that appeared in other historical novels. The resource frontier was, by its nature, a moving frontier. In fiction, the resource frontier community could be located in a variety of places and time periods, from the lumberwoods of Ontario, to the ranching areas of the Prairies, to the mines of the Rocky Mountains, to the great forest and mining frontiers of British Columbia. This was particularly true because the Canadian frontier of settlement moved toward and through all of these areas in the period between 1867 and 1900. In addition, these resource frontiers were an important political topic during this period, as Prime Ministers John A. Macdonald and Wilfrid Laurier emphasized the role of western resources in creating wealth and industrial development in eastern and central Canada. Macdonald's National Policy was based on the idea of creating tariff barriers to foreign manufactures so that the money earned from resource extraction would be spent within Canada, thereby stimulating Canadian manufacturing.

The most famous of English-Canadian depicors of this resource frontier was the Reverend Charles William Gordon, who wrote under the pseudonym Ralph Connor. His best-selling novels, *Black Rock*, *The Sky Pilot*, and *The Man from Glengarry*, took place in the frontier communities that grew up around primary resource industries. The settlement of Black Rock was a town inhabited by miners and lumbermen; the men from Glengarry were woodsmen and river drivers in the Ottawa River Valley.<sup>33</sup> The area described in *The Sky Pilot* was "the great ranges on which feed herds of cattle and horses," another type of resource frontier that was seen as

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<sup>33</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (Toronto: The Westminster Co., 1898; CIHM 11872); Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Man From Glengarry* (Toronto: Westminster, 1901; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960).

a wilderness because it had not yet felt the civilizing hand of women, preachers, and farmers.<sup>34</sup> Connor based these tales on his actual experiences as a missionary to the miners and lumbermen of the Northwest and as a child in Glengarry, Ontario.<sup>35</sup> Other English Canadians who made careers by writing about this aspect of the Canadian wilderness included Gilbert Parker and J. MacDonald Oxley.<sup>36</sup> All three of these men had great financial success with their novels, not only in Canada but in the United States and Great Britain as well. As best-selling novelists they were instrumental in shaping the Canadian idea of their nation's wilderness character.

These novelists depicted Canada as a nation primarily characterized by its wilderness areas. Canadians's relationship to this landscape was the primary formative element in Canadian identity. One important aspect of the wilderness character of the land was its ability to transform the people who inhabited it into stronger, more heroic, more virile, and overall superior men.<sup>37</sup> That is, English-Canadian writers believed that a wilderness way of life would give rise to a group of people who were, in the

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<sup>34</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (1899; facsimile reprint, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 12.

<sup>35</sup>Michael Hurley, "Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon)," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 50-55.

<sup>36</sup>Gilbert Parker, *Pierre and His People: Tales of the Far North* (1892; reprint, New York: MacMillan, 1906); Gilbert Parker, *An Adventurer of the North* (1896; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969); Gilbert Parker, *A Romany of the Snows* (New York: Stone & Kimball, 1896); J. MacDonald Oxley, *Archie of Athabaska* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1893; CIHM 30438); J. MacDonald Oxley, *In the Wilds of the West Coast* (London, Edinburgh & New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1895; CIHM 11677); J. MacDonald Oxley, *Fergus MacTavish; or, Portage and Prairie: A Tale of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892; CIHM 30437).

<sup>37</sup>Susan Joan Wood, *The Land in Canadian Prose, 1840-1945* (Ottawa: Carleton Monographs in English Language and Literature, 1988), 113; Francis, "The Frontier and Images of the Canadian West," 28-31; Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada," 25-26; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 145; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 3, 105.

words of one French-speaking character in a novel about New France, "more rugged than the polished people from whom [they had] sprung."<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most clearly articulated example of this belief in the transformative power of the wilderness was Ralph Connor's description of the pioneers of Glengarry County, Ontario:

The sons born to them and reared in the heart of the pine forests grew up to witness that heroic struggle with stern nature and to take their part in it. And mighty men they were. Their life bred in them hardiness of frame, alertness of sense, readiness of resource, endurance, superb self-reliance, a courage that grew with peril, and withal a certain wildness which at times deepened into ferocity. By their fathers the forest was dreaded and hated, but the sons, with rifles in hand, trod its pathless stretches without fear, and with their broad-axes they took toll of their ancient foe.<sup>39</sup>

An important aspect of this adaptation to the wilderness was the way it was seen in exclusively masculine terms. The experience of the wilderness was believed to create a different type of masculinity that was not only ideally suited to Canadian circumstances, but also gaining increasing favor in international gender ideology.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the terms "men," or "man," and "manly" had taken on an almost mythic significance in descriptions of a particular man. The concept of "manliness" included virtues such as bravery, honesty, self-control, hard work, and devotion to one's family. In adventure stories, such as those of the Canadian wilderness, all but the last of these qualities were emphasized. As an earlier focus upon piety began to metamorphose into the ideal of the muscular Christian, manliness also

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<sup>38</sup>Rosanna Leprohon, *The Manor House of De Villeraie: A Tale of Canada Under the French Dominion, The [Montreal] Family Herald* (1859-1869); reprint, *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 34 (1986): 18. Also see the description of French Canadians in Burnham, *Marcelle*, 124.

<sup>39</sup>Connor, *Man from Glengarry*, 3-4.

began to include a particular concept of the physically developed white masculine body as an important indicator of manliness.<sup>40</sup> By the turn of the century, such a man was believed to be found in close association with the wilderness as masculinity began to be seen as inherently primitive.<sup>41</sup>

Though this idea of manliness was becoming commonly accepted within the entire British Empire, in Canada the concept of wilderness manliness was given nationalistic connotations.<sup>42</sup> Wilderness ability was seen as source of a unique Canadian national character. English-Canadian writers often depicted Englishmen and Frenchmen as refined gentlemen who did not like, and could not survive, the wilderness. In contrast, Canadian men, or men who were fit to become Canadians, adapted themselves to the wilderness and enjoyed their wilderness experience. Englishmen who were not fit to become Canadians did not have this ability to travel in the wilderness. In one such instance, an Englishman who had been with a hunting party in the "wild woods," managed to get lost on his

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<sup>40</sup>John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolutionary to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 223-224. A striking instance of this worship of the male body appeared in Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Forge in the Forest* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe, & Co., 1896), 44-47.

<sup>41</sup>See Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 227-232; John M. MacKenzie, "The Imperial Pioneer and Hunter and the British Masculine Stereotype in Late Victorian and Edwardian Times, in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 176-198; John Springhall, "Building Character in the British Boy: The Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-Class Adolescents, 1880-1914," in *Manliness and Morality*, 62-65; Elizabeth Vibert, "Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race, and Class in British Fur Traders' Narratives," in *Gender and History in Canada*, ed. Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996), 50-67; Graham Dawson, "The Blond Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, Imperial Adventure and the Imagining of English-British Masculinity," in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. Michael Roper and John Tosh (New York: Routledge, 1991), 113-144.

<sup>42</sup>J. A. Mangan, "Discipline in the Dominion: The 'Canuck' and the Cult of Manliness," in *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), 160-161.



way to the next shanty in search of provisions. He had given himself up to despair when one of the young Canadians in the party found him and led him back to camp. Afterward, he remarked to a Canadian girl named Rose that "The woods are very confusing to a person of my life and habits." She replied, "Oh, yes, indeed, and so very different from England." Even though Tredway, the Englishman, had been in Canada for many years, he was incapable of adapting to the country and becoming at home in the wilderness. Earlier in the novel he had expressed his preference for the ordered, garden-like landscape of England, while his young Canadian friend, Edward, rejoiced in the "wild, unconquered woods" of Canada.<sup>43</sup> Canadian men were associated with the wilderness that ensured their manliness, while European men were seen as over-civilized and therefore unmanly. In this way, it was easy for nineteenth-century writers to associate Canadian masculinity with the rugged virtues of the wilderness.

An exemplar of Canadian wilderness masculinity was Archie McKenzie, the boy hero of J. MacDonald Oxley's adventure tale, *Archie of Athabaska*. Archie was the son of a Hudson Bay factor and his wife Virginie Latour, the daughter of a French-Canadian voyageur and a Cree woman. Archie grew up on the shore of Lake Athabasca at the fur-trading fort of which his father was chief. There he absorbed a wilderness ideal of manhood. Thus, at age fifteen, he felt himself to be almost a man and his definition of masculinity was a catalog of wilderness abilities:

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<sup>43</sup>Adam and Wetherald, *An Algonquin Maiden*, 182-183, 14. Other instances of this nationalistic view of wilderness capability appeared in Jones, *Girl of the North*, 220; W. D. Lighthall, *The False Chevalier; or, The Lifeguard of Marie* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1898; CIHM 26273), 17-18; Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Foreigner: A Tale of Saskatchewan* (New York: George H. Doran, 1909), 300-326.

[T]o send a bullet or an arrow straight to its mark, to paddle a canoe hour after hour without missing a stroke, to tramp on snow-shoes four miles an hour for half a day without sitting down to rest, to bestride a half-broken horse and stick there until the creature, panting and exhausted, confessed defeat, to set a trap so cunningly that even the very wolverine fell a victim—these were some of the attributes of manhood, according to his way of thinking; and all these he possessed in a degree which rendered the pretty high opinion he held of himself at least excusable, if not altogether admirable.<sup>44</sup>

Archie's wilderness masculinity was linked to his French and Indian heritage, while the addition of Scottish descent emphasized his Canadian identity, as will be made clear in Chapter Six. English-Canadian authors gave their heroes wilderness abilities as part of both their masculinity and their Canadian identity.

The omission of women from the wilderness described in historical novels was not accidental. Nineteenth-century authors, both male and female, were much more comfortable with the idea of wilderness manliness than they were with the idea of rugged and hardy womanhood. The virtues associated with Canadian wilderness masculinity harmonized very well with prevailing nineteenth-century ideals of masculinity. Men were believed to be brave, self-reliant, capable of independent thought and action, and to have strength both of body and of character.<sup>45</sup> These virtues accorded

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<sup>44</sup>Oxley, *Archie of Athabaska*, 147. Similar descriptions of Canadian masculinity appeared in Jones, *Girl of the North*, 20; J. K. Lawson, *The Harvest of Moloch: A Story of To-Day* (Toronto: John M. Poole, 1908), 175-176.

<sup>45</sup>E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolutionary to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Parr and Rosenfeld, *Gender and History in Canada*; Roper and Tosh, *Manful Assertions*; Mangan and Walvin, *Manliness and Morality*. Some apropos expressions of the masculine ideal in Canadian fiction include: the description of Ranald, the hero, in Connor, *Man From Glengarry*, 218; Archie's battle for manly self-control in Oxley, *Archie of Athabasca*, 173; the statement that a true man is never controlled by his passions in Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty* (New York: D. Appleton, 1896), 137.

quite well with the wilderness ideal of masculinity throughout the British Empire and in the United States. Women, on the other hand, were expected to be motherly, strongly attached to their homes, and sensitive to the pain and suffering of small animals and other people. They were believed to inhabit a separate, domestic, sphere. As Barbara Welter observed, woman was a hostage in the home.<sup>46</sup> In nineteenth-century Canadian novels, it was common for women's virtue, or lack thereof, to be indicated by their domestic surroundings.<sup>47</sup> Women were expected to be delicate and tender both physically and in their feelings. In the nineteenth century, many authors believed that child-bearing women underwent a mystical transformation that made them into good mothers.<sup>48</sup> Women were

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<sup>46</sup>Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-174. Also see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 114, 272, 344; Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Misao Dean, *Practising Femininity: Domestic Realism and the Performance of Gender in Early Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), esp. 12, 21. An excellent summary of the doctrine of separate spheres may be found in the Canadian novel: Grodenk, pseud. *My Own Story: A Canadian Christmas Tale* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1869; CIHM 06368), 77. Descriptions of ideal femininity in Canadian novels include Miss Ethel Mordaunt, the heroine, in W. H. Brown, *She Might Have Done Better* (St. Johns, Quebec: The News Steam Printing House, 1877; CIHM 03748), 1: 15.

<sup>47</sup>The association of the ideal woman with her domestic surroundings was exemplified in many novels, including: Dunlop, *Forest Lily*, 45, 48; Mary E. Herbert, *Woman as She Should Be; or Agnes Wiltshire* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: for the author, 1861; CIHM 35770), 70; Watson Griffin, *Twok: a Novel* (Hamilton, Ontario: Griffin & Kidder, 1887; CIHM 12614), 112; Rebecca Agatha Armour, *Marguerite Verne; or, Scenes from Canadian Life* (St. John, New Brunswick: Daily Telegraph, 1886; CIHM 06085), 36-37; Cornelius O'Brien, *After Weary Years* (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1885; CIHM 11486), 24-25; Maud Ogilvy, *The Keeper of Bic Light House, A Canadian Story of To-Day* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1891; CIHM 11501), 60; Agnes Maule Machar, *Katie Johnstone's Cross: A Canadian Tale* (Toronto: James Campbell and Sons, 1870; CIHM 09599), 45.

<sup>48</sup>The expectation that women would be good mothers was demonstrated in: Withrow, *King's Messenger*, 90; Gilbert Parker, *The Pomp of the Lavillettes* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1896; reprint, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 212; Margaret Murray Robertson, *Christie Redfern's Troubles* (1866; reprint, London: Religious Tract Society, n. d.), 14; R. & K. M. Lizars, *Committed to His Charge: A Canadian Chronicle* (Toronto: George N. Morang &

associated with dependence, domesticity, and a clean and orderly home environment. There was nothing in this idea of femininity that would suggest that Canadian women might adapt to and enjoy their wilderness experience.

Thus the historical wilderness portrayed in English-Canadian fiction in the late nineteenth century was an almost entirely masculine world. In this fiction, even the towns that served the resource frontier were largely empty of white women. While men might go into the wilderness because they enjoyed the life or for financial gain, female characters who entered the wilderness required more elaborate justifications from writers. In Ralph Connor's *Black Rock*, for example, only one white woman appeared in the story, and Mrs. Mavor was in the mining and lumbering town out of devotion to her recently deceased husband. Indeed, in most fiction about the resource frontier white women who ventured into the wilderness were accompanying their husbands or fathers.<sup>49</sup>

This expectation that women would remain at home while men went into the wilderness and had adventures was typical of late-nineteenth-century views of both sexes.<sup>50</sup> Thus, in order for writers to include white

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Co., 1900; CIHM 09186), 19; Paul Tsy, *G. Dwyer, K. W.* (Montreal: Lovell, 1895; CIHM 24978), 97; Millie Magwood, *Pine Lake: A Story of Northern Ontario* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1901), 17-18.

<sup>49</sup>Connor, *Black Rock*. Other examples of this tendency include Gwen in Connor, *The Sky Pilot*; Edith Temple in W. H. Withrow, *Life in a Parsonage; or, Lights and Shadows of the Intinerancy* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1886; CIHM 34395); Frances Sutherland in Laut, *Lords of the North*; Mrs. Paterson and Miss Linda Paterson in Hampden Burnham, *Jack Ralston; or, The Outbreak of the Nauscopees: A Tale of Life in the Far North-East of Canada* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1903).

<sup>50</sup>This attitude was common in adventure fiction throughout the British Empire. See Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 39; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

women in their historical wilderness stories, they had to include a socially acceptable reason for a woman to be in the wilderness. One such reason for a woman to enter the wilderness, as mentioned above, was her devotion to a husband or other loved one. For a woman to go to a wilderness to be with her husband was, for nineteenth-century readers, understandable, because a woman's place was at her husband's side. One good example of this viewpoint is the following vignette about a French explorer and his wife:

On the 24th of July, 1701, Cadillac landed at Detroit, and set himself to found the place. Soon after this Madame Cadillac, who had been left behind at Quebec, plunged into the wilderness to join her husband.

It was a thousand miles in a birch-bark canoe rowed by half-clad Indians, and the route was through a dense forest and over great waters swept by the September storms, but this brave woman undertook the journey attended by only a single female companion.

When subsequently reminded of its hazards and hardships, she simply replied: "A woman who loves her husband as she should, has no stronger attraction than his company; where ever he may be."<sup>51</sup>

Madame Cadillac's devotion to her husband transformed this trip from something that would be unthinkable to a good woman into a feat of feminine bravery. Her motivation made all the difference in how she was regarded. Even so, as the quote implied, she did not herself display any masculine wilderness skills.

A white woman might also undertake a wilderness journey in order to save her nation from harm. For an example of the former we need look no further than the journey of Laura Secord, the Canadian heroine of the War of 1812, who snuck through the American lines in order to warn

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<sup>51</sup>Thomas B. Smith, *Young Lion of the Woods; or, A Story of Early Colonial Days* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1889; CIHM 15222), 142.

General Isaac Brock of the movement of American troops in Upper Canada. Secord made a cameo appearance in an 1880 novel about the War of 1812, in which she explained that, "I saw them marching past my cottage this very morning, and I vowed to warn the King's soldiers or die in the attempt. I slipped unseen into the wood and ran like a deer, through bypaths and cross lots, and I must press on or I may be too late."<sup>52</sup> Due to this wilderness daring, Secord became, and remains, a truly Canadian heroine. Her run through the woods was motivated by love of her country and was generally seen as a sacrifice of comfort and convenience that saved Canada by making possible Brock's victory at Queenston Heights.

An even stronger and more acceptable feminine motivation for wilderness travel was the necessity of rescuing a child from peril. This was the central plot in Charles G. D. Roberts's novel *The Forge in the Forest*.<sup>53</sup> The novel was set in Acadia after it had become the English colony of Nova Scotia, but before 1755 when the Acadian colonists were expelled. The hero and narrator was Jean de Mer, a Canadian nobleman and famed Acadian bush-ranger. His son, Marc, had fallen in love with an English girl who lived in Annapolis with her older, widowed sister Mizpah Hanford and Mizpah's five year old son, Philip. These three English people were captured by Indians faithful to the French, but Jean and Marc succeeded in rescuing the two women, although Marc was wounded. Unfortunately,

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<sup>52</sup>W. A. Withrow, *Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1880; CIHM 34398), 103. An almost identical scene, though with a different female character as heroine, took place in Robert Sellar, *Hemlock: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1890; CIHM 13445), 153-154. Also see Ruth McKenzie, "Ingersoll, Laura (Secord)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 9: 405-407.

<sup>53</sup>Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Forge in the Forest*, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe, & Co., 1896).

they were unable to rescue Mizpah's son and due to Marc's wound he could not aid his father in the pursuit of the Indians who stole Philip.

Jean de Mer was determined to rescue Mizpah's son, and Mizpah, with great effort and the promise to dress as a boy, persuaded him to let her go with him. In her anxiety for her son she could not bear to be left behind at the settlement. She believed, and convinced Jean, that his chances of finding the boy were greatly enhanced if he had a traveling companion to help paddle the canoe. In one sense, Mizpah's actions were unwomanly, in that she went, dressed like a boy, into the wilderness alone with a man. But because her actions were motivated by her supremely feminine anxiety about her child, she retained her status as a good woman and the heroine of the book.

All of these elaborate justifications, which seemed necessary in order for female characters to maintain their femininity in the wilderness, applied only to white women. To nineteenth-century English-Canadian authors, there was one group of women who naturally belonged in the wilderness: Indian women. Over and over again, the female characters who were most capable of taking care of themselves in the wilderness were at least partially Indian. Authors did not feel the need to imagine elaborate stories to allow Indian women to go into the wilderness because, as indigenous peoples, they were believed to be part of the uncivilized natural world. Indian women could take care of themselves in the forest, while white female characters who did enter the forest generally had to be taken care of by someone, as Mizpah by was by Jean de Mer and Madame Cadillac by her Indian guides. Indeed, Indian girls were so completely at home in the

wilderness that, in fiction, they made a habit of rescuing white men who had gotten lost or hurt in the forest.<sup>54</sup>

Unlike native women, white women were depicted as incompatible with wilderness life. In part, this was because of the late-nineteenth-century idea that the key transition between wilderness and settlement was the arrival of white women. The presence of white women indicated that an area was becoming civilized because of the prevailing view of white women as unable to adapt to wilderness life except as a result of unusually strong motivations. In addition, white women were seen as agents of civilization. White women were believed to be essential to the creation of a traditional European family structure and home environment, which were an important indicator of civilization for nineteenth-century intellectuals. They were also expected to create or support institutions that would lead to civilization, such as schools and churches.<sup>55</sup>

This association between white women and civilization was a corollary of the identification of men with primitivism and wilderness life. In the nineteenth century, men and women were often seen as opposites to each other in every way. Therefore, any characteristic that was typical of men tended to have an opposite characteristic that was viewed as typically feminine. By the late nineteenth century, urban civilization was beginning

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<sup>54</sup>Instances of this appeared in Adam and Wetherald, *An Algonquin Maiden*, 62, 64; Dunlop, *Forest Lily*, 8, 168.

<sup>55</sup>Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 174. Also see Susan Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) xiii-xiv, 6, 8, 21, 159, 174; Wood, *Land in Canadian Prose*, 114-115; Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) and Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979).



to be seen as a feminizing influence that needed to be counteracted by frequent retreats to the wilderness or into masculine activities such as sports.

The correlation of the wilderness with an undesirable savagery was beginning to give way to a more romantic view of the wilderness as an antidote to the emasculating effects of the “festering cities” that were the result of the industrialization that was increasingly common in Canada and the United States in the 1880s and 1890s. For example, between 1871 and 1901, the percentage of Canadians living in urban areas (defined as communities with over 1000 people) almost doubled. According to the 1871 census, 18.3% of Canadians lived in urban areas, while by 1901, 34.9% lived in urban areas. In 1867, over 80% of the working population of British North America received its income from farming, fishing, lumbering, and fur-trapping. As the century unfolded, an increasing percentage of the work force began to get its income from urban jobs, such as work in textile, clothing, footwear, and cigar factories, or in offices and other professional settings.<sup>56</sup> In practical terms, this meant that fewer and fewer of the Canadians who wrote novels had direct contact with wilderness landscapes on a day-to-day basis. Although this was the period of the settlement of the Canadian west, those who were writing novels and thinking about Canadian identity were much more likely to live in cities. Even Ralph Connor, who based his wilderness novels upon his own experience in the

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<sup>56</sup>The term “festering cities” is borrowed from A. R. M. Lower, *Unconventional Voyages* (Toronto, 1953), viii; quoted in Berger, *Writing of Canadian History*, 115. The sources for the statistics on the transformation of Canadian society are: Alvin Finkel, Margaret Conrad and Veronica Strong-Boag, *History of the Canadian Peoples, Volume II: 1867 to the Present* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 3, 87, 172; R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones and Donald B. Smith, *Destinies: Canadian History Since Confederation*, 3rd. ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 9, 11-12.

unsettled areas of the west, was living in Winnipeg by the time he began to write.

This very lack of contact with wild land led to a romanticized vision of the wilderness. As Roderick Nash argued, in his classic *Wilderness and the American Mind*, "From the vantage point of comfortable farms, libraries and city streets, wilderness assumed a far different character than from a pioneer's clearing. . . . Wilderness had actually become a novelty which posed an exciting, temporary alternative to civilization."<sup>57</sup> As industrialization and urbanization advanced in the United States and in Canada, Americans and Canadians increasingly came to view the wilderness as a place of renewal. They believed that temporary visits to wilderness areas, such as the Muskoka area of Ontario, would regenerate and revivify men and women enervated and debilitated by modern life.<sup>58</sup>

This turn-of-the-century belief in the regenerative power of the wilderness was succinctly expressed by John A. Murdoch, a resident of Pilot Mound, Manitoba, in his 1896 novel about early Loyalist settlers in Ontario. As Murdoch declared in the preface, he wrote the book "partly to have the pleasure of recalling, in imagination, the songs of birds that have long ceased to sing and of enjoying the verdure of the woods, long since fallen and faded." Murdoch attempted to recapture such delights by writing a book about United Empire Loyalists arriving in the unsettled wilderness of Upper

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<sup>57</sup>Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 57; T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, 2nd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 4-5, 28, 108. This view of the wilderness took hold earlier in Great Britain, where industrialization took place earlier than in the United States or Canada. See Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 28.

<sup>58</sup>Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature," 22, 24-26; Cole, "Artists, Patrons and Public," 69; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 143-145; Francis, *National Dreams*, 147, 151; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 3, 105, 113; Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 124; Mangan, "Discipline in the Dominion," 160-161.

Canada. As they began to settle the area, one family of settlers, the Adams, met a white man who already inhabited the area. This man preferred to live in the wilderness. Yet he remained a perfect gentleman and even saved one of the Adams girls from drowning. As they did not know his name, the Adamses called him the "wild man." As he got better acquainted with the Adamses, the "wild man" explained why he preferred the wilderness. He argued that:

Man oppresses and enslaves every living thing which comes under his control. The wild creatures of the woods and plains, rivers and lakes, lose their ability to protect themselves and find their own food; they become helpless and stupid. Look at that flock of geese passing along the surface of the lake, they are wild, strong, self-reliant and free. Compare them with the inactive, waddling idiots of the same race that inhabit the barnyard. . . . The same rule holds good in the case of men. In a perfectly civilized condition, the mind is supposed to be improved by receiving an agreeable polish, but in securing this, other qualities are lost and the untiring, independent and undaunted native of this earth degenerates into a being most effeminate.<sup>59</sup>

In this turn-of-the-century view, it was civilization, rather than savagery, that was the true degenerative power in society. As more and more people lived in cities, they had begun to feel that urbanization destroyed the vigor and healthfulness of the people who lived in them. In this view, an occasional return to the wilderness became essential for recovering social vigor. This desire to retreat to the wilderness was an important factor in the simultaneous creation of wilderness reserves and national parks in the

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<sup>59</sup>John A. Murdoch, *In the Woods and On the Waters* (Winnipeg: Stovel Co., 1896; CIHM 09812), 89-90. Similarly romantic views of the wilderness appeared in: Lighthall, *False Chevalier*, 19-20; A. C. Laut, *Heralds of Empire: Being the Story of One Ramsay Stanhope, Lieutenant to Pierre Radisson in the Northern Fur Trade* (1902; reprint, Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 150, 179, 223, 323; Hampden Burnham, *Jack Ralston; or, The Outbreak of the Nauscopees: A Tale of Life in the Far North-East of Canada* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1903), 11-12, 105-106, 193; Burnham, *Marcelle*, 258-259.

United States and Canada. The increasingly positive view of the wilderness led to a desire to preserve it from the modern world.

Increasingly, the urban middle classes began not only to take vacations, but to retreat to areas such as the Muskoka region north of Toronto in order to recoup their physical and emotional energy after coping with the urban world of work. Such a retreat was the subject of one short story published in 1900 in the British magazine *Cornhill*. The author, a resident of Hamilton, Ontario, wrote about a party of Bostonians who summered on Georgian Bay. The two main characters were an overweight, lazy, cynical Bostonian and a vigorous Canadian girl. By the end of the summer, Georgian Bay and contact with the Canadian girl had worked such a change on him that he had become tanned and athletic-looking and resolved to put in a good winter's work towards getting his law degree.<sup>60</sup> This transformation was presented as partially the result of the wilderness and partially of the influence of the Canadian girl with whom he fell in love.

This view of the wilderness as a place that would redeem industrial civilization took on explicitly nationalist overtones for Canadian writers. For English-Canadian authors, Canada's wilderness past set it apart from other nations and Canadians' desire and ability to return to the wilderness became a defining national trait. Canadian writers described the Canadian wilderness, in the words of the historian Daniel Francis, as "a unique landscape which imparts to us a unique set of characteristics which we recognize as Canadian. When we enter the canoeable Canadian landscape,

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<sup>60</sup>J. N. McIlwraith, "On Georgian Bay," *Cornhill* 3rd. series, 9 (August 1900), 179-195; Misao Dean, "Jean Newton McIlwraith," *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Vol. 92*, 239-242. Also see Sidney C. Kendall, *Among the Laurentians: A Camping Story* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1885; CIHM 07925), 11.

we believe we are rediscovering and reinforcing our national virtues.”<sup>61</sup> This point of view was definitely shared by Charles G. D. Roberts, one of the most famous writers of both fiction and poetry in late-nineteenth-century Canada. Roberts was himself an avid canoeist and had taken many trips along the rivers of New Brunswick before he moved to New York in 1895. Recollections of these trips were undoubtedly of use to him in his novel, *Around the Campfire*, published in 1896. The novel began with the departure from Fredericton of six professional men, the type of men with whom Roberts would have gone on vacation. These “six devoted canoeists . . . heard simultaneously the voices of wild rapids, calling to them from afar. The desire of the woods awoke in us. The vagrant blood that lurks in the veins of our race sprang up and refused to be still. The very next day we fled from the city and starched collars, seeking the freedom and the cool of the wilderness. . . . In shirt sleeves and moccasins we went.” Their desire for a wilderness retreat was represented as a national desire, something in the blood of the Canadian race. And these Canadian men were prepared for their wilderness adventure. Not only did they have their birch-bark canoes and their wilderness clothes all ready, they were such expert canoemen that they did not even have to engage Indian guides to pole them up the more difficult parts of the Madawaska and the Saint John rivers.<sup>62</sup>

By the turn of the nineteenth century, skill with a canoe was increasingly emphasized as a marker of Canadian identity. To be able to

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<sup>61</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, 150. A good example of this trend in Canadian culture is Pierre Elliott Trudeau, “Exhaustion and Fulfilment: The Ascetic in a Canoe,” in *Wilderness Canada*, ed. Borden Spears (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, & Co., 1970), 3-5. See also Jasen, *Wild Things*, 109; Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 123.

<sup>62</sup>Charles G. D. Roberts, *Around the Camp-Fire* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1896; CIHM 12495), 1-2. Biographical detail on Roberts provided by: Patricia Morley, “Charles G. D. Roberts,” in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 301-308.

canoe properly was a quintessentially wilderness skill, one which every true Canadian would have and could be identified by while abroad. One instance of such identification was expressed in a 1903 novel by the Halifax-based author Alice Jones. The relevant dialogue was between an English lady and the Canadian visitor who was paddling her in a canoe on an English river.

"How quietly and quickly you paddle," she said. . . .  
 "You don't look like the other people here do. You kneel upright and hardly raise your paddle. Is that the American way?"

"It is the way I learnt from Indians on the St. Lawrence. I certainly never saw *them* lie back against cushions and wave their paddles like a spoon helping porridge. I suppose it's the English way."

"Don't be supercilious! How can we be expected to paddle like Indians!" she retorted.

"No, the English mind is hardly imaginative enough to grasp the fact that if the Indian evolved the canoe, he is most likely to understand the best way of getting it along."<sup>63</sup>

Once again, Canadian wilderness skills were associated with Canada's Indians. Canadians were distinguished from their imperial cousins by their willingness to learn such skills. Thus the very possession of such skills became indicators of Canadian identity.

The importance of such skills in defining Canadian identity was indicated by authorial willingness to associate white Canadian women with wilderness skills. When one turn-of-the-century Canadian heroine journeyed to London, she found she longed for the wilderness. She also

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<sup>63</sup>Alice Jones, *Bubbles We Buy* (Boston: Herbert B. Turner & Co., 1903), 292-293; Gwendolyn Davies, "Alice C. Jones," *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Vol. 92*, 165-168. This identification of Canadians with their method of paddling a canoe was shared by the British, and persisted into the 1930s, as is shown by a vignette in Dorothy Sayers, *Gaudy Night* (1936; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 295, in which Harriet Vane and Lord Peter Whimsy, on the bank of a river, watch passing boats which include a "canoe, driven swiftly by two Canadian undergraduates kneeling to their work." The only way they could possibly know that these passing figures were Canadian was by the identification of their manner of paddling.

demonstrated her Canadian identity through her skillful handling of a canoe.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the English people around her, she was strong and vigorous and used to a canoe. Her love for the wilderness and her canoeing skills indicated another change between the wilderness depicted in historical novels and the turn-of-the-century escape to the wilderness. In novels about their own contemporaries, late-nineteenth-century authors embraced the idea that women too showed their Canadian identity through their ability in, and enjoyment of, the wilderness. This tendency to identify Canadians by their distinctive wilderness abilities was indicative of English-Canadian ideas about the centrality of the Canadian wilderness in the formation of a uniquely Canadian identity. In these novels, nationality was more important than gender in the characterization of Canadians.

English-Canadian authors believed that Canada's wilderness heritage was a continuing factor in the creation of the character of urban Canadians. An important indicator of this point of view appeared in the last lines of Ralph Connor's best-selling novel, *The Man from Glengarry*. The novel opened by describing the lives of the Scots settlers of Glengarry county, Ontario, especially those men who supplemented the income from their bush farms by working in the lumberwoods and on the spring river drives. The hero, Ranald, was the son of one of these river-driving pioneers. By the end of the novel, Ranald has succeeded in Eastern business circles and moved to British Columbia to run lumber camps like those in which his father once worked. In the last moments of the novel, Ranald, on a visit to Toronto, attended a dinner given him by the men's club for which he played football while in the city. After the dinner, he became engaged to the girl he

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<sup>64</sup>Susan Jones, [Helen Milecete, pseud.], *A Girl of the North: A Story of London and Canada*, 2nd. ed. (London: Greening & Co., 1900; CIHM 01368), 62, 67.

loved and as he left the club with her, the men cheered them both, "and after the three cheers and the tiger, little Merrill's voice led them in the old battle-cry, heard long ago on the river, but afterward on many a hard-fought football field, 'Glengarry forever!'"<sup>65</sup> The use of this fighting cry for the organized sports of urban Canada, with its origins in the Canadian wilderness, indicated the way English Canadians like Ralph Connor linked Canada's wilderness heritage to the modern, urban, Canadian national identity.

Despite the increasing urbanization of their nation, English-Canadian authors found the idea of the Canadian wilderness more and more important in their definition of themselves and their nation. The simultaneous development of Canadian nationalism with the changing vision of wilderness throughout the English-speaking world was an important factor in the embrace of unsettled nature as a central aspect of Canadian national identity. The increasingly positive characterization of primitive nature at this time had a lasting effect on Canadian self-definition by making the wilderness character of the land an acceptable ingredient in national character.

Canada's wilderness heritage was seen as its distinguishing difference from other nations. In nineteenth-century novels, the wilderness played an important part in shaping the Canadian character, both through its historical legacy and by its contemporary presence on the fringes of Canadian cities and towns. By writing historical novels about the period prior to European settlement, English-Canadian authors defined the experience of wild land as a key characteristic of the Canadian national character. The definition of Indians and French-Canadians as inhabitants of

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<sup>65</sup>Connor, *Man from Glengarry*, 287.



such landscapes provided English-Canadian writers with a means of including them within the imagined Canadian identity based on life in the bush. By writing about contemporary Canadians in terms of their wilderness attitudes and abilities, they emphasized the idea that Canadian identity continued to be a product of wild landscapes. For many, both within and outside the country, the wilderness experience came to be an essential part of the definition of Canada and Canadians.

## Chapter 4

### CANADA AS A GENDERED SETTLER SOCIETY

In the late nineteenth century, one important component of English Canadians' imagined national identity was the image of themselves as a settler society. Authors of fiction contributed to this idea by writing about Canada's settlement frontiers. In these stories Canadian identity was based on the successful conquest of the bush, the transformation of the land from forest into farmland. This was a point of view that coexisted with, even though it contradicted, the view of Canada as being characterized by its wilderness. Individual authors often emphasized both Canada's wildness heritage and the settler transformation of that heritage as components of Canadian national identity.

While reverence for the wilderness was one reaction to the unique Canadian land, the glorification of those who converted the wilderness into a thickly settled nation emphasized another relationship to the land. In this view, the transformation of the landscape was indispensable in the creation of Canada as a national community. This was clearly stated by the St. Thomas, Ontario, resident, Coll McLean Sinclair, in an 1897 novel about Ontario. As part of his opening material, he argued that the story of the early settlers needed to be told:

Nearly all the writers, who have ventured near this treasure country, took their incidents from the picturesque French period, the voyageurs, the Indians wars, and so forth. But after all is said about their picturesqueness . . . there still remains the blunt fact that these people made but little headway in shaping out a nation. Had the efforts to colonize and civilize Canada been left to hunters and trappers solely there would most likely still be only a stretching line of trading posts from the Atlantic to the Pacific instead of the nucleus of a hardy

northern nation. It is undeniable that Canada owes the greater part of its comparative success in nation building to the English, the Scotch, the German, and in a lesser degree to the Irish settlers. . . . These men were not hunters or trappers, they were practical men with one purpose in view, to hew out for themselves homes in the dark forests, and this they did so effectually, that to-day their posterity are in possession of one of the fairest lands in the world—a land where wealth is equally distributed, a land of even-handed liberality to all.<sup>1</sup>

Although Sinclair recognized the popularity of the portrayal of the wilderness in creating Canadian identity, he felt that the period of settlement was more important to the creation of Canada as a nation. In novels about the settlement of Canada, most authors looked at the transformation of the landscape as a positive process. This continuing emphasis on the transformation of the wilderness may reflect the fact that much of Canada, particularly west of Ontario, continued to be a society in the process of settlement until the 1920s. As Roderick Nash argues, the pioneers actually engaged in settling an area, tended to see settlement as a positive process of subduing the wilderness and creating something fruitful in its place. This view of the wilderness as an enemy has been a common and continuing aspect of Canadian culture.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Coll McLean Sinclair, [Malcolm, pseud.], *The Dear Old Farm: A Canadian Story* (St. Thomas, Ontario: The Journal Publishers, 1897; CIHM 09517), 10. A similar sentiment appears in Robert Wilson, *Never Give Up; or, Life in the Lower Provinces* (Saint John, NB: Daily News Steam Job Office, 1878; CIHM 32337), 42. In addition, the view that the French deserved to lose their colony because they had been unsuccessful in settling the land appeared in Hampden Burnham, *Marcelle: An Historical Novel* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905), 18, 106, 132. This concept was discussed in the previous chapter, "Wilderness and Gendered Canadian Identity." Also see Eric Kaufmann, "'Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (October 1998): 680, 683. Also see the discussion of Sinclair's novel in Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 97-98.

<sup>2</sup>Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 30-43; J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-creation before the Railway* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 9; Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto:

In the characterization of Canada as a settler society, English-Canadian writers emphasized an immigrant's successful adaptation of the Canadian land. The transformation of both the immigrant and the wilderness was believed to be at the heart of Canadian nationhood. In their fiction of the settlement process, English-speaking-Canadian authors focused primarily upon British settlers. Although many immigrants to nineteenth-century Canada were from the United States, Americans appeared in novels only as part of the hardships surrounding the British settler hero or heroine. Thus, in fiction, the process of settling Canada was portrayed as a process of British expectations coming to terms with and transforming Canadian realities. One reason for this was the heritage of those writing fiction about Canada in the nineteenth century. Of the 42 authors for whom biographical details are available, 13 were themselves immigrants from Great Britain, a further 11 were the children of immigrants from Great Britain, and the remaining 18 were born in Canada of already settled parents. Of these 42 authors, none were themselves immigrants from the United States, or descended from American immigrants, with the exception of 3 who described themselves as descended from United Empire Loyalists who left the United States in order to remain loyal to the British crown.<sup>3</sup>

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Anansi, 1972); Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Northrup Frye, "Conclusion," in *The Literary History of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 830.

<sup>3</sup>These biographies were found in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volumes 10-14*; W. H. New, ed, *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990); W. H. New, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 99, Canadian Writers Before 1890* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990); Lorraine McMullen and Sandra Campbell, eds., *Pioneering Women: Short Stories by Canadian Women, Beginnings to 1880* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1993); Lorraine McMullen and Sandra Campbell, eds., *Aspiring Women: Short Stories by Canadian Women, 1880-1900* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1993); Charles G. D. Roberts and Arthur L. Tunnell, eds., *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who Was Who: Volume One, 1875-1933* (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1934).

English-Canadian authors characterized settlement as a result of both masculine and feminine energy. In the settlement process, the wilderness was not just transformed, it was domesticated. And in the nineteenth century, domesticity was believed to be the product of women's efforts. The domestication of the Canadian wilderness was no exception. Yet in order to survive the settlement frontier long enough to domesticate it, British women settlers were believed to have had to make many sacrifices of their middle-class gentility and expectations. Writers of fiction felt that these sacrifices were worthwhile because women's adaptations to frontier conditions created a uniquely Canadian femininity. This Canadian feminine character was more adaptable and domestically capable than her British counterpart. In addition, the Canadian woman was believed to have maintained true refinement without false notions of gentility and social distance. This adaptation process was documented in the writings of Catharine Parr Traill and her sister Susanna Moodie, both of whom emigrated to Canada in the 1820s and 1830s as the wives of British officers on half pay. As such, they were extremely sensitive to their social position as genteel ladies and the indignities of bush life for such women. Much of the characterization of Canadian settler femininity, with its tension between domestic work and refinement, was inspired by the literary work of these two settlers.<sup>4</sup> English-Canadian writers also believed that the work of men was essential to the settlement process and that the work of settlement had

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<sup>4</sup>The most famous works of the sisters Moodie and Traill are: Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush; or, Life in Canada*, 2nd. ed., (London: Richard Bentley, 1852; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989); Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada: Being Letters from the Wife of an Emigrant Officer, Illustrative of the Domestic Economy of British America* (London: Charles Knight, 1836; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989).

an important impact on masculine Canadian identity, making Canadian men hard-working, honest, and physically and mentally strong.

In the period between 1867 and 1900, the concept of Canada as a nation based upon settlement had both historical and contemporary implications. In 1867, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia all included large settled areas, flanked by an unsettled "back country" that had not yet been transformed into agricultural settlements. In the case of the Maritimes, this land included the agriculturally poor soils on hillsides and the forested land that sustained ship-building and timber-trading industries.<sup>5</sup> In Quebec and Ontario, the settled agricultural and urban areas were centered around the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, and the various tributary bodies of water in the southern portions of both provinces. Each colony attempted to encourage settlements in their northern regions in the 1850s and 1860s. Yet even the Free Grant and Homesteads Act of 1868 and the Colonization Societies Act of 1869, which subsidized the cost of crown lands for settlers, failed to lead to successful settlement of this agriculturally poor region. By the 1880s even the government of Ontario had given up on such formal promotions of settlement of the Canadian Shield.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Rusty Bittermann, "The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a 19th Century Cape Breton Community," in *The Acadiensis Reader, Volume One: Atlantic Canada Before Confederation*, 2nd ed., ed. P. A. Buckner and David Frank (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990), 220-242; Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Ernest R. Forbes, D. A. Muise, and L. D. McCann, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

<sup>6</sup>Brian Young and John A. Dickinson, *A Short History of Quebec*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman Ltd., 1993), 114-116; Geoffrey Wall, "Nineteenth-century Land Use and Settlement on the Canadian Shield Frontier," in *The Frontier: Comparative Studies*, eds. David Henry Miller and Jerome O. Steffen (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 231-335; Brian S. Osborne, "Frontier Settlement in Eastern Ontario in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Changing Perspectives of Land and Opportunity," in *The Frontier*, 217-220.

By that time, the settlement energies of the Canadian government were focused on the newly acquired prairie provinces. Indeed, the Canadian embrace of the idea that their future development would be dependent upon the settlement of the prairie west was one of the impulses that led to Confederation in 1867. Particularly in light of the inability to settle the Canadian Shield territories of northern Ontario and Quebec, Canadians focused on the western prairies as essential frontiers for agricultural development. In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company relinquished control over this land—which became the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan—to the Canadian government. Almost immediately, the Canadian government began to encourage agricultural settlement of these prairie areas through the Dominion Lands Act, passed in 1872, which granted 160 acres of prairie land to any adult male with ten dollars. The determination of John A. Macdonald's Conservative party to settle the West was evident in their continuing devotion to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, designed to promote settlement, connect agricultural producers with eastern Canadian markets, and ensure British Columbia's entry into Confederation. Prairie settlement got off to a slow start in the 1870s, and only in the 1880s, after the completion of the railway, did the prairies begin to get significant influxes of agricultural settlers.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1880 and the 1930s, the prairie provinces were seen as the most significant frontier of settlement within Canada.<sup>8</sup> Yet this area did not

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<sup>7</sup>Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 3, 108; Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 17.

<sup>8</sup>On the settlement period of the prairies as primarily between 1880 and 1930, see Danysk, *Hired Hands*, 7, 27; Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982), 20-21; Elaine Leslau Silverman, *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880-1930*, Rev. ed. (Calgary: Fifth House, 1998).

appear frequently in novels about the settlement of Canada prior to 1900.<sup>9</sup> English-Canadian authors preferred to discuss Canada as a settler society in the more familiar geographic settings of Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes, possibly because these were the landscapes with which they were most familiar. Given the timing of prairie settlement, the group of educated English Canadians who were most likely to write novels had little direct contact with prairie life. Even those who spent time in the prairies, such as Ralph Connor, were not native to the region and they evinced a preference for writing nostalgically about the landscapes of their childhood rather than the hardships of their prairie experience.

Thus in writing about Canadians as settlers, English Canadians generally wrote of Canada's national past, rather than of its present; that is, most novels about the settlement process were historical novels. Historical novels about settlement could be set at any time between about 1780 and the 1850s, depending upon the area depicted. Writers most often focused on the settlement of Ontario, especially in relation to the Loyalist migrations of the 1790s, or the later British settlement migrations between 1800 and the 1840s of which Moodie and Traill were exemplars.<sup>10</sup> The most popular novels of settlement were Ralph Connor's stories about Glengarry County, Ontario,

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<sup>9</sup>Two exceptions to this disregard of prairie settlement were A. L. O. M., *The Brock Family* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890; CIHM 30197), in which the Brock family took up a homestead in Manitoba under the Dominion Lands Act; Christopher Oakes, *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* (Toronto: National Publishing Co., 1890; CIHM 30422), in which one main character had a farm at Portage La Prairie, Manitoba.

<sup>10</sup>On the timing of settlement in Ontario, see Wood, *Making Ontario*; on Quebec, see Dickinson & Young, *A Short History of Quebec*; on the Maritimes, see W. S. MacNutt, *The Atlantic Provinces: The Emergence of Colonial Society, 1712-1857* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965); Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).



*The Man From Glengarry* and *Glengarry School Days*.<sup>11</sup> Although these novels were published in 1901 and 1902, respectively, they were characteristic of late-nineteenth-century views of the process of settlement. Literary English Canadians believed that these books presented an inspiring and truthful picture of Canadian frontier life. Although later literary critics do not agree with this idea of Connor's novels earlier reviewers' comments centered around the books' "trueness with life," their "graphic delineation of rough frontier life," and their "virility and fidelity to human nature."<sup>12</sup> Whatever twentieth-century readers and literary critics might think, to English Canadians at the turn of the last century Ralph Connor's books, and others like them, provided a realistic picture of the heroic period of Canadian settlement.<sup>13</sup> In their fiction, late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian writers created and reflected a vision of the settler origins of their nation. These authors insisted on the realism of their stories in prefaces.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Man From Glengarry* (Toronto: Westminster, 1901; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960); *Glengarry School Days: A Story of Early Days in Glengarry* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1902).

<sup>12</sup>Review of *Glengarry School Days*, by Ralph Connor, In *The Canadian Magazine* 20 (January 1903): 294; Review of *The Man From Glengarry*, by Ralph Connor, In *The Canadian Magazine* 18 (December 1901): 194; Review of *The Man From Glengarry*, by Ralph Connor, In *Toronto Saturday Night* (November 23, 1901): 5. On the readership and popularity of Connor's novels, see W. Kent Power, "The Reading of Canadian Students," *University Magazine* 8 (February 1909): 127-134; Mary Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada, 1899-1918: An Overview," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 24 (1979): 9-119.

<sup>13</sup>Other examples of this opinion that novels about settlement were true to life appear in, for example, Review of *For King and Country: A Story of 1812*, by Agnes Maule Machar, In *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* 6 (December 1874): 571; Review of *Candlelight Days*, by Adeline M. Teskey, In *The Canadian Magazine* 41 (September 1913): 536; Review of *Hemlock: A Tale of the War of 1812*, In *Books and Notions* 7 (January 1891): 8.

<sup>14</sup>Grodenk, pseud., *My Own Story: A Canadian Christmas Tale* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1869; CIHM 06368), preface. Other examples include: J. W. Griffin, *Help in the Distance: A New Dominion Story* (Elora, Ontario: for the author, 1869), preface; W. A. C., *Tim Doolan, The Irish Emigrant* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1869; CIHM 13409), preface; Richard Lanigan, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada, Fifty Years Ago* (Montreal: Lovell, 1888;

Their books reflected the Canadian view that their nation grew out of a settler culture and that their national virtues were therefore those of the type of people who could successfully conquer the wilderness and produce tame farmland.

Most novels of the settlement periods emphasized the way early settlements consisted of isolated farms surrounded by, and growing out of, the wilderness, reflecting the belief that this conquest of the bush was crucial to Canadian nationhood. Although probably a term of British origin, as it is also a typical Australian term, in Canadian usage the bush specifically referred to a forested wilderness.<sup>15</sup> English-Canadian writers repeatedly envisioned the earliest Canadian farms as mere shanties, surrounded by the forest, a tendency that began with Moodie and Traill's work and was evident in many of Ralph Connor's novels. He wrote about Glengarry County, Ontario, at a time when the area was still mostly bush, but "Here and there, set in their massive frames of dark green forest, lay the little farms, the tiny fenced fields surrounding the little log houses and barns."<sup>16</sup> These bush farms were portrayed as islands of light and civilization in the dark forest.

English-Canadian authors depicted this period of early hardship and hard work as the most important part of the settlement process. In their fiction, the conquest of the wilderness that this period represented created a variety of national virtues, including physical hardiness and the motivation

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CIHM 28408), preface; John A. Murdoch, *In the Woods and On the Waters* (Winnipeg: Stovel Co., 1896; CIHM 09812), preface.

<sup>15</sup>Walter S. Avis, et. al., eds., *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Company, 1991), s. v. "bush."

<sup>16</sup>Connor, *Glengarry School Days*, 25. Other examples of this portrayal of early settlers as surrounded by the bush include: Connor, *Man From Glengarry*, 20; Grodenk, *My Own Story*, 8; Robert Sellar, "Lost in the Woods," in *Gleaner Tales*, (Huntingdon, Quebec: Canadian Gleaner Office, 1886; CIHM 13444), 54.

to work hard in order to succeed in life. Through such virtues the pioneer succeeded in clearing the land and transforming the bush into a prosperous farm, thereby creating an agriculturally productive nation. English-Canadian authors of novels about settlement seldom failed to describe this period of early hardship.<sup>17</sup> This frontier period of settlement was seen as a crucial moment in the development of Canada as a nation and for defining the Canadian character.

Even so, for late-nineteenth-century English Canadians, this portrait of early hardship was not complete without the accompanying picture of the success that grew out of the early hard work. Authors who described the suffering of the early settlers generally concluded with a description of a later period when the pioneer's "farm is one of the best in the neighborhood; the little log cabin has given place to a respectable and well-finished house; and the days of hardship and toil are no more."<sup>18</sup> Writers presented this transformation in the settler's circumstances as typical of the development of Canada from a wilderness to a settled and prosperous nation.

R. and K. M. Lizars, female novelists and historians, indicated domestic nature of this settlement process when they described "the epitome of a pioneer's career" through the succession of houses on a homestead; from the original one room log dwelling, to a larger, two-story log home, to "a stone house, firm of foundation, commodious, and

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<sup>17</sup>Important instances of this appear in Wilson, *Never Give Up*, 42-45; R. & K. M. Lizars, *Committed to His Charge: A Canadian Chronicle* (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1900; CIHM 09186), 103-104; Lottie McAlister, *Clipped Wings* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1899; CIHM 09354), 20-22.

<sup>18</sup>Wilson, *Never Give Up*, 45.

comfortably furnished."<sup>19</sup> Such domestic descriptions of settlement indicated the importance of women in the English-Canadian vision of the settlement experience. Through their domesticity, women were believed to be able to turn wilderness into civilization.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, while Canadian writers recognized the importance of men's work in the transformation of wilderness into farmland, they also associated the settlement process with women's efforts and influence. English-Canadians continued to link masculine identity with the experience of the wilderness; conversely, they saw women as primarily loyal to the creation of a suitable home for their family. This divergent attitude toward the continuing wilderness was evident in one fictional conversation. Alan, who speaks first, defended his gift of wild flowers:

"I think these wild flowers are ever so much prettier than those stiff marigolds and sunflowers that your mother delights in."

"Wild flowers don't feed chickens and sunflowers will, and marigolds help to make the butter yellow, that's why," said the practical Lottie.<sup>21</sup>

Alan's love for wild flowers was indicative of the masculine connection with wilderness, even when the particular male was a settler and farmer. Lottie's response illustrated the nineteenth-century ideal of Canadian settler femininity. English-Canadian writers portrayed Lottie's domestic practicality as a distinctively Canadian feminine virtue that was essential to the creation of domestic life in a settlement.

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<sup>19</sup>Lizars, *Committed to His Charge*, 103-104.

<sup>20</sup>Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), 12, 24, 79-106.

<sup>21</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *Lost and Won: A Canadian Romance*, In *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* 7 (January 1875): 16.

English-Canadian writers more commonly indicated the continuing masculine association with the wilderness through the depiction of life in Canadian lumber camps. The association of men with the process of transforming wilderness into agricultural land by cutting down trees was largely a reflection of the actual process of settlement in Canada. Many men needed to get other jobs in order to earn money to support their not-yet-self-sufficient farms. In late-nineteenth-century novels, Canadian men who needed to work to support their farms invariably chose to work in the woods. An especially cogent explanation of this process appeared in an 1893 novel about a young Presbyterian minister. One of his first appointments as a preacher was in a new settlement:

The few settlers that were there were engaged during the summer in cultivating any small plots of land they might have sufficiently free from stones to be ploughed. When winter came the men and all the boys old enough to stand "roughing it in the bush" went to the lumber shanties and spent the winter there. When they returned in spring many of them spent the greater part of their hard earnings on the very worst of whiskey. Those who saved their money were generally able to supply all the necessaries which their small, rough, imperfectly cultivated farms failed to produce.<sup>22</sup>

Although identified as settlers, these men spent much of their time in the wilderness. While women were expected to remain at the homesteads, creating home and civilization out of the wilderness, Canadian writers

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<sup>22</sup>Rev. D. McNaughton, *The Wife of Fairbank on Kirks and Ministers* (Toronto: Press of The Canada Presbyterian, 1893; CIHM 09665), 227-228. Also see Robertson, *Shenac's Work*, 16-19; Connor, *Man from Glengarry*; Wilson, *Never Give Up*, 44. Historical studies on farmers' need to work at other trades in order to support their farms include: Rusty Bittermann, "Farm Households and Wage Labour in the Northern Maritimes in the Early 19th Century," *Labour/Le Travail* 31 (Spring 1993): 13-45; R. W. Sandwell, "Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History," *Historie Sociale/Social History* 27 (May 1994):13-14, 26; Joy Parr, "Hired Men: Ontario Agricultural Wage Labour in Historical Perspective," *Labour/Le Travail* 15 (Spring 1985): 91-103; Danysk, *Hired Hands*, 18, 173; Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 72.

portrayed men as crossing the boundaries between wilderness and civilization.

In writing fictions about Canadian settler society, nineteenth-century authors could not leave out women, as they mostly did in writing about the wilderness, because women were believed to be crucial to the settlement process. Many books and stories presented the Canadian settlement frontier from the female point of view and firmly established the belief that bush settlement was a partnership between men and women, although men and women had their proper, separate, tasks. In the minds of late-nineteenth-century English Canadians, the work of a farm divided itself into two spheres, that which was the responsibility of men and that which was woman's domain. The women's sphere included the making of clothing, care and cleaning of the house, cooking, and the care of poultry, the dairy and the vegetable garden. Work in the fields and the overall management of the farm were firmly in the male sphere. A farm could not be run, let alone begun, without someone to take full responsibility for each sphere. While a farm could not be run without a woman, neither could it long survive without a man.<sup>23</sup> English-Canadian authors very seldom presented the spectacle of a man attempting to carve out a farm without a wife by his side and then he was generally aided by a sister or has been tragically disappointed in love.

One reason for this was that by the late nineteenth century the pioneer woman "had become an archetype of the Canadian consciousness and also a recognizable Canadian literary character type," according to the

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<sup>23</sup>Cecilia Danysk, "'A Bachelor's Paradise': Homesteaders, Hired Hands, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1880-1930," in *Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement*, ed. Catherine Cavanaugh and Jeremy Mouat (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996), 157-162.

literary scholar Elizabeth Thompson. In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian authors of fiction depicted a feminine ideal that was seen as “compatible with a backwoods, Canadian setting.” According to Thompson, the characteristics of this Canadian pioneer feminine ideal were courage, resourcefulness, pragmatism, the ability to act decisively and quickly in cases of emergency, the strength to accept adverse circumstances with equanimity, and the fortitude to attempt to improve frontier conditions.<sup>24</sup>

While traits such as courage, fortitude, pragmatism and decisiveness were appropriate and necessary for a woman coping with frontier conditions, they were difficult to reconcile with prevailing ideas of femininity and women’s “nature” by the late nineteenth century. With increasing industrialization in Great Britain and the United States, the middle-class white woman’s real work in the home decreased; she actually produced less of the food and clothes that sustained her family. Concurrent with this change, however, the middle-class woman’s role as the producer of the family’s social status began to be more important. While the middle-class woman in nineteenth-century urban England no longer raised the sheep that provided the wool that she made into clothes for her family, she did maintain the family’s social status as part of the middle class by making sure that their clothes were kept clean and neat in accordance with ideas of middle-class cultivation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Elizabeth Thompson, *The Pioneer Woman: A Canadian Character Type* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 8, 24, 59-61, 113.

<sup>25</sup>Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), chapter on “Domesticity,”; Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 152; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 18-28; Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian*

The ideology that developed out of these social changes is generally referred to interchangeably as “the ideology of domesticity,” or “the ideology of separate spheres.” The best expression of this ideal in Canadian fiction appeared in an 1869 novel in which the main character expressed his idea of separate spheres to the woman he loved:

I hold that in all respects woman is man’s equal. We occupy different spheres however, and perform different duties in life. She is for the home circle, while we are for the ruder work of battling with each other, and struggling for place, and position, and power and wealth. . . . All the refinements we see around us come from woman, either directly or indirectly. If it were possible for our sex to exist without yours, the result would be that before fifty years we would become boors, savages, monsters. The inclinations of man’s heart are bad, and without the guiding and controlling influences of women’s society, these inclinations would swell themselves into characteristics, and the most enlightened nation on the face of the earth would ere long become barbarous and ignorant. The influence of our mothers, wives and sisters, keeps us as we are; and if it were removed we would become what I have said.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the doctrine of separate spheres gave women credit for being more moral than men and allowed them several ideological outlets for personal independence and control of their world. First, it asserted that women had the best knowledge of all domestic things and that they should therefore rule within their households as men ruled the world outside the home.<sup>27</sup>

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*Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 150-162, especially on dress as an indicator of middle-class status.

<sup>26</sup>Grodenk, pseud. *My Own Story: A Canadian Christmas Tale* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1869; CIHM 06368), 77. Another example of the statement of the idea of separate spheres in Canadian fiction is: Cornelius O’Brien, *After Weary Years* (Baltimore & New York: John Murphy & Co., 1885; CIHM 11486), 24-25. Also see Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) for a discussion of the ideology of separate spheres in England.

<sup>27</sup>This aspect of the ideology was forcefully argued in a Canadian novel by Mrs. E. M. Mason, *Faces That Follow* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898; CIHM 09962), 33-51; and represented in another, Miss E. F., *Nothing Like Black on White* (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1878; CIHM 92852), 113. It was also a view held by American reformers, including Catharine



The idea that women were morally superior to men also allowed women to claim the potentially empowering role as the creators of society in newly settled areas.<sup>28</sup>

The profoundly middle-class ideology of domesticity was mainly propounded by educated members of this class and primarily applicable to such women. Therefore, it dictated that women's behavior in the domestic realm had to uphold the entire family's class position.<sup>29</sup> This led to what one historian has termed the "cult of gentility," which made critical distinctions between types of domestic work that were proper for a refined and educated middle-class woman and those that should be left to her servants.<sup>30</sup> For middle-class women who did not have the money to hire sufficient servants to take care of such tasks, a critical domestic skill was the ability to hide all evidence of their work. Maintaining a home that met middle-class standards of cleanliness and comfort took incredible amounts

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Beecher and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who otherwise had little in common. Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), xii-xiii; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences 1815-1897* (1898; reprint, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 205-211.

<sup>28</sup>Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, 12, 21-24; Thompson, *Pioneer Woman*, 88-111; Susan Joan Wood, *The Land in Canadian Prose, 1840-1945* (Ottawa: Carleton Monographs in English Language and Literature, 1988), 114; Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 139-146, 174; Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 6-7, 159, 194.

<sup>29</sup>Holman, *Sense of Their Duty*, x; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle-Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

<sup>30</sup>Emma Floyd, "Without Artificial Constraint: Gentility and British Gentlewomen in Rural Australia," in *Imperial Objects: Essays on Victorian Women's Emigration and the Unauthorized Imperial Experience*, ed. Rita S. Kranidis (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 85-86. Also see Patricia Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Home* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 6-7, 22-24; Marian Fowler, *The Embroidered Tent: Five Gentlewomen in Early Canada* (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), 57-59, 79-81; John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990).

of labor, but the middle-class housewife was never to display evidence of this work. Thus, nineteenth-century novels and advice books accompanied descriptions of household work with instructions that the housewife was to hide all evidence of this work by changing her dress before she met visitors or her husband returned from work. When either husband or visitors appeared, she should be found, fresh, neat, and smiling, seated in her parlor either with a book or some embroidery in her hands.<sup>31</sup>

Canadian writers discussed the domestic work of middle-class women in national terms. They typically juxtaposed an idle, frivolous, falsely genteel, and incapable English lady with a strong, resourceful, domestic, adaptive, yet still refined, Canadian pioneer woman.<sup>32</sup> Descriptions of Canadian pioneer women, such as this one from Agnes Maule Machar's 1874 novel, *For King and Country*, emphasized their ability and willingness to do all sorts of domestic work while maintaining a genteel appearance. This heroine

had been busily engaged in various domestic avocations; had paid her morning visit to her four-footed favorites, fed the chickens, given those delicate fowls, the young turkeys, her especial attention, helped in "seeing to" the breakfast, . . . and had gathered in the fresh bouquet of spring flowers that adorned the breakfast table. . . . And now, looking bright and fresh in her pale chintz morning-dress . . . she was sitting, deep

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<sup>31</sup>Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 153, 160-165. Examples of this type of disavowal of domestic work in nineteenth-century Canadian novels includes Elizabeth Walshe, *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement: A Tale of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1863; CIHM 18077), 325-326; Charles Shrimpton, *The Black Phantom; or Woman's Endurance: A Narrative Connected with the Early History of Canada and the American Revolution* (New York: James Miller, 1867; CIHM 13614), 6-7; Madame Henrietta Skelton, *Grace Morton* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1873; CIHM 13633), 61.

<sup>32</sup>Thompson, *Pioneer Woman*, 10-11; Fowler, *Embroidered Tent*, 98.

in "Marmion," by the open window, partly shaded by the young green leaves of a trellised grape vine.<sup>33</sup>

Although she has reacted to the frontier conditions of her home in Canada by taking on the domestic chores of the farmyard, this character retained her claim to middle-class gentility by changing into a clean, light-colored dress and hiding the evidence of her work. Her chores were done before the rest of the family awoke and when her father and his guest came to breakfast they found her giving the appearance of leisure. Such a scene provided reassurance to middle-class female readers that they could maintain their class position in Canada, even as their domestic work may have changed.

When writing about the pioneer experience in Canada, novelists who published in Canada during the late nineteenth century often emphasized the difference between women's work there and in Great Britain. In particular, they believed that the move to Canada meant a loss of household technology such as cooking stoves, together with the need for middle-class women to take care of farm animals. Although writers believed these to be national differences in housework, a more important force in the changing nature of women's work in the home was the difference between rural and urban experiences. Regardless of the time period or the geographical location, farm women did much the same work as other farm women, while urban women's work also more closely resembled that of other urban

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<sup>33</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *For King and Country: A Story of 1812* (Toronto: Adam, Stevenson & Co., 1874; CIHM 09602), 69; Carole Gerson, "Agnes Maule Machar," in *New, Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92*, 221. A similar description, of a settler who could "dust the piano and play it afterwards; paint a landscape or raise young turkeys" without ruining the whiteness or shape of her hands, appeared in W. H. Brown, *She Might Have Done Better* (St. Johns, Quebec: News Steam Printing House, 1877; CIHM 03748), 1:16. Yet another novelist suggested that the physical toil of the frontier only improved a lady in both health and beauty: Lily Dougall, *What Necessity Knows* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1893; CIHM 05750), 398.

women throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> For British female immigrants to Canada, however, this change in work often seemed to be nationally determined, because Great Britain became urbanized much earlier than Canada. In 1851, over half of the British lived in urban areas, a statistic that Canada could not equal until 1921. Thus, for many British gentlewomen and other immigrants, the move from Britain to Canada was a move from an urban existence to a rural life, with all the changes this implied in middle-class women's work.

The move from mostly urban Great Britain to mostly rural, and even pioneer, Canada must have been a traumatic one for middle-class female emigrants and their families and this trauma was reflected in their fiction. As discussed earlier, the majority of Canadians writing fiction in English in the late nineteenth century were either immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants from Great Britain. When these immigrant authors were women, they had the experience of adjusting their urban expectations to a pioneer and rural reality; when the immigrants were men they might have watched their wives or mothers go through the same adjustment; and even children born in Canada to immigrant parents would have heard of the difficulties these immigrant women found when they came to Canada.

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<sup>34</sup>Branca, *Silent Sisterhood*, 2; Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), xv-xvii, 12; Caroline Davidson, *A Woman's Work is Never Done: A History of Housework in the British Isles* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982), 184, 201; Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Patricia Davitt et. al., *Never Done: Three Centuries of Women's Work in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974); Daniel E. Sutherland, *The Expansion of Everyday Life, 1860-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 54-55, 62-68; Thomas J. Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 130-133; Alison Prentice, et. al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1996), 121-128.

For many of the middle-class women who emigrated to Canada the most difficult adjustments to Canadian life included the many tasks that women had to undertake on that frontier, most of which were unfamiliar to urbanized middle-class British women by the late nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> Nineteenth-century novelists recognized this problem, as shown by this 1899 description of the housekeeping skills of an early settler. The woman described was "a marvellous compound of baker, seamstress, laundress, tailoress, barber, gardener, nurse, man servant, maid servant, and had found time to be a Sunday-school teacher."<sup>36</sup> This compendium demonstrated the frontier woman's skill, but it also emphasized the ungentle nature of most of these tasks by associating them with the lower-class merchants or servants who performed them in an urban setting. This type of description was typical of late-nineteenth-century fictional discussions of pioneer women's domestic tasks. Such passages emphasized the difficulty of learning new domestic tasks, yet maintained that it was possible to maintain one's gentility despite the adversity of frontier conditions.

In fictions of pioneer settlement, the first Canadian challenge to a female settler's middle-class standards was the rough, unadorned, and shamefully small, shanty that she was expected to inhabit. Such shanties were typical of the period of early settlement in all areas of Canada. Whether built of logs, sod, boards, or tar-paper, the first dwellings of settlers on the prairies in the 1920s were virtually identical in terms of available

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<sup>35</sup>Carter, *Capturing Women*, 9; Fowler, *Embroidered Tent*, 10, 80; Errington, *Wives and Mothers*, 23, 24, 92-99; Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 63, 69-75, 121-126; Susan Jackel, ed., *A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), xviii; Virginia Watson Rouslin, "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Pioneering in Canada," *Dalhousie Review* 56 (Summer 1976): 319-335.

<sup>36</sup>Lottie McAlister, *Clipped Wings* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1899; CIHM 09364), 22.

interior space to the shanties built in the 1820s by the early British settlers in Ontario. Whenever a middle-class woman arrived in Canada as a frontier settler, she would have had to adapt to this undifferentiated domestic space, in which the entire family lived, slept, cooked, ate, and worked. During the nineteenth century, however, the homes of the urban middle-classes began to include more and more division of space by activity. For the middle-class, this division of the home to hide private activities like sleeping, cooking, and bathing was not only essential to gentility, it seemed necessary for a decent life.<sup>37</sup> When Susanna Moodie, the exemplary middle-class female emigrant, first saw her bush shanty she broke down in tears, calling it a "miserable hut," that was "not a house, but a cattle-shed or a pig-sty." In fact, before she could take possession, three young steers and two heifers had to be driven out of the building.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, writers of fiction indicated that the first and most important task that tested a middle-class woman's fitness as a settler was her ability to transform the one-room shanty into a comfortable and cultured home. The female settler had to "conquer this unfamiliar lack of space and the raw and functional physical structure with a familiar genteel ambiance."<sup>39</sup> Evidence drawn from the memories of Canadian prairie settlers indicates that pioneer women were willing to spend much of their scarce time and resources on decorating projects that would make the home more comfortable and

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<sup>37</sup>Peter Ward, *A History of Domestic Space: Privacy and the Canadian Home* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), 8-62; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 359; Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

<sup>38</sup>Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush*, 90-92. Also see Charles Shrimpton, *The Black Phantom, or Woman's Endurance: A Narrative Connected with the Early History of Canada and the American Revolution* (New York: James Miller, 1867; CIHM 13614), 167, 170-171.

<sup>39</sup>Floyd, "Without Artificial Constraint," 89-90.

cultivated.<sup>40</sup> The ideal outcome of this process of remaking a rough shanty was best described in a novel about the Loyalist settlement of Ontario. In this case, the father and his grown sons arrived first and built a one-room shanty, which was transformed into a home by the arrival and work of the mother and daughters of the family. Once the women had finished with it, the dwelling was no miserable hut:

The large shanty, newly erected, was divided into rooms by heavy curtains, which could be drawn aside during the day, permitting the heat from the great stove to warm up the entire space. It was astonishing with what dexterity and dispatch the ladies put things in order; what a home-like appearance was given to the rude dwelling, although there was little or no furniture in the house; meals were well cooked and regularly served and an air of comfort pervaded the entire establishment.<sup>41</sup>

These settler women maintained their middle-class identity in the wilderness by transforming inadequate household space into a cultured and cozy home. By doing so, they reinforced the family's middle class status and their own identity as good women. Indeed, it was an article of faith for nineteenth-century Canadian authors that virtuous women would create comfort and cleanliness around them, no matter their lack of money or the physical drawbacks of the situation.

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<sup>40</sup> See Faye Reineberg Holt, *Settling In: First Homes on the Prairies* (Calgary: Fifth House, 1999), 32-33; Angela E. Davis, "'Country Homemakers': The Daily Lives of Prairie Women as Seen Through the Women's Pages of the *Grain Grower's Guide*, 1908-1928," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History, Volume VIII*, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1992), 163-164, 168.

<sup>41</sup> John A. Murdoch, *In the Woods and on the Waters* (Winnipeg: Stovel Co., 1896; CIHM 09812), 37. A similar transformation of a shanty with "little touches in its arrangement which indicated a cultured taste and made it snug and cosy," occurred in Rev. Austin Potter, *Wealth to Poverty; or, The Tricks of the Traffic: A Story of the Drink Curse* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884; CIHM 12098), 235.

In the minds of late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian writers the middle-class settler's greatest challenge in her quest to transform her bush shanty into a cultured home was the lack of adequate servants in Canada. These middle-class writers believed that Canada suffered from a unique shortage of female domestic servants. They frequently contrasted the arrogance and disrespect of Canadian servants with the obedience and deference of British servants. As scholars point out, the "servant problem" was one that bedeviled the middle class in both Great Britain and the United States in the late nineteenth century, but English Canadian authors portrayed this problem as one that was unique to Canada.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, in the minds of these authors and other late-nineteenth-century Canadians, one of the frontier circumstances that forced genteel middle-class women to do their own household work was the absence of good servants in Canada. Even if she were lucky enough to be able to afford to hire, and to find, a servant, the settler lady still had to take on domestic tasks, if only to keep the servant from being overwhelmed and quitting. In one example, an immigrant lady secured herself a reliable servant by bringing the family's devoted Irish servant, Biddy, with her when the family emigrated to Canada. However, they were unable to afford another servant to supplement Biddy's work, so the mistress and her daughters also did domestic work. This disturbed the old-world servant, but her mistress

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<sup>42</sup>Examples of this Canadianization of the servant problem can be seen in: Ellen Ross, *Violet Keith* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1868; CIHM 12959), 257-260; Henrietta Skelton, *Grace Morton* (Toronto: A. S. Irving, 1873; CIHM 13633), 20-22; Mrs. Dobbin, [George Graham, pseud.], "Thos." *A Simple Canadian Story* (Montreal: Lovell, 1878; CIHM 32580), 41-43, 144-146. For discussions of the servant problem in Great Britain see Davidson, *A Woman's Work*, 164-182; in the United States, Strasser, *Never Done*, 162-179. On servants in nineteenth-century Canada, see Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 3-14; Claudette Lacelle, *Urban Domestic Servants in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites, 1987).



explained, "I wish you to do other things which you can manage better than we can, and, in the meantime we will employ ourselves usefully; it is no disgrace to employ our hands in useful household matters."<sup>43</sup> With this thought in mind, one daughter learned how to bake bread and another "does up" the bedrooms, while Bidy retained responsibility for heavier tasks such as the laundry. Discussions such as this demonstrated the conflict between the cult of gentility and that of domesticity. The cult of gentility assumed the necessity of servants in order to provide respectability and at least the appearance of idleness for the middle-class woman. The emigrant lady's insistence that there was nothing degrading about domestic work was part of a didactic attempt to bring respectability to women's household work. In this Sunday-school prize book, the prescriptive nature of such statements was particularly evident. This author, like many other advocates of domesticity, was attempting to convince middle-class women that idleness was not the only indicator of their class position.<sup>44</sup>

Writers of fiction frequently focused upon cooking as the most important domestic skill that the middle-class emigrant had to learn in the Canadian bush. Well cooked and regularly served meals were one of the most important indicators of domestic ability in the late nineteenth century. It is unclear, however, whether middle-class women continued to do their

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<sup>43</sup>J. E., *The Old and the New Home: A Canadian Tale*, Canadian Prize Sunday School Books (Toronto: James Campbell and Son, 1870; CIHM 06368), 81. A similar negotiation of work between mistress and maid took place in Elizabeth Walshe, *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement: A Tale of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1863; CIHM 18077), 325-327.

<sup>44</sup>Magda Fahrni, "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented' Maids: Respectability and the Case of Domestic Service, 1880-1914," *Labour/Le Travail* 39 (Spring 1997): 72; Faye Dudden, *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 112-117.

own cooking in urban areas.<sup>45</sup> In Canadian novels, middle-class women were frequently credited with cooking skills. However, outside of the settlement context authors focused on the result, dainty, well-cooked meals, rather than the process of cooking. In addition, they tended implicitly to identify cooking skill as a nationally-based trait.<sup>46</sup>

The settler lady's need to learn, or relearn, cooking skills was most commonly represented in fiction through the process of learning to bake a good loaf of bread. Generally, the middle-class pioneer received instruction from a neighbor who had been longer in the country. This difficulty with baking bread, even for those who could cook in Great Britain, had to do with a change in household technology. Instead of having an oven to bake in, women on the Canadian settlement frontiers of the early 1800s had to learn how to bake bread in or on various makeshift devices such as a bread kettle or a baking stone. Another problem was the lack of familiar yeast. In one fairly typical fictional episode, an English lady got bread making instruction from an American neighbor, Lizbeth Hannah Slater. She traveled to Lizbeth Hannah's house to learn the secret and returned with cryptic instructions and a bowl of "barm" to make the bread rise. But all did not go well at first:

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<sup>45</sup>Branca, *Silent Sisterhood*, 15; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 19-20. On the importance of good meals to middle-class domesticity see the 1873 Canadian novel, Skelton, *Grace Morton*, 20-25, 60-61; and an American example of the proliferation of cookbooks, Catherine Owen, *Ten Dollars Enough: Keeping House Well on Ten Dollars a Week: How It Has Been Done: How It May Be Done Again* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886).

<sup>46</sup>Maud Petitt, *Bess Woodburn* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897; CIHM 09304), 64-65; Joanna E. Wood, *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co., 1898; CIHM 26047), 36, 51; Margaret E. Tennant, *The Golden Chord: A Story of Trial and Conquest* (Almonte: McLeod and McEwen, 1899; CIHM 15813), 94; Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Imperialist* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1904; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 38-39; Alice Jones, *Gabriel Praed's Castle* (Boston: Herbert B. Turner & Co., 1904), 46.

Mother made the bread, and a few weeks later my father broke it into small nuggets with a hammer for me to amuse myself throwing it at the squirrels. After many, many attempts, mother turned out bread that we all declared was quite equal to Lizabeth Hannah's.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast, another novel described proper bread, which "was brown as to crust, and flaky and white as to interior."<sup>48</sup> We can only imagine that Mother's final effort at bread making might have been almost as good as this example, which was produced by an uneducated farm woman. Bread-baking was emblematic of the many skills that settler ladies had to learn from their less genteel neighbors, as men learned wilderness skills from the Indians. Among the household skills fictional emigrants to Canada had to learn were the care of domestic animals such as poultry, dairy cattle, and sheep. In the novel cited above, for instance, Mother also learned how to raise sheep for the family's clothing from the same kindly neighbors.<sup>49</sup>

In the imaginations of late nineteenth-century Canadian authors, the work of dairy and poultry-raising was clearly acceptable even for middle-class women in the society of an agricultural frontier. This was a type of work, however, that was not explicitly incorporated in the ideology of domesticity as it was created in an urbanizing society. In Great Britain, for example, the production of cheese was beginning to be redefined as men's

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<sup>47</sup>Adeline M. Teskey, *Candlelight Days* (New York: Cassell & Co., 1913), 52. On changing household baking technology, see Davidson, *A Woman's Work*, 44-49; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, 54. The immigrant daughter who aided the servant Bidy by making the bread had also learned this task from kindly neighbors, rather than Bidy herself, probably due to the unfamiliar baking technology: J. E., *Old and New Home*, 81. Susanna Moodie had particular difficulty learning to use a bake-kettle: Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush*, 116-121.

<sup>48</sup>Robert Barr, *In the Midst of Alarms* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1894; CIHM 03348), 44.

<sup>49</sup>Teskey, *Candlelight Days*, 52-55.

work, rather than women's, as early as 1843. The same process took place somewhat later in the United States, as the emergence of butter and cheese making as the major business of eastern farms transferred the responsibility of dairying labor from women to men between 1860 and 1875. That is, while milk and butter and cheese were produced for home consumption, these duties were still women's work, but when butter and cheese became the primary income-generating products of the farm, tasks like milking tended to become men's work. In Canada, this transition did not take place until even later in the nineteenth century. Thus women who emigrated to Canada between the 1870s and 1900 might have found themselves facing responsibilities in the farmyard that had been normal work for their ancestors, but which seemed unusual, and perhaps unwomanly, to these urbanized middle-class women.<sup>50</sup>

Yet in English-Canadian novels throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, women's work in the dairy and the poultry yard was defined as essential for Canadian domesticity. An admirable Canadian settler lady would be able to encourage these animals to give ample eggs and milk, not only for her family, but for sale. Authors of settlement novels depicted such tasks as domestic; they were part of women's proper role within the farm home. The feminine identification of dairying in settlement novels was most clear in a novel by Margaret Murray Robertson. Robertson emigrated to Canada at the age of thirteen with her father and siblings after the death of her mother in Scotland. Robertson wrote of the

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<sup>50</sup>Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 274; Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), xiv; Sally McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life: Dairying Families and Agricultural Change, 1820-1885* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 9, 17-19, 23-28, 68-69.

Scottish settlers of Glengarry county, Quebec, in one of her many novels, *Shenac's Work at Home*, published in 1868. Shenac, the heroine, had to take over the domestic work because her mother was ill and might never be strong again. Robertson wrote that:

The heaviest of the household work fell to Shenac. They had not a large dairy. . . . But the three cows which they had were her particular care. She milked them morning and evening, and, when the evenings were longest, at noon too; and though her mother prepared the dishes for the milk, and skimmed the cream, Shenac always made the butter.<sup>51</sup>

Such descriptions of dairying as an unquestioned part of women's work either predated the transformation of butter and cheese into major products of Ontario farms, or indicated authors' nostalgia for this time period. Canadian authors always associated women's involvement in dairying and poultry-raising with the frontier experience.

The shift in the gendering of dairy work was not explicitly discussed in Canadian novels, but it was indicated by the appearance, near the turn of the century, of heroines who were completely inept in the dairy, yet who were nevertheless seen as exemplars of ideal domestic femininity. One such heroine appeared in an 1895 novel, *G. Dwyer, K. W.* This city girl married a farmer and gloried in experiments with setting hens and feeding the chickens. She was, however, sentimental about them, rather than producing them for meat and eggs. She was efficient in her indoor duties

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<sup>51</sup>Margaret Murray Robertson, *Shenac's Work at Home: A Story of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1868; CIHM 28884), 42-43. For Robertson's biography, see Lorraine McMullen, "Robertson, Margaret Murray," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, ed. Frances G. Halpenny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 12: 904-906. Other examples of this inclusion of dairying and poultry-raising as women's household work appeared in: Connor, *Glengarry School Days*, 92-95; Josephine Smith, *Perth-on-the-Tay: A Tale of the Transplanted Highlanders* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Co., 1901), 10-14, 23-25; Rosanna E. M. Leprohon, *Armand Durand; or, A Promise Fulfilled* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1868; CIHM 08564), 6-7.

and created a tasteful home and fed her husband dainty yet filling meals. Yet she utterly failed when she attempted to milk a cow. She took the easiest milker, but even so, her wrists were too weak and she could not finish. This failure did not injure her characterization as a domestic ideal. Her husband was a farmer with "considerable livestock," and he never expected her to help at milking the cows; instead, he had intended to do this himself.<sup>52</sup> Even for a farmer's wife, domesticity had changed from earlier frontier expectations. When the farmer himself began taking an interest in milk production such tasks moved out of women's sphere.

In contrast to their shifting characterization of dairy and poultry work, English-Canadian authors were never really able to integrate the reality of occasional female fieldwork into their ideal of a genteel settler femininity. Though they had to deal with the reality that frontier women sometimes had to sow and reap grain, make hay, or plant and harvest potatoes, the placement of such activity within the plots of settlement novels indicated that the authors did not approve of such activity for women. As with white women who entered the wilderness, female characters who worked in the fields in English-Canadian novels always had a particularly strong justification.

In the opinions of writers of fiction, there was really only one necessity that would allow a female character to work in the fields and retain her feminine gentility and that was the absence or inadequacy of men to do the work.<sup>53</sup> This inability to countenance women's work in the fields

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<sup>52</sup>Paul Tsyrr, *G. Dwyer, K. W.* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1895; CIHM 24978), 229-233. A similarly inept heroine appeared in Joanna E. Wood, *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co., 1898; CIHM 26047), 36.

<sup>53</sup>Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 294-295, in which two girls harvest the potatoes because their father and brother are neglecting the farm; and the three sisters who worked in the fields

was a result of both class and gender expectations on the part of the middle-class writers. In Great Britain, women's fieldwork had been common in lower-class farm families. For middle-class women, therefore, fieldwork became a signifier of a loss of class position.<sup>54</sup> This viewpoint was generally shared by Canadian writers of fiction, who were all of the educated middle class. In their novels, therefore, they presented women's work in the fields as the result of special circumstances.

English-Canadian authors frequently presented the War of 1812 as a moment in Canadian history when women's work in the fields was fully justified by circumstances. In such a situation, when men were called away to defend the country from a barbarous invasion, women's fieldwork became a patriotic duty.<sup>55</sup> In the face of the American threat to their nation, Canadian men proved their manhood and patriotism by going to war, while the women who remained behind showed their patriotism by taking on difficult and unfamiliar fieldwork in order to save the harvest. In one novel about the War of 1812, the heroine assured her father and brother that they could be spared from the farm, because "'The maids and I will plant the corn and cut the wheat, too,' said Kate with the pluck of a true Canadian girl. 'We'll soon learn to wield the sickle.'" Her willingness to do this unusual work was explicitly nationalistic. Though she could not directly defend her nation, she could do work that would allow her father and brother to join

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because their father could get no other help, in Margaret Murray Robertson, *Christie Redfern's Troubles* (1866; reprint, London: Religious Tract Society, n. d.), 16.

<sup>54</sup>Cohen, *Women's Work*, 69.

<sup>55</sup>For a complete discussion of English-Canadian opinions about the War of 1812 in the late nineteenth century, see Chapter Five "Imperialism, Anti-Americanism, and Canadian Nationalism."

the militia. Thus Kate's work in the fields was her own way of serving her country.<sup>56</sup>

Yet even when women took up field work only because of the unavoidable absence of the men in the family, English-Canadian authors believed that such work could destroy their femininity. This danger was central to the plot of Margaret Murray Robertson's novel, *Shenac's Work at Home*. In this portrayal of Scottish settlers in Glengarry county, Ontario, a mother and her children were left to take care of themselves by the death of the father on a lumbering expedition. The eldest son, who would naturally have taken over the farm, was away logging somewhere in the west, so they could not reach him to get him to return. Of the other boys in the family, Hamish was crippled and Dan too young to take charge. For Robertson, such elaborate justifications were apparently necessary to justify Shenac's emerging role as the family member who did most of the work of the farm. Although Shenac was successful at maintaining the farm and keeping the family together, Robertson continued to express reservations about the effect of such work on Shenac's femininity:

They all said, after a while,—the neighbours, I mean,—that [the farm] could not have fallen into better hands; and, as far as the family affairs were concerned, that was true. But for Shenac herself it was not so well. . . . [I]t was especially bad for her to have so much the guidance of these affairs, for she naturally liked to lead,—to have her own way; and, without being at all conscious of it, there were times when she grew sharp and arbitrary, expecting to be obeyed unquestioningly by them all.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Rev. W. A. Withrow, *Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1880), 93. Also see Machar, *King and Country*, 169, 177-179; Sinclair, *Dear Old Farm*, 55. This aspect of the War of 1812 has received little attention from historians.

<sup>57</sup>Margaret Murray Robertson, *Shenac's Work at Home: A Story of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1868; CIHM 28884), 83-84. The theme that self-reliance and farm work will make a woman unfeminine also appeared in Mrs. J. J. Colter, *Robbie Meredith*



Had Shenac been a boy, her decisiveness and expectations of being obeyed would most probably have been presented as both natural and laudable. In the late nineteenth century these qualities were believed to be fundamentally masculine, while women were expected to be nurturing and sensitive to other people's feelings, qualities Shenac lost in the stress of running the farm.

To Robertson, Shenac's changing character demonstrated her fundamental lack of fitness for the task of running a farm. After the return of her older brother Allister, Shenac herself realized that the work of the farm had been too much for her:

The labour, though it had been hard enough, from early morning to night every day of the year, was not what had been worst for her. The constant care and anxiety had been hard to bear. . . . [T]he responsibility had been too heavy for her. How much too heavy she only knew by the blessed sense of release which followed its removal.<sup>58</sup>

In the opinion of nineteenth-century authors, the female mind simply could not bear the responsibility of running a farm. Even when women might chance to be good at farm work, as Shenac was, to be solely responsible for the farm was unfeminine employment. Had Shenac not been saved by her brother's return and her own religious conversion, her control of the farm would have destroyed her femininity.

Shenac's brother Allister demonstrated many of the same qualities of decisiveness and farming ability as Shenac, but for him these were gender appropriate. Robertson and other nineteenth-century authors considered

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(Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., 1876; CIHM 29300); Charles Shrimpton, *The Black Phantom, or Woman's Endurance: A Narrative Connected with the Early History of Canada and the American Revolution* (New York: James Miller, 1867; CIHM 13614).

<sup>58</sup>Robertson, *Shenac's Work*, 185.

forethought, decision, and industry natural and appropriate characteristics for men. Allister “lost no time in commencing his labours, and he worked, and made others work, with a will.” For him, expecting to be obeyed was a positive character trait. In only a few years, the family farm had become so profitable that Allister could afford to marry and build another house for himself and his bride, leaving the old one to the family. Allister showed his true settler manhood by his willingness to work and by his attention to his farming. Shenac, meanwhile, demonstrated her true womanliness by cheerfully giving up the control of the farm to him, by her pleasure in his success, and through her marriage at the end of the novel.<sup>59</sup>

Margaret Murray Robertson’s differing attitude toward the same characteristics in this brother and sister demonstrated the importance of gender in the minds of late-nineteenth century authors. Late nineteenth-century authors regarded the settlement of Canada as a venture for which the divergent qualities of men and women were equally necessary. While they believed that women’s work was essential to creating a home in the wilderness, they thought that such a home could not long survive without a man to make a success of a farm and thereby provide financial support.

English-Canadians believed that the success of a farm was dependent upon the particular attributes and abilities of the man who settled and worked it. The most important of these attributes was the ability and willingness to work hard. For those who worked, English Canadians believed, the Canadian frontier provided unlimited opportunities for prosperity. But in order to take advantage of these opportunities, the epitome of settler masculinity needed to have or develop practical skills,

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<sup>59</sup>Robertson, *Shenac’s Work*, 179-180, 187.

such as the ability to fell trees, plow, sow, reap, and thresh his own grain and thus manage his farm so that it would prosper.

For a man to succeed as a settler, English-Canadians believed, he had to be willing and able to do hard, manual work, whether on the farm or at another job to get money to support the farm. This connection of hard work with pioneer success meant that hard work became an unconditional virtue in Canadian culture and authors portrayed it positively even in novels that did not deal with the settlement period. An English-Canadian author could express no greater scorn of a male character than by calling him an idler. One such figure of scorn was Henry Weeks, the son of a farmer. Henry was so lazy that his father despaired of making him do the hard work necessary to be a farmer and decided he would have to make a teacher or a preacher of the boy. This, too, was unsuccessful because Henry "had as strong an aversion to working with his brains as he had to exercising his muscles."<sup>60</sup> Henry's idleness was presented as a characteristic that rendered him essentially unmanly. He could not support a family of his own, an essential ingredient of masculine identity in the late nineteenth century; instead, he returned to his parent's house in order to be cared for and die.<sup>61</sup>

In contrast, the ideal Canadian man was portrayed as willing to put in the hard work necessary to make a success of himself. This attitude was expressed in one novel by a young English character who went to Manitoba,

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<sup>60</sup>McAlister, *Clipped Wings*, 44. A similar condemnation of idle men can be found in Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 294-295.

<sup>61</sup>On the ability to support a family as a central aspect of middle-class manhood, see Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 4. This concept also appeared in English-Canadian novels, especially: Mrs. J. J. Colter, *Robbie Meredith* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1876; CIHM 29300), 80-83; James Donald Dunlop, *Forest Lily* (London: F. Tennyson Neely, 1898; CIHM 32194), 6, 164.

intending first to apprentice with a farmer and then to obtain his own farm.

He understood that:

To be a farmer, I must learn by working. I cannot learn to pitch hay by tossing up straws with a walking-stick; nor can I plow with kid gloves on my hands and a glass in my eye. No; if I want to farm I must strip off my coat and grasp the plow-handles without mittens.

He equated farming success with hard work and explicitly contrasted the virtuous hard work of Canadian men with the aristocratic idleness nineteenth-century Canadians attributed to British urban life. Through his experience in Canada, Fred became representative of an emerging masculine ideal:

The toil which had at first seemed hard and burdensome became easy, and even pleasant with familiarity. His hands hardened so that he could use any tool without pain. He no longer feared the effect of exposure on his skin. His muscles grew firm, and his limbs strengthened with constant exercise. His sleep was sound, his appetite keen, and he could stand forth at last, a true brother among earth's noblest sons—"the laboring men."

Because he was willing to adjust his British ideas about what was proper work for a middle-class man, his future success on Canada's farming frontier was assured. English-Canadian authors saw this adjustment as essential for the successful settlement of Canada, whether the area discussed was the western prairies or the Ontario bush.<sup>62</sup>

As was the case with female settlers, views of male settlers were profoundly influenced by expectations of how gender and class interacted in the formation of an individual's identity. In writing about the settler

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<sup>62</sup>James Morton, *Polson's Probation: A Story of Manitoba* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897; CIHM 30393), 10-11, 40. Also see Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 266, 288; John Arthur Phillips, *Thompson's Turkey, and Other Christmas Tales* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1873; CIHM 12031), 59; Machar, *For King and Country*, 149; Lanigan, *They Two*, 28.

experience, late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian writers faced a paradoxical view of middle-class male work. On the one hand, nineteenth-century ideology emphasized that a man should be willing to take any kind of honest work in order to ensure his future success. On the other hand, middle-class masculine identity was becoming increasingly associated with having a non-manual occupation. In his study of the middle class in two Ontario towns between 1850 and 1890, historian Andrew Holman noted the changing content of middle-class beliefs about work in nineteenth-century Canada. Holman argues:

In the 1850s and 60s, all kinds of work were equally laudatory and moral, but by the 1870s that conception had been modified. From then on, many contemporaries held aloft the value of non-manual labour, distinguishing it from manual labour and assigning "brain" workers higher status in the work order.<sup>63</sup>

Yet the central identification of a successful settler or farmer remained that of a man who was able and willing to do his own manual work and the settler remained one of the primary archetypes of the "self-made man" in English Canada.<sup>64</sup> English-Canadian writers of fiction had to deal with this paradox in their fictions of the settlement frontier.

When writing about settler masculinity, these authors shifted the burden of maintaining class status from a character's work to his education and refinement. As the literary scholar Misao Dean observed, "turn-of-the-century authors created an archetypal Canadian man who seemed oddly

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<sup>63</sup>Holman, *Sense of Their Duty*, 22. Also see Stuart M. Blumin, "The Hypothesis of Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals," *American Historical Review* 90 (April 1985): 312-317; Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 22-23, 111-112. A Canadian statement that a man could succeed only if he took up any honest work he could find appeared in Marie Edith Beynon, *Saints, Sinners and Queer People* (New York: Author's Publishing Association, 1897), 180.

<sup>64</sup>Allan Smith, "The Myth of the Self-made Man in English Canada, 1850-1914," *Canadian Historical Review* 59 (July 1978): 192, 212.

classless, happily competent at physical work yet educated and with refined tastes," exemplified by Andrew, the hero of Joanna Wood's 1898 novel, *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe*. He excelled in the practical work of his farm, but he also possessed an inborn refinement that made him seem aristocratic and allowed him to see the poetic beauty of the world around him. Such a figure relieved the class anxieties of middle-class men who, unable to find nonmanual employment either in Britain or in Canada, were becoming farmers and ranchers in the Canadian West. Such men needed to be assured that the manual work of farming was compatible with being a gentleman. Characters like Andrew provided that reassurance through their combination of gentlemanly attributes and manual work. However, discussions of the middle-class acceptability of manual work were limited to farming or ranching work. Manual work in an industrial or urban setting remained completely incompatible with middle-class masculinity.<sup>65</sup>

English-Canadian writers also incorporated the idea of farm work into the ideal of middle-class masculinity by depicting it as a stage in a man's life course. Most commonly, the young male character began in a farming or settlement situation. As a result of this experience, he acquired a habit of hard work that served him well in his educational training for a future, non-manual, career.

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<sup>65</sup>Misao Dean, *Practising Femininity: Domestic Realism and the Performance of Gender in Early Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 12; Wood, *Judith Moore*, 9-12, 64-65. Also see Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 215; Carter F. Hanson, "'Working' in the West: The Canadian Prairies as Playground in Late-Victorian Literature," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31 (Winter 2001): 657-677.

Examples of this life course abounded in Canadian fiction.<sup>66</sup> The hero of Mrs. J. J. Colter's 1876 novel *Robbie Meredith*, to cite only one, began his struggle to succeed at the age of thirteen, when his father died and he inherited the responsibility of running the farm and caring for his mother and sisters. Though a physically weak child, Robbie took on his task with a will. In time his work made him physically strong and he became a skilled and successful farmer. Robbie insisted on getting as much schooling as he could, for he wanted to be more than a farmer, so he attended the village school all winter, every winter:

To be sure, it was a long, cold walk in the pinching winter days, but the same energy that enabled him to perform a work in the grain and potato field that was the admiration, and perhaps envy, of every parent farmer in all the country side, made him equally energetic in getting what knowledge it was possible for him to gain.<sup>67</sup>

Robbie gained more than physical vigor from his fieldwork; he also learned habits of industry and application that allowed him to be such a good scholar that he received a scholarship to a Canadian university. Again, his habits of industry served him well and he was able to go on to graduate study in Europe. In the end, he accepted a mathematics professorship in Switzerland. The skills of industry and application that he learned from farm work allowed him to gain a professional, middle-class occupation.

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<sup>66</sup>Colter, *Robbie Meredith*; Robert Wilson, *Never Give Up; or, Life in the Lower Provinces* (Saint John, NB: Daily News Steam Job Office, 1878; CIHM 32337); William Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation: A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 34392); Rebecca Agatha Armour, *Marguerite Verne; or, Scenes From Canadian Life* (St. John, New Brunswick: Daily Telegraph, 1886; CIHM 06085); Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Man From Glengarry* (Toronto: Westminster, 1901; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960); Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Doctor: A Tale of the Rockies* (Toronto: The Westminster Co., 1906).

<sup>67</sup>Colter, *Robbie Meredith*, 54-55.

Robbie's career path off the farm was typical for characters in English-Canadian literature in the 1860s and 70s. Prior to about 1885, English-Canadian writers emphasized the way in which the virtues learned on the farm allowed good men to escape the farm and go on to success elsewhere, as discussed above. The emphasis on leaving the farm seems to be connected to the historical period during which many of the writers had direct experience of farm life.

By the 1890s, novelists had begun to create stories in which the ideal man found happiness in being a successful farmer. By this point, fewer Canadians, and therefore fewer writers, lived on farms or knew those who did. The cultural historian Keith Walden pointed out that by the late 1880s:

As problems associated with industrialization and urbanization mounted, the supposed healthiness and independence of farm life was increasingly idealized. Farmers worked, not at someone else's direction in stifling factories or enervating offices, but at their own paces in pure, fresh air, close to God and the wonders of creation. Agriculture was the cornerstone of the economy and the foundation of national greatness.<sup>68</sup>

As a result, writers more frequently portrayed men who had gained emotional and financial success by remaining or becoming farmers rather than by leaving the farm behind in their youth. One such farmer was Andrew Cutler, the hero of an 1898 novel who fell in love with and married an opera singer. After the marriage, they both retreated to Andrew's Ontario farm and lived happily ever after.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 200-201.

<sup>69</sup>Wood, *Judith Moore*. A similar story can be found in Beynon, *Saints, Sinners*, 181. Ralph Connor's 1902 book, *Glengarry School Days*, also idealized life in a settlement community.



During these last twenty years of the nineteenth century, English-Canadian authors increasingly emphasized the nation's settler past as a creator of modern Canadian virtues. The settler experience was particularly important in creating Canadian masculinity. Writers believed that the men of the frontier, either in the early days of settlement or in the Canadian west of their present day, proved their manhood by their prowess at rural manual labor. As Ralph Connor wrote of this period of frontier settlement:

Those were the days when men were famous according as they could "cut off the heels of a rival mower." There are [those] that grieve that, one by one, from field and from forest, are banished those ancient arts of daily toil by which men were wont to prove their might, their skill of hand and eye, their invincible endurance.<sup>70</sup>

Though Canadian men who lived in urban areas could not prove their manliness in the harvest field or with the woodsman's axe, English-Canadians felt that, "there still offer in life's stern daily fight full opportunity to prove manhood in ways less picturesque perhaps, but no less truly testing."<sup>71</sup> The distinctive masculinity created by contact with the Canadian land was inheritable and gave Canadians the strength and courage to succeed in the modern world. The struggles and sufferings of settlers had built a nation and ensured that the Canadian people would be able to prosper in the future. The twentieth century would belong to Canada because Canadians of the future would continue to share in the virtue and toughness created in their ancestors by contact with, and conquest of, the wild nature of the Canadian landscape.

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<sup>70</sup>Connor, *The Doctor*, 19.

<sup>71</sup>Connor, *The Doctor*, 19.

English-Canadian writers believed that these settler virtues would be essential to the future of Canada in two ways, both of which were evident in the fictional career of Ranald Macdonald, *The Man From Glengarry*. They believed that the settler virtues of hard work and honesty were crucial to the individual's success in urban, industrial employment and that the experience of farming in bush communities in Ontario was essential training for the settlement of western Canada. Ranald grew to manhood in the township of Glengarry, where men supported their families through bush farming, lumbering, and river driving. At an early age he became proficient at the skills required by all of these activities; moreover, he learned honesty from the Scottish Presbyterianism of his father. The skills helped him get a job in Ottawa, working with a land merchant, and the honesty led him to leave this man's service. Ranald would not lie to a client in order to help the land merchant sell a tract of timberland. This honesty served him well, for through it he became the principal agent of a British Columbia timber merchant. Because of this new employment, Ranald turned his skills to the settlement of western Canada and became one of the leading citizens of British Columbia.<sup>72</sup> This emphasis on settler virtues as the redemption of urban Canada betrayed an uneasiness with the direction of Canadian development.

As central and eastern Canada became more fully settled and even urbanized, Canadian authors and readers turned to fiction that idealized the farmer's life and allowed them to continue to imagine themselves as a nation of settlers. Early fiction about the settlement of the Canadian prairies reinforced this idealization of farm life as a continuing part of the national

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<sup>72</sup>Connor, *Man From Glengarry*.

character. Such fiction emphasized the success possible on the prairies while remaining silent about the unique hardships of prairie farming.<sup>73</sup> Throughout the English-speaking world, the rise of city and industrial life led to a nostalgic longing for the rural past.<sup>74</sup> Canada was no exception to this trend, as exemplified in the numerous English-Canadian novels about idyllic rural, agricultural communities. The popularity of these novels, especially those of Ralph Connor and Lucy Maud Montgomery, indicated that the longing for the rural past was shared not only by those who wrote novels, but by those who read them as well.<sup>75</sup> As Mary Vipond notes, the rural or regional novel was particularly popular because of a nostalgia for the "simple decent country and village people . . . left behind by middle class book-buying urban dwellers."<sup>76</sup> In essence, in reading stories about rural idylls, like Ralph Connor's *Glengarry* and Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Avonlea*, English-Canadians were expressing a nostalgia for their own rural childhoods.

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<sup>73</sup>See Christopher Oakes, *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* (Toronto: National Publishing Co., 1890; CIHM 30422); Beynon, *Saints, Sinners and Queer People*, 173-212; Julia W. Henshaw, *Why Not Sweetheart?* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901).

<sup>74</sup>David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 9; Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 259; Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 105; Raymond Chapman, *The Sense of the Past in Victorian Literature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 162; T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 28, 64.

<sup>75</sup>Both Connor and Montgomery were internationally best-selling authors during the first two decades of the twentieth century, although only Montgomery's popularity endured after the First World War. Montgomery is most famous for her first novel, published in 1908, *Anne of Green Gables*. See Frances Frazer, "Lucy Maud Montgomery," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92*, 246-25; and Michael Hurley, "Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon)," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92*, 50-55.

<sup>76</sup>Vipond, "Best-Sellers in English-Canada," 102. Carole Gerson, *Purer Taste*, 149, also mentions Adeline Teskey's *Mapleton* as an example of this trend.

English-Canadian writers identified the settlement period as an especially pure and heroic time and worried that, in the transition to a city economy, they were losing these virtues. One of the stories in Ralph Connor's *Glengarry School Days* was a particularly revealing treatment of this dichotomy between rural virtue and the corruption of the modern, commercial world. The book, published in 1902, was set in Glengarry, Ontario during the period of settlement. Modernity first impinged upon the community when the school board decided to hire female teachers instead of the male teachers they had earlier preferred. With this change, the older boys left the school, "and with their departure the old heroic age passed away, to be succeeded by an age soft, law-abiding, and distinctly commercial." With this commercial age, sin came to the rural idyll that was Glengarry. Hughie Murray, the minister's son, was tempted by the wares of a school-yard shop kept by "Foxy" Ross, son of the village storekeeper. "Foxy" was the incarnate spirit of the commercial age, who corrupted Hughie by allowing him to go into debt for a strongly-desired pistol and then convincing him to steal from the church collection plate money to pay back the debt. Hughie did so and was tormented by his sin. Then he went on a visit of several days to the farm of a friend and "[t]he hours that Hughie spent in working with the clean, red earth seemed somehow to breathe virtue into him." He returned repentant, confessed to his mother and paid back the money and remained untempted by the wares of the commercial age. He had been cleansed by the pure life of the farm, rescued by it from the evils of the modern, commercial world.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Connor, *Glengarry School Days*, 151-214. A similarly explicit contrast between rural virtue and urban vice was the central plot conflict in S. Frances Harrison, *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* (Toronto: George M. Morang, 1898; CIHM 05388). Also see Shi, *Simple Life*, 195; Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, 12.

So English-Canadian writers hoped that their nation would be saved from the evils of the modern world by their rural heritage. While more and more of them made their lives in cities, they continued to imagine themselves as men and women who had, or had inherited, all the virtue and ruggedness of settlers in the bush. As they lived in their modern Canada, they turned to their idea of the Canadian past to give them strength and virtue to resist commercial sins while succeeding in the urban world that they perceived as Canada's future.

By basing their ideas of Canadian identity upon the settlement experience, English-Canadian authors once again made use of Canada's geography to define their national character. In this case, they based Canadian identity upon the experience of transforming the wilderness into an agricultural nation. They believed that this experience of the Canadian land was one that had shaped both male and female Canadians, transforming them into men and women who were stronger, healthier, and more capable than their British counterparts. Writers depicted the settlement period as a time when middle-class British men and women had to take on unfamiliar and unpleasant tasks. They believed that this necessity had shaped Canadians by freeing them from the over-anxious gentility of the British middle classes. Canadian writers emphasized the compatibility of domestic and manual labor, within a settlement setting, with true refinement.

Such characterizations of Canadians were particularly important for the creation of an ideal of Canadian femininity. While Canadian masculinity was primarily imagined in relationship to the wilderness, Canadian femininity was most often described in conjunction with the settlement experience. The characteristics that distinguished Canadian

women from all other women of the world were generally related to their abilities to cope with frontier conditions. Women's efforts were also seen as central to the transformation of the wilderness through domesticity.

English-Canadian authors also believed that the settlement experience was critical for the development of a distinctively Canadian masculinity. In this case, they saw the experience of agricultural work as essential to the development of a Canadian masculinity that ensured future national greatness. Nationalist writers felt that the habit of hard work that boys acquired on a farm would ensure their success in an urban environment. Because Canada's history as a settler society produced such men, its national future was assured.

Canadian identity was linked to a gendered experience of the Canadian landscape. The necessity of changing one's ideas and habits in order to survive the Canadian bush was a central theme in novels of settlement. By identifying Canada with its settlement period, English-Canadian authors emphasized the land as important factor in the transformation of British men and women into Canadians. This allowed them to continue to identify with their British heritage in a way that was compatible with creating a uniquely Canadian identity.

**Chapter Five**  
**IMPERIALISM, ANTI-AMERICANISM, AND CANADIAN**  
**NATIONALISM**

In the late nineteenth century, English Canadians who wrote fiction generally believed that their nation represented the best of the old and the new worlds. They believed that the best of the renowned British Empire would combine under the beneficent influence of Canada's northern climate to create a wonderful new nation that would be the envy not only of the American states but of all the world. Canada would become the crown jewel of the Empire, a true representation of the glory that could be attained by the British race in a land free of the impediments of custom and a class system based on inherited wealth. In their fiction, the most significant obstacle in Canada's path was the threat of annexation—real or perceived—by the United States. English-Canadian authors were unanimous in rejecting the idea that Canada's future lay with the United States. Instead, they reflected the ideas of Canadian imperialists and envisioned Canada remaining within the British Empire.

In this vision of Canadian identity, national character was based both upon the nation's American landscape and on its British heritage. Canada was in a unique position within the British Empire, as the only dominion to share such a long border with an emerging world power. Due to this geographical and political situation, English Canadians believed that their national future was dependent upon the question of which of these great powers they would join. As literary scholar Dennis Duffy noticed, to many

writers Canada seemed to make “no sense except as part of a larger political, social, and cultural entity.”<sup>1</sup>

Canadian imperialists, as represented by groups such as Canada First and the Imperial Federation League, hoped that Canada’s destiny lay within the British Empire, not as a colony, but as one of a number of independent powers that would have an equal voice in imperial affairs. For the imperialists, such ambitions were not incompatible with Canadian nationalism. They believed that Canada would only be able fully to develop its national potential within the British Empire. Indeed, the men who made up Canada First, an organization that was active between 1867 and the late 1870s, were primarily interested in fostering a sense of Canadian identity and developing the Canadian nation, but they were uniformly imperialists in that they expected that these goals could best be met within the British Empire. The Canadian members of the Imperial Federation League, an Empire-wide organization that was founded in 1884, felt that Canada’s unique national destiny could best be worked out within an equal federation of all members of the British Empire. Their ideal was an imperial federation in which Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and other former colonies would all have an equal voice in imperial policy but would retain individual responsibility for internal governance.<sup>2</sup> Canadian authors of

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<sup>1</sup>Dennis Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalty in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 132.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Leacock, *Greater Canada: An Appeal Let Us No Longer Be a Colony* (Montreal: The Montreal News Company, 1907), 1-10. Also see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); and the documents gathered in Carl Berger, ed., *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1969).



fiction in English were key participants in disseminating these imperialist viewpoints, possibly due to their own British heritage.<sup>3</sup>

The competing view of Canadian identity, and the imperialists' fear, was that Canada would find its meaning within an American Empire, whether through annexation or commercial union. Nineteenth-century Canadian imperialist writers of fiction feared this outcome because they believed that Canadian national identity would be destroyed in such a union. This profound uneasiness about American intentions and the possibility of becoming Americans, generally called anti-Americanism by Canadian historians, was partly a result of the many similarities between Canadian and American culture that were evident to Canadians in the nineteenth century. Despite similarities of language and culture, English Canadians constructed their sense of national identity upon the idea that they were not Americans. This view of national identity was constantly threatened by their resemblance to Americans and English Canadians used their imperial loyalty and identity as one means of distinguishing themselves from Americans.<sup>4</sup> English-Canadian authors also emphasized

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<sup>3</sup>Of the 42 authors for whom biographical details are readily available, 13 were themselves immigrants from Great Britain, a further 11 were the children of immigrants from Great Britain, and the remaining 18 were born in Canada of already settled parents. Of these 42 authors, none were themselves immigrants from the United States, or descended from American immigrants, with the exception of 3 who described themselves as descended from United Empire Loyalists who left the United States in order to remain loyal to the British crown. Their biographies were found in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volumes 10-14*; W. H. New, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92; Canadian Writers 1890-1920* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990); W. H. New, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 99; Canadian Writers Before 1890* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990); Lorraine McMullen and Sandra Campbell, eds., *Pioneering Women: Short Stories by Canadian Women, Beginnings to 1880* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1993); Lorraine McMullen and Sandra Campbell, eds., *Aspiring Women: Short Stories by Canadian Women, 1880-1900* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1993); Charles G. D. Roberts and Arthur L. Tunnell, eds., *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who Was Who: Volume One, 1875-1933* (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1934).

<sup>4</sup>On anti-Americanism as a "central buttress" of Canadian national identity, see J. L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: Harper Collins,

Canadian differences from the United States through novels about the War of 1812, the Fenian Invasions of the 1860s and possible future American invasions of Canadian territory. In these novels, they portrayed the United States as a land-hungry, violent nation, against which their British association was a necessary protection.

Anti-Americanism and imperialism were two sides of the same coin in Canadian nationalism. Each reinforced the other within late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian ideas of themselves and their nation. Anti-American ideas pushed Canadians toward the Empire, while imperialism pushed them away from the Americans. It is a common belief that nineteenth-century Canadians were only imperialists because they did not want to become American, but it would be equally truthful to say that English Canadians did not want to become Americans because of their loyalty to the Empire. Many Canadian ideas about themselves and their nation were simultaneously anti-American and imperialist, especially when those ideas had to do with the Loyalist migration, past and possible future invasions of Canada, or the future of the British Empire. These two ideologies reinforced each other in the fictional creation of Canadian national identity.

Conspicuously missing from English-Canadian fiction in the late nineteenth century was the event that created the very nationalism that so

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1996); Robin W. Winks, "'Whodunit?' Canadian Society as Reflected in its Detective Fiction," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 17 (Winter 1987-1988): 377; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 53; George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (1965; reprint, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991), vii, 3. On similarities between English Canadians and Americans, see Jane Errington, *The Lion, The Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal; McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 3-7, 35-54; André Siegfried, *The Race Question in Canada* (London, 1907; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966), 102-105.

many authors were attempting to define. In their search for events that created national feeling, or defined the difference between Canadians and Americans, or cemented Canadian ties to the British Empire, the Confederation of the various colonies of British North America into the Dominion of Canada by means of the British North America Act, passed by the British parliament in 1867, was conspicuously absent.<sup>5</sup> There are a variety of possible reasons that authors did not include Confederation in their portrait of the Canadian past. One reason was probably the authors' belief that Confederation was not suitable material for a historical novel. In this era, the most popular novels in Canada were historical romances, inspired by and including the novels of Sir Walter Scott, which focused on heroic military actions. In the context of this fictional tradition, Confederation seemed a process of political compromise far too dry and uninteresting to invest with nation-building capabilities.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Confederation was followed, not by a golden age of national unity, but by economic stagnation, rebellion, and divisive political wrangling. Canadian historians began to discuss the sources of what went wrong with

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<sup>5</sup>On the political processes that led up to Confederation, see Ged Martin, ed., *The Causes of Confederation* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990); Christopher Moore, *1867: How the Fathers Made a Deal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997); G. F. G. Stanley, "Act or Pact? Another Look at Confederation," in *Confederation*, ed. Ramsay Cook (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967); P. B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation, 1864-1867: Politics, Newspapers, and the Union of British North America*, 3rd. ed. (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2001); D. G. Creighton, *The Road to Confederation: The Emergence of Canada, 1863-1867* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964); W. L. Morton, *The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964).

<sup>6</sup>Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 97; Claude T. Bissell, "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Historical Review* 31 (September 1950): 238-239; Berger, *Sense of Power*, 69.

Confederation. Therefore, neither they nor novelists celebrated it as a source of unity and national pride.<sup>7</sup>

Imperialists had particular difficulty in celebrating Confederation as the beginning of the Canadian nation. It was all too easy to interpret Confederation as a result of British disinterest in its North American colonies. Especially with the withdrawal of all British troops from North America in 1871 as a result of the Treaty of Washington between Great Britain and the United States, Confederation could be seen as part of a process of British disengagement from Canada. As Confederation created a Canadian nation, it weakened the imperial ties that Canadian imperialists believed were crucial to the future of Canada.<sup>8</sup> Thus writers of fiction, who were mainly pro-British in their sympathies, did not feel able to discuss the event that separated them from Great Britain as a positive event for the nation. This was particularly true in the context of their depiction Canada as dependent upon its imperial connection as a military and cultural defense against the United States.

Thus, instead of focusing on the political creation of Canada, English-Canadian authors expressed their anti-American and pro-imperial visions of Canadian identity in fictional works about Canada's historical and imaginary wars. As historian Mark Moss points out, "In most cases, nationalism was linked with the idea of war. As nations grappled with defining their past, what rose to the forefront was the history of their

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<sup>7</sup>M. Brook Taylor, *Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans: Historiography in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 7, 231, 269.

<sup>8</sup>On British motivations for encouraging Confederation, see C. P. Stacey, "Britain's Withdrawal from North America, 1864-1871," *Canadian Historical Review* 36 (September 1955): 185-198; Ged Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation, 1837-67* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995).

conflict.”<sup>9</sup> In English-Canadian fiction of the late nineteenth century, Canada’s wars appear as important factors in the creation of a Canadian national identity, as a reason for maintaining the imperial connection and as a means of distinguishing British and Canadian virtue from American perfidy. The war that appeared most often in English-Canadian fiction prior to 1900 is the War of 1812, although the Fenian invasion of 1866 and the Boer War also received credit for creating a sense of Canadian nationalist prestige. The Rebellions of 1837, the Red River Rebellion, and the Northwest Rebellion of the Métis and the Cree received comparatively little attention in English-Canadian fiction, possibly because they were neither in defense of the Empire nor against the Americans.

In contrast, the Seven Years’ War, which led to the Fall of New France, frequently appeared in English-Canadian novels. Although this war was crucial to the creation of British Canada, nineteenth-century novelists did not emphasize its role in linking Canada to the British Empire. Instead of rejoicing over the British victory, Canadian novelists portrayed the Conquest as a source of Canadian unity. They discussed the heroic figures on both sides of the conflict, adopting all of them as national heroes. English-Canadian writers depicted the fall of Quebec as a source of national pride for both French and English Canadians; moreover they attempted to minimize the potential divisiveness inherent in the event. Far from emphasizing it as an event that made a British nation, English-Canadian authors attempted to portray the Conquest as solely a Canadian event. Depictions of the Conquest and the Seven Years’ War focused on integrating French and English-speaking Canadians into a culturally unified national

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<sup>9</sup>Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 51.

group, a topic that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven. This concern was so central to English-speaking writers of fiction that they did not endow the Conquest with a strong imperialistic or anti-American significance.<sup>10</sup>

English-Canadian writers frequently credited a later war with being the beginning of British Canada. Although the American Revolution did not make many direct appearances in English-Canadian fiction, it was seen as the source of the first substantial immigration of English-speaking settlers to Canada. English-Canadian writers focused on the migration of the defeated Loyalists to Upper Canada, the area that became Ontario, a migration that they believed was the foundation of the Canadian nation. The idea that Canada had been settled by a group of Americans who were distinguished by their loyalty to the British crown was important to the creation of English-Canadian identity in the late nineteenth century. This vision of the Loyalists was particularly helpful because it could be adopted by both the descendants of these Loyalists and by the British immigrants who arrived later. The embrace of loyalism as central to identity meant that Canadians could be sure of how they differed from Americans, even when the similarities began to seem alarming.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, English Canadians depicted the Loyalists as people who had rejected the American Revolution on purely

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<sup>10</sup>For instance, see Mabel Clint, [Harold Saxon, pseud.], *Under the King's Bastion: A Romance of Quebec* (n. p.: Frank Carrel, 1902); Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty: A Romance of Old Quebec* (New York: D. Appleton, 1896); William McLennan and J. N. McIlwraith, *The Span O'Life: A Tale of Louisbourg and Quebec* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899). Also see Daniel Francis' discussion of the Conquest in *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 93-95.

<sup>11</sup>Eric Kaufmann, "Condemned to Rootlessness: The Loyalist Origins of Canada's Identity Crisis," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 3 (Spring 1997); 125-129.

ideological grounds. The myth of the United Empire Loyalists emphasized their sufferings and sacrifices for the British Empire.<sup>12</sup> According to the popular histories of nineteenth-century Canada, the Loyalists had voluntarily sacrificed comfort and wealth in the United States because of their principles of loyalty to the British Empire. One of the best contemporary summations of the United Empire Loyalists is from an 1894 novel by historian and author Agnes Maule Machar. In this passage, an English visitor to Canada asks a Canadian about the “U. E. Loyalists,” and the Canadian provided the following definition:

A U. E. Loyalist means one of those first settlers of Canada who were driven to take refuge here at the time of the American revolution, because they would not give up their allegiance to the British Empire, and so they left their farms and possessions behind, and came to settle in the wilderness under the “old flag.”<sup>13</sup>

This belief in the purely ideological motivation of the Loyalists was critical to English-Canadian self-definition in the late nineteenth century. If they had acknowledged that many of the Loyalists were more interested in inexpensive land than in the principle of crown rule, they would have lost an important means of differentiating themselves from the Americans. In the story English Canadians told themselves about their own origins, the Loyalists had to have rejected the American Revolution on ideological grounds because such a rejection provided a reason for the existence of Canada as a nation. In addition, English-Canadian writers based their sense

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<sup>12</sup>The nineteenth-century view of the Loyalists has been dubbed “the Loyalist myth” by Canadian historians and cultural critics, including Berger, *Sense of Power*, 99-102; Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?*, 13-19; Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles*, 4-8.

<sup>13</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *Down the River to the Sea* (New York: Home Book Co., 1894; CIHM 09603), 86.

of Canadian difference from the United States upon their loyalty to the British crown. English Canadians believed that the Loyalists had created a unique nation by rejecting the American Revolution. Because of this rejection, Canada developed as a new world nation, but one in which a greater measure of British stability and tradition were preserved.<sup>14</sup>

English-Canadian writers also revered the Loyalists because they had rejected the disloyal and uncouth Americanism represented by the Revolution. Many English Canadians believed that the Loyalists had been members of the American elite and that they were therefore well suited to creating an orderly, mannered society in their new land.<sup>15</sup> The Loyalists became both the source and the exemplars of a uniquely Canadian combination of American practical abilities and British refinement.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian writers commonly credited the United Empire Loyalists with being the first English-speaking settlers of Canada. In this way, the ideology of the Loyalist origins of Canadian identity was linked to the English-Canadian idea of themselves as a nation of settlers, as discussed in Chapter Four. Authors of fiction portrayed the Loyalists as ideal settlers who combined all the knowledge and positive virtues of Americans with strong allegiance to the British Empire.

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<sup>14</sup>For additional information on the myth and reality of the United Empire Loyalists, see L. F. S. Upton, *The United Empire Loyalists: Men and Myths* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1967); Wallace Brown and Hereward Senior, *Victorious in Defeat: The American Loyalists in Exile* (New York: Facts on File, 1984); Christopher Moore, *The Loyalists: Revolution, Exile, Settlement* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1984); Walter Stewart, *True Blue: The Loyalist Legend* (Toronto: Collins, 1985); Ann Condon, *The Loyalist Dream for New Brunswick: The Envy of the American States* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1984).

<sup>15</sup>For this aspect of the Loyalist myth, see Jo-Ann Fellows, "The Loyalist Myth in Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1971), 99; David V. J. Bell, "The Loyalist Tradition in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (1970): 25; Jane Errington, *The Lion, The Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).



The Loyalists “were experienced in all matters relating to the settlement of a bush country. They knew the name and nature of every tree, bush, bird and beast to be met with in the forest, were quick to decide on the resources of a district and able to judge correctly of the character of the soil, rocks and timber.”<sup>16</sup> This knowledge was a result of their American identity. Such a portrait of the Loyalists was possible because nineteenth-century authors primarily wrote about the Loyalist settlement of the area that became Ontario. Those who settled in the Maritimes did not appear in Canadian fiction, nor did authors from the Maritimes emphasize the Loyalist tradition in their writing. The Loyalist myth was created by writers from central Canada; their focus was upon the Loyalist experience in Upper and, to a lesser extent, Lower Canada. Their intent, however, was to use this essentially regional experience as a unifying myth for the entire nation. One reason for this focus on the Loyalist experience in Upper Canada was the later invasion of this geographical area by the United States during the War of 1812.

According to nineteenth-century writers, the peaceful society created by the Loyalists in Upper Canada was put to the test by the American invasion of Upper Canada during the War of 1812. In the nineteenth-century view, the War of 1812 was an almost biblical test of the Loyalists’ commitment to their faith in the monarchy. And in both the textbooks and the novels of the late nineteenth century, the Loyalists passed this later test as they had passed the first. They turned out with devotion to protect their

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<sup>16</sup>John A. Murdoch, *In the Woods and on the Waters* (Winnipeg: Stovel Co., 1896; CIHM 09812), 5. On the Loyalist settlement experience, see Mary Fryer, *King’s Men: The Soldier Founders of Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1980); Janice Potter-MacKinnon, *While the Women Only Wept: Loyalist Refugee Women in Eastern Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993); Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783-1791* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1986).

new homes from the same menace that had driven them from the old. The outcome of the land War of 1812 in Upper Canada was interpreted as a Canadian victory, which added strength to the Loyalist myth by providing them with a victory to offset their defeat in the American Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

English-Canadian novelists from Ontario explicitly connected the Upper Canadian reaction to American invasion with their Loyalist heritage. In nineteenth-century novels about the War of 1812, Canadian settlers were particularly anxious to defend their land because many of them were United Empire Loyalists. As one yeoman told a British officer in Agnes Machar's award-winning novel about the War of 1812, *For King and Country*:

Lose this province, indeed,—while there's many a brave yeoman in it will give his heart's blood sooner than see the Stars and Stripes waving over it! Yes, sir, it's not idle brag with me. I left as fine a farm and homestead as a man would want to see, behind me in the valley of the Connecticut, and came here, nigh thirty years ago now, to fell the trees with my own hands, to build a log cabin to bring my wife into, sooner than to part company with the Union Jack! . . . I'm ready, and my sons are ready, too, sir, to turn out to-morrow and shoulder a musket for the old flag still. And there's hundreds, aye, and thousands, 'll do the same throughout the province!<sup>18</sup>

In this characterization of the War of 1812, imperialism and anti-Americanism met in a Canadian determination to defend the country. Indeed, in this version of the Canadian response to the War of 1812, it is

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<sup>17</sup>Dennis Duffy, "Upper Canadian Loyalism: What the Textbooks Tell," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 12 (Spring 1977): 17-26; Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles*, 23, 28.

<sup>18</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *For King and Country: A Story of 1812* (Toronto: Adam, Stevenson & Co., 1874; CIHM 09602), 12. This novel was originally serialized in 1874 by *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* and won that magazine's yearly award for Canadian fiction. Similar sentiments are expressed in Rev. W. H. Withrow, *Neville Trueman, The Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1880; CIHM 34398), 13; Robert Sellar, *Hemlock: A Tale of the War of 1812* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton and Sons, 1890; CIHM 13445), 56-57.

impossible to separate loyalist imperialism from anti-Americanism. The two strands of Canadian identity supported and reinforced each other.

Yet the Loyalists were not the only settlers who were shown as resisting the Americans. Nineteenth-century Canadian novels about the war conveyed the impression that the entire countryside heard that the Americans were invading the Niagara Peninsula and immediately volunteered for the militia. Again, the best example of this is from Machar's novel, *For King and Country*:

In town, village, and sparsely populated townships, the staunch Canadians rose as one man, determined, at all hazards, to stand by the old flag, and go forth, under that venerated ensign, to fight to the death for king, country, and home. From all quarters the militia offered their immediate services, and bands of willing volunteers poured into York, Newark, Kingston,—all the known places of rendezvous,—eager to bear arms, and disappointed when, simply because there were no weapons with which to furnish them, many had to return to a forced inaction.<sup>19</sup>

This outpouring of volunteers and militia companies was one of the most powerful myths in Canadian history well into the twentieth century. The militia myth, born out of General Isaac Brock's lauding of the militia in his wartime speeches and Reverend John Strachan's history of the war, became central to Canadian identity.<sup>20</sup> The militia myth implied that the Canadians were victorious in the War of 1812 because of their home-trained militia.

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<sup>19</sup>Machar, *King and Country*, 167. Also see J. Mackay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

<sup>20</sup>The term "militia myth" is used by Canadian historians to refer to the set of nineteenth-century English-Canadian beliefs about the militia described here. See C. P. Stacey, "The War of 1812 in Canadian History," in *The Defended Border, Upper Canada and the War of 1812*, ed. Morris Zaslow (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1964), 331-337; R. Arthur Bowler, "Propaganda in Upper Canada in the War of 1812," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 18 (1988): 20-21, on Brock; Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?*, 24, on Strachan.

The militia myth discounted the actual contribution of the many British regular soldiers who served in the war and instead gave credit for the successful defense of Canada to the many settlers who turned out "for king and country." Generations of Canadian historians and authors depicted the militia as the saviors of Canada. One such novelist and historian was the Methodist minister William Withrow. His novel *Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher. A Tale of the War of 1812*, was serialized in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* in 1879. It was first published as a book in 1880 and continued to be re-issued at least as late as 1900.<sup>21</sup> In this novel Withrow wrote that the militia were the true defenders of Canada:

The patriotism and valour of the Canadians were . . . fully demonstrated. With the aid of a few regulars, the loyal militia had repulsed large armies of invaders, and not only maintained the inviolable integrity of their soil, but had also conquered a considerable portion of the enemy's territory.<sup>22</sup>

Withrow most probably referred to the surrenders of Michilimackinac and Detroit, which led to the loss of American territory west of Lake Erie to the Canadians. Like the historians of his time, Withrow minimized the contribution of the British regular troops to these "Canadian" victories. This underestimation of the role of British troops was crucial to the nineteenth-century sense of the War of 1812 as the beginning of Canadian national feeling and identity. The militia myth created a nationalistic bond

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<sup>21</sup>The CIHM collection of Pre-1900 Canadiana includes both the 1880 and 1900 editions of *Neville Trueman*. There is no way of knowing how many editions the book actually went through, as the 1900 edition is not identified by number, but the re-issue in 1900 argues that the book had a continuing popularity in Canada.

<sup>22</sup>Withrow, *Neville Trueman*, 67. Withrow expressed a similar point of view in his 1878 textbook, *A Popular History of the Dominion of Canada*, as quoted by S. F. Wise, "The War of 1812 in Popular History," in *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada*, ed. A. B. McKillop and Paul Romney (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 163.

based upon an idea of the victory of Canadian citizen-soldiers against a much larger American army.

English-Canadian novels about the War of 1812 most commonly began with the American invasion of the Niagara Peninsula and ended with Brock's victorious death at Queenston Heights in October of 1812. Novelists did not go into detail about Brock's earlier offensive victories at Michilimackinac and Detroit, nor did they chronicle the final two years of the war.<sup>23</sup> This vision of the war was useful in the creation of a Canadian national identity based on a vision of Canadians as a peace-loving people wantonly invaded by land-hungry neighbors. Novelistic depictions of the war allowed Canadians to celebrate their military prowess without the guilt of viewing themselves as aggressors. The identification of victory with the death of General Brock, a national hero, fulfilled cultural expectations about the role of a hero, resonating with English veneration of Admiral Nelson who was killed at Trafalgar and General Wolfe who died to take Quebec.

By the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian authors and historians viewed the War of 1812 as the foundation of Canadian national identity. Based on his examination of Canadian textbooks from the late 1800s, historian Daniel Francis contends that "successful resistance to the Americans represented the first glimmering of a Canadian nationality. In the same way that later generations of Canadians have come to believe that a sense of a distinctive Canadian identity was born in the blood and sacrifice

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<sup>23</sup>On the actual military events in Canada between 1812 and 1814, see Zaslow, *The Defended Border*; John R. Elting, *Amateurs to Arms: A Military History of the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Press, 1991); J. MacKay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); G. F. G. Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1983); Pierre Berton, *The Invasion of Canada, 1812-1813* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980); Pierre Berton, *Flames Across the Border, 1813-1814* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981).

of World War I, so earlier generations traced this self-awareness to the battlefields of the War of 1812."<sup>24</sup> In nineteenth-century novels about the war, Canadians went forth to defend king, country, and their own homes. After the war was over, these successful defenders were left with a new sense of themselves as a nationality. As William Withrow wrote in the Preface to *Neville Trueman*:

In this short story an attempt has been made . . . to present certain phases of Canadian life during the heroic struggle against foreign invasion, which first stirred in our country the pulses of that common national life, which has at length attained a sturdier strength in the confederation of the several provinces of the Dominion of Canada.

Throughout the novel Withrow described his characters as being motivated by Canadian patriotism in resisting the American invasion. They all spoke of defending their country. At the outbreak of war, Zenas Drayton, one of the main characters, "obtained his father's consent to volunteer for the militia cavalry service in this time of his country's need, although it left the farm without a single man, except the squire himself." To make up for this lack of farm hands, his sister also sacrificed for her country by volunteering to take care of the men's farm work.<sup>25</sup> In Withrow's view, the War of 1812 was both a demonstration and a source of Canadian nationalism. The actions of his characters showed Canadian national feeling and he expected their heroic actions to inspire young Canadians with national pride.

To remember the War of 1812 was seen as an important factor in the creation of Canadian nationalism. English-Canadian writers of fiction discussed the effects of the remembrance of the war in the lives of their

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<sup>24</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, 56. Also see Errington, *Lion, Eagle, and Upper Canada*, 102.

<sup>25</sup>Withrow, *Neville Trueman*, v, 92, 93.

characters. One young boy, a character in a book meant to be given as a prize to Canadian Sunday school students, felt his Canadianness most strongly in visits to the site of the Battle of Queenston Heights, the most famous British/Canadian victory of the war:

Again and again he walks over the battleground; [and] . . . standing by the spot where our Upper Canada hero [General Brock] fell, pictures to himself the oft-repeated story of the fight. He takes great delight in remembering that his grandfather was one of those "brave York volunteers," to whom the last words of General Brock were addressed.<sup>26</sup>

The battleground at Queenston Heights connects this little boy to his national history. For him, the war created Canadian heroes, like General Brock and his own grandfather. His grandfather fought to defend Canada, making it a nation to be proud of and connecting the boy to a sense of his nation's past, a central feature of nationhood.<sup>27</sup>

In English-Canadian fiction, the remembrance of the War of 1812 could also unite characters who were otherwise very different in a sense of their shared Canadian nationality. In a novel about a boy who grew up to be a Methodist minister, William Withrow included a scene that demonstrated the way a common past could unite disparate races within a common nation. In this case, remembrance of the War of 1812 created an instant bond between a young, white, Canadian lumberman and an Indian chief. One Sunday afternoon a young Canadian lumberman named Dowler visited an encampment of Methodist Indians in the company of Lawrence

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<sup>26</sup>L. G., *Jessie Grey; or, The Discipline of Life: A Canadian Tale* (Toronto: James Campbell and Son, 1870; CIHM 01280), 88-89. General Brock, although generally adopted as a Canadian hero in the nineteenth century, was an officer in the British army. Though he died in, and arguably for, Canada, he was not a Canadian.

<sup>27</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

Temple, the novel's hero. The young white men began by asking the chief about his medals:

"Whar did ye git this?" inquired Dowler laying his finger on the silver medal that decorated the chief's broad breast.

"That," said the old man, his eagle eye flashing proudly, "was fastened on my breast in full parade before all the red-coats by Major-General Sir Isaac Brock. . . ."

"Tell us all about it," said Dowler eagerly, "My father fit with Brock at Queenston Heights an' arterwards got wounded at Lundy's Lane."

"Did he?" said the chief. "Well, I don't talk much of these things, but I don't mind telling the son of an old soldier."<sup>28</sup>

Their mutual association with the defense of Canada in 1812 gave the two otherwise very dissimilar men a bond of sympathy. The young white lumberman and the old Indian chief were able to put aside their differences and imagine themselves as part of a national community by remembering the War of 1812.

The War of 1812 also reinforced Canadian identity because it strengthened and provided justification for anti-Americanism as a central theme in Canadian national identity. The military historian C. P. Stacey argues that the American invasion of Canada during the war "did much . . . to prevent the ultimate annexation of the country to the United States."<sup>29</sup> Prior to this invasion Upper Canada was becoming more American with every passing year due to continuing American immigration. However, the American invasion revived and intensified a deep prejudice against the United States. English-Canadian novelists expressed this animosity throughout the nineteenth century. For instance, consider this exchange in

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<sup>28</sup>Rev. W. H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation. A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 34392), 123.

<sup>29</sup>C. P. Stacey, "The War of 1812 in Canadian History," in Zaslow, *The Defended Border*, 336.



Robert Sellar's 1890 novel about the War of 1812. The conversation between the British officer, Lieutenant Morton, and a Scots settler took place after the Canadians defeated the American invasion force. The Scotsman expressed regret that it was necessary to fight and Morton replied:

"It is better for all that the best blood of Canada and Britain has soaked the fields within the sound of Niagara, than that Canada should have become a conquered addition to the United States."

"You're richt in that: the sacrifice is sair, but [sic] trial bitter, but a country's independence maun be maintained. Canadians will think mair o' their country when they see what it has cost to defend it."<sup>30</sup>

This quote demonstrates the way in which Canadian nationalism was linked to anti-Americanism in fiction. The unquestioned assumption that underlay the discussion was that to belong to the United States would destroy Canadian freedom and national identity. Canadians desired to retain their independence against the United States and they saw no contradiction in the idea that they did so with the help of the British Empire.

In English-Canadian novels about the War of 1812, the Americans were portrayed as a destructive force, invading a peaceful country solely for their own gain, to be resisted at all costs. In contrast, Canadians were a peace-loving people who were only defending themselves, albeit with great skill and success. This myth had its beginning in Canadian propaganda during the 1810s, but the view of a land-greedy, destructive American army wantonly invading a peaceful countryside continued to be accepted as historical fact within Canada well into the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> English-

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<sup>30</sup>Sellar, *Hemlock*, 192-193.

<sup>31</sup>Bowler, "Propaganda in Upper Canada in the War of 1812," 23; Wise, "The War of 1812 in Popular History," 163-165.

Canadian novelists also upheld this viewpoint. The strongest statement against the Americans was placed in the mouth of a Methodist circuit preacher born in the United States. Neville Trueman, the hero of William Withrow's 1880 novel about the war, decided that he must support the Canadians against his invading countrymen because he believed that "this invasion of a peaceful territory by an armed host is a wanton outrage and cannot have the smile of Heaven."<sup>32</sup> In a similar vein, in Robert Sellar's 1890 novel, *Hemlock: A Tale of the War of 1812*, a Scots settler asked:

What hae we done that they shud come in tae disturb us? Hae we nae richt to live doucely and quietly under our appointed ruler, that they should come into our ain country to harry and maybe kill us? Dod, they are a bonny lot!<sup>33</sup>

This emphasis on the peaceful nature of the Canadians and the wanton aggression of the Americans became and remains a central idea in the creation of a distinct Canadian identity.<sup>34</sup>

English-Canadian authors represented the Fenian invasion of Ontario in the summer of 1866 as another glaring example of American aggressiveness and desire for Canadian territory. In June of 1866 the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish nationalist organization, carried out its policy of attacking the British Empire wherever it could be reached by mounting an invasion of British North America. Fenian forces assembled in the United States and crossed the border over the Niagara River from Buffalo, New York. Scarcely two days after their entry into the country, the Fenians were

<sup>32</sup>Withrow, *Neville Trueman*, 13.

<sup>33</sup>Sellar, *Hemlock*, 19.

<sup>34</sup>Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," in *The Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 846-849.

defeated by British regulars and Canadian militia at the Battle of Ridgeway, a small town less than ten miles from the Niagara River. This invasion was the most important of many small raids undertaken by the Fenians into Canada between 1866 and 1870, from Campobello Island in New Brunswick to as far west as Manitoba.<sup>35</sup>

Prior to 1900, Canadian fiction consistently conveyed the idea that the Fenians were an invasion force encouraged, if not actually organized, by the United States government and that their raids therefore indicated American desires to annex Canada. In one 1902 novel about American tourists in Quebec City, a Canadian and an American discussed the relationship between the two countries. The American could not understand why Canadians would not recognize the United States's right to oversee the affairs of the entire continent based upon the size of their territory. The Canadian pointed out that Canada held at least as many square miles as did the United States and said:

We know it is not your fault that "America" does not stretch over all the land rightly bearing that name. You have attacked Canada several times, and when you were too busy to attend to us yourselves, you have aided, or at least countenanced, Fenian raids and such things.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>On Fenian raids into Canada, see Hereward Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991); David Owen, *The Year of the Fenians* (Buffalo: Western New York Heritage Press, 1990). For further background on the Fenian movement see Wilfried Niedhardt, *Fenianism in North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975); León Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma* (New York: New York University Press, 1971); William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States, 1858-1886* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947); Hereward Senior, *The Fenians and Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978).

<sup>36</sup>Clint, *Under the King's Bastion*, 188-189. A similiar view of the Fenian invasions was presented in the satirical work by R. Utica, *The Story of John and Jonathan* (Ottawa: Bell & Woodburn, 1871; CIHM 32317), 13, 24.

Most English-Canadian authors presented the Fenians as agents of American expansionist desire for Canadian territory. This identification of the Fenians with the United States was so strong that it prevented English-Canadian writers from expressing any identification with the Irish cause. Canadians did not regard themselves as fellow oppressed colonials, as the Fenians had hoped, but as patriots defending their homes against American-based aggression.

English-Canadian authors portrayed the Fenian invasion of 1866 as an unwarranted assault on a peaceful people. Although they recognized that the Fenians' motives were pro-Irish rather than anti-Canadian, Canadian novelists presented the Fenian invasion in many of the same ways as they had the War of 1812. One Ontario novelist described the Fenians as "making an incursion into a country with which they had no quarrel." He imagined that early in their time in Canada, many of the Fenians "were dreaming of a free Ireland, a conquered Canada and all the visions of a lifetime realized. . . . They had yet to learn the aroused temper of Canada which had already put them down for a plundering band of marauders."<sup>37</sup> Here again English-Canadian novelists reflected the dualistic view of aggressive Americans and blameless Canadians.

In addition to this nationalist interpretation of the Fenian invasion, English-Canadian authors also described it in imperialist terms as providing evidence of Canada's loyalty to the British Empire. After all, as the authors pointed out, the Fenians invaded Canada because of their anger at Great

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<sup>37</sup>Coll McLean Sinclair, [Malcolm, pseud.], *The Dear Old Farm: A Canadian Story* (St. Thomas, Ontario: *The Journal Publishers*, 1897; CIHM 09517), 161, 162-163, 164-169. Also see Robert Barr, *In the Midst of Alarms* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1894; CIHM 03348).

Britain. As the Ontario author Coll McLean Sinclair wrote, the Fenians believed that:

the Canadians were groaning under monarchial tyranny and were ready to rise at the first opportunity, whilst the very opposite was the truth, since no people on earth have greater love for their homes and institutions, their beautiful land of sunny lakes and fertile soil.<sup>38</sup>

In this depiction of the Canadians, nationalism and imperial loyalty were combined. The same combination of loyalties was shown in the actions of one of Agnes Maule Machar's heroes, who volunteered to defend Canada against the Fenians after he had worked his way to personal wealth. He volunteered as a duty he owed his country and he departed "as many another Canadian did at that crisis, taking his life in his hand, in order to defend his country against a foe whose quarrel was not with Canada, but England."<sup>39</sup> Machar clearly felt that the volunteer's motivation was more patriotic than imperial, yet in defending their own homes against attack, Canadians were simultaneously defending the Empire as a whole. English-Canadian authors did not evidence any sympathy for the Irish cause. They had no concept of themselves as a similarly oppressed colonial people, partly because by the late nineteenth century when these authors wrote, Canada had become an internally self-governing nation. In addition, their view of themselves as distinguished by their membership in the British Empire was too strong to allow them to believe that they were oppressed because of this loyalty.

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<sup>38</sup>Sinclair, *Dear Old Farm*, 166-167.

<sup>39</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *Lost and Won: A Canadian Romance*, in *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* 8 (December 1875): 474.

However, as with the War of 1812, English-Canadian authors believed that their victory at the Battle of Ridgeway was a result of the efforts of the Canadian militia. Late-nineteenth-century Canadian authors insisted that even when the British army and Canadian militia worked together, the Canadians were the force that brought victory. In his 1894 novel, *In the Midst of Alarms*, Robert Barr displayed this Canadian pride in their militia:

Volunteers are invariably underrated by men of experience in military matters. The boys fought well. . . . If the affair had been left entirely in their hands, the result might have been different—as was shown afterward, when the volunteers, unimpeded by regulars, quickly put down a much more formidable rising in the Northwest. But in the present case they were hampered by their dependence on the British troops, whose commander moved them with all the ponderous slowness of real war, and approached O'Neill as if he had been approaching Napoleon.<sup>40</sup>

Thirty years before he wrote this praise of Canada's volunteers, Barr had himself been one of them. In 1866, at the age of sixteen, he joined the St. Thomas Volunteers and apparently saw active service against the Fenians.<sup>41</sup> Yet his laudatory attitude toward the militia was too common in Canadian life for his opinion to be dismissed as merely the result of his own experience. Barr expressed the Canadian belief that a volunteer militia was superior to a professional army.

Though this militia myth found its roots in the War of 1812, it pervaded views of Canadian identity throughout the nineteenth century. As the military historian C. P. Stacey argued, the portrait of the militia as the

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<sup>40</sup>Barr, *Midst of Alarms*, 230.

<sup>41</sup>John Parr, "Robert Barr," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), 21.

sole cause of victory in the War of 1812 led to the belief that an untrained Canadian was a better soldier than the highly-trained members of European armies. The militia myth prevented the formation of a Canadian standing army until World War I, with the defense of the country left to volunteer militia groups.<sup>42</sup>

For English-Canadians in the late nineteenth century, the aggressor who most threatened their nation was the United States of America. This distrust was a legacy of military and political conflict between the two nations. One instance of this conflict, the War of 1812, has already been discussed. Others include boundary disputes over Maine and Oregon in the 1830s and 1840s. English-Canadian nationalists felt that the United States had gained more territory than they were justly entitled to in both settlements. Many historians argue that one motive for the Confederation of the British North American colonies was a fear of American invasion. These fears were exacerbated by the Fenian raids and by the American purchase of Alaska and attempts to annex British Columbia.<sup>43</sup>

These fears should have been put to rest by the 1871 Treaty of Washington, which settled several British-American disputes that emerged from the American Civil War. The terms of the treaty included British military withdrawal from Canada, which proved a turning point in Canadian-American relations. After 1871, the border forts ceased to be garrisoned and for the first time the border was undefended. Though the

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<sup>42</sup>C. P. Stacey, "The War of 1812 in Canadian History," in *The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812*, ed. Morris Zaslow (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964), 333; Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to the Gulf War*, 3rd. ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 93-99.

<sup>43</sup>John Herd Thompson & Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 30-44; David Shi, "Seward's Attempt to Annex British Columbia, 1865-1869," *Pacific Historical Review* 47 (May 1978): 217-138.

military withdrawal from the border took place swiftly, historian C. P. Stacey pointed out that "Mental disarmament came rather more slowly."

Canadian distrust of the United States was reinforced in 1885, when the Americans abrogated the section of the Treaty of Washington that dealt with fishing rights, which led to conflicts between Canadian and American fishermen and conservationists.<sup>44</sup>

English-Canadian authors felt that they could not trust the United States. This fear of American expansionism was exacerbated by the dispute over the border of Alaska that followed the discovery of gold in the Yukon in 1896. The dispute continued until 1903, when it was settled by a six member bi-lateral commission. Canadian fears seemed unabated despite the years of peace following the 1871 Treaty of Washington. In a 1901 examination of the relationship between Canada and Great Britain, Henri Bourassa referred to the United States as "waiting to gobble us up."<sup>45</sup> This opinion was shared such relatively obscure people as Mabel Clint, the author of a 1902 novel about tourists in Quebec City. Clint included a lengthy conversation on Canadian-American relations between an English-Canadian and an American visitor. The American could not understand why the Canadians were so unfriendly over the question of the Alaskan border and the Canadian replied:

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<sup>44</sup>J. L. Granatstein & Norman Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1991), 9-13; C. P. Stacey, *The Undefended Border: The Myth and the Reality*, Canadian Historical Association Historical Booklets (Sackville, New Brunswick: Tribune Press, 1953), esp. 13; Thompson and Randall, *Canada and the United States*, 62.

<sup>45</sup>Henri Bourassa, *Great Britain and Canada* (Montreal, 1901), 7, quoted in Robert Craig Brown, "Canadian Opinion After Confederation," in *Canada Views the United States: Nineteenth-Century Political Attitudes*, ed. S. F. Wise and Robert Craig Brown (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 110.



You cannot cease to hanker after us. We do not say that you are our enemy now, but we say you have been in the past—the only one we have had hitherto, and that you are not in any case a proven friend.<sup>46</sup>

This character's profound distrust of American motives grew out of the historical relationship of the two nations. In the course of his discussion with the American, he made mention of the disputes over the boundaries of Maine and Oregon and the Canadian belief that these had been unfairly settled in the favor of the United States. They saw the United States as an antagonistic nation that continued to threaten Canadian sovereignty. By the late nineteenth century, the Canadian-American border was unfortified and essentially undefended. At times, this very lack of defense was a source of Canadian fears. From their perspective, the lack of border defense made them all the more vulnerable to the larger, more powerful nation that had invaded them in the past and could be expected to be willing to invade them in the future in order to fulfill their manifest destiny to rule the entire continent. The expansionist policies of the United States in the rest of the western hemisphere did not help to put Canadian fears to rest. American military actions in Cuba and the Philippines seemed only too prophetic to Canadians who feared that the United States desired to control the entire continent of North America.

English-Canadian novelists reflected this continuing fear of American invasions when they wrote about possible future wars. Canadian fictions of future wars were part of a genre of fiction that was inspired by the 1871 publication, by the British *Blackwood's Magazine*, of an invasion narrative entitled *The Battle of Dorking*. This fiction postulated an

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<sup>46</sup>Clint, *Under the King's Bastion*, 190.

invasion of the British Isles by France and was intended to demonstrate Britain's lack of military preparedness. Imaginary wars became popular literary subjects in the British Empire, the United States, and all the nations of Europe between 1871 and 1914. Within this genre, authors generally imagined invasions that seemed most credible and most threatening to themselves and their nation. The British wrote about invasion by the French, as the French had been their enemy for many hundreds of years. In Australian invasion narratives the most common invaders were the Chinese and the Russians. For the Australians, the most feared Others, "upon whose exclusion the myths of the new nations depend," were the Asian peoples who shared their hemisphere.<sup>47</sup>

For English-Canadian writers, the most feared and the most credible source of a possible future invasion was the United States. Canadian identity depended upon the exclusion of the Americans and they firmly believed that the United States desired to control the entire North American continent. An invasion by the United States appeared in two Canadian novels about a future Canada.<sup>48</sup> One book, written in 1883 and proclaiming itself a description of *The Dominion in 1983*, written by an author who used Ralph Centennius as his or her pseudonym, included an 1887 invasion threat. Prior to this event, a political party that advocated annexation to the

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<sup>47</sup>I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 38, 42; Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 135. English-Canadian writers would have been aware of *The Battle of Dorking*, not only because of its Empire-wide popularity, but because Toronto's Copp, Clark, Ltd. published it in 1871 (CIHM 26875).

<sup>48</sup>The future invasion narratives were a subset of the utopian novel, a genre of writing about the future that was very popular in the late nineteenth century, especially in the United States. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) is the most familiar example of this genre. English-Canadian writers contributed eight books to this genre, and of these, two included speculation about a future invasion by the United States.

United States had been gaining strength in Canada. However, the threat of invasion brought Canadians together and dampened their internal strife. Centennius argued that this threat was therefore of ultimate benefit to Canada by creating national unity.<sup>49</sup> Centennius did not discuss American motives for invasion. In common with other Canadians, he simply assumed that the United States continued to desire Canadian territory and would not hesitate to use military methods to acquire it. His description of the entire invasion threat also makes clear that Canadian nationalism depended upon the defeat of these attempts to incorporate Canada into the American Empire. In Centennius's vision of the future, the threatened invasion did not take place because Great Britain came to Canada's aid both militarily and diplomatically and was able to intimidate the United States into calling off the invasion.

Although this theme of a war between the United States and Canada was only touched upon in Centennius' work, it was the central plot point in W. H. C. Lawrence's book about *The Storm of '92: A Grandfather's Tale told in 1932*. The storm referred to in the title was a full-fledged fictional war between the United States and Canada. The story was narrated from the perspective of 1932, by a man who fought against the invading Americans. Lawrence emphasized the view that a war would create and strengthen Canadian nationalism. As one character reflected during the war:

The war will build up Canada. There is no bond between human hearts like that brought about by a common danger and a common grief—and our Provinces but lately such strangers to each other, now face the one, and will shortly, God help us, share the other.

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<sup>49</sup>Ralph Centennius, pseud., *The Dominion in 1983* (Peterborough, Ontario: for the author by Toker & Co., 1883; CIHM 00529; reprinted in John Robert Colombo, ed. *Other Canadas: An Anthology of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979)), 303.

The war allowed Canadian men to prove both their patriotism and their manhood by joining the army to defend their homes. In the face of war with the United States only “one answer comes from united Canada. It rolls from the fog-encircled rocks from Newfoundland to the far off sunny slopes of Vancouver: form, riflemen, form; ready, aye, ready.” In the face of shared danger and suffering, Canadians realized that they had much in common and came to treasure their shared nationality in its relationship to the British Empire. In the author’s fictional 1932, Canada is “Knit together as one nation, old differences silenced and forgotten, we have become heirs to a goodly heritage.”<sup>50</sup> Because of this fictional war of defense against American aggression, Canadians have set aside their old differences of nationality and language and have become a strong nation within the British Empire.

In *The Storm of '92* Canada owed its survival to the British connection. Although Canadians turned out willingly, they fought side by side with imperial forces. Imperial troops arrived not only from England, but from India and Australia:

[T]he great troopships Burrampootra, Mirzapoor, and Scindiah, their white hulls swarming with troops, stole like ghosts into the harbour at Halifax, bearing . . . in all four thousand men; and following them in less than a week came . . . other ships . . . landing fifteen thousand more. . . . The Pacific cable brought us information, also, that East Indian troops were already despatched from Calcutta to land upon our western coast and hold British Columbia. . . . [T]he first message sent across from Melbourne was “Canada, stand firm; Australia sends twenty thousand men. Shoulder to shoulder.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>W. H. C. Lawrence, *The Storm of '92: A Grandfather's Tale told in 1932* (Toronto: Sheppard, 1889; CIHM 08947), 42, 26, 69.

<sup>51</sup>Lawrence, *Storm of '92*, 32-33.

Lawrence emphasized the extent of the British Empire in this portrait of imperial aid. Not only the historic regiments of the British army, but forces from Britain's other colonies arrived to aid Canada in its crisis. Pitted against this worldwide force, the United States began to seem less threatening.

In addition to providing soldiers, the Empire aided Canada with naval forces. Great Britain sent ironclads into New York harbor and shelled and burned the city in retaliation for American aggression against Canada. Imperial troops and the British navy had preserved Canadian independence in the face of the American threat. This was consistent with prevailing ideas about the necessity of the imperial connection to preserve Canadian independence, such as politician D'Arcy McGee's 1871 contention that "had we not had the strong arm of England over us, we would not now have had a separate existence." Many Canadians believed that the United States was hostile to their national aspirations and that the British connection was vital to the protection of their national independence.<sup>52</sup>

From the nineteenth-century English-Canadian perspective, Canada could become a fully developed, independent nation only by remaining a part of the British Empire. This may seem contradictory and complicated to the modern reader, but in late nineteenth-century English-Canadian fiction it was the prevailing attitude regarding Canada's future relationship to the British Empire. In one novel, an English sporting tourist visiting the Canadian Rockies so deplored the Canadian lack of national, rather than imperial, patriotism, that he "made the quixotic vow that he would stand

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<sup>52</sup>McGee is quoted in Brown, "Canadian Opinions After Confederation," 109. The nineteenth-century Canadian tendency to connect British support and Canadian survival is also discussed by Berger, *Sense of Power*, 82, 169; by Granatstein & Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse*, 9; and by Stacey, "War of 1812 in Canadian History," 336.

the Queen on her head every chance he would have until Canadians had the national spirit to print the features of their Premier on their postage stamps."<sup>53</sup> This Englishman saw the use of the Queen's picture as detrimental to the development of Canadian national pride, but obviously the Canadians themselves did not. To them, pride in the Queen and the Empire were part of, not contradictory to, Canadian national feeling.<sup>54</sup>

Canadians also had to defend their dual loyalty against the skepticism of Americans. In one 1877 novel, an American castigated his Canadian nephew for Canadians' lack of "true patriotism," which he defined as the love of one's own country. He lamented the fact that Canadians "look with greater pride towards the country from which they are descended than to the land to which they are native." His nephew replied: "I think you are rather hard on us Canadians. We younger ones, at any rate, are proud of our country, and believe in it, and if we do look with affection and pride to the country from which we are descended, we do not love our own country any less on that account."<sup>55</sup> Such Canadian nationalism was seen as entirely compatible with loyalty to the British Empire. Prior to 1900, English-Canadian nationalists emphasized their British heritage, a concept that will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six. This British heritage and imperial loyalty became part of their idea of Canadian identity.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Campbell Shaw, *A Romance of the Rockies* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1888; CIHM 16142), 13.

<sup>54</sup>Leacock, *Greater Canada*, reprinted in Carl Berger, ed. *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1969), 47-48.

<sup>55</sup>W. H. Brown, *She Might Have Done Better* (St. Johns, Quebec: The News Steam Printing House, 1877; CIHM 03748), 1: 100-103.

<sup>56</sup>Phillip Buckner, "Whatever Happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 4 (1993): 11.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian authors imagined themselves as part of two interrelated communities. One of these was Canada; the other the British Empire. As Canada was part of the British Empire, by being loyal to Canada one was loyal to the Empire. In much the same way that one can be both a New Yorker and an American, nineteenth-century English-Canadians saw themselves as both Canadian and British. English-Canadian novelists discussed this dual identity by describing the ways it manifested itself in Canadian culture. Their stories depicted Canadians displaying their imperial loyalty and their national pride in their celebrations and through their participation in imperial wars and organizations. Novelists also reflected the influence of imperial loyalty on Canadian identity by writing about characters who believed that Canada was destined to become the center of the British Empire. Others included characters who were members of the Imperial Federation League, an organization that advocated a future federation of all of Great Britain's former colonies and Great Britain, in which each country would have an equal voice in the formation of imperial policy. By including such characters and events in their fiction, English-Canadian writers both reflected Canadian reality and helped this imperialist vision of Canadian nationalism to become more generally accepted within Canadian culture.

Novelists reinforced the connection between Canadian nationalism and Canadian imperialism through their interpretations and fictional depictions of Canadian celebrations. These authors felt that Canadian celebrations of imperial holidays, such as Queen Victoria's birthday on the twenty-fourth of May, demonstrated both Canada's loyalty to the Empire and its unique national identity. Referred to as Victoria Day, or the Queen's Birthday, it was celebrated throughout Canada between 1849 and the end of

the nineteenth century. On the most obvious level, a Canadian holiday celebrating the birthday of the British queen demonstrated and reinforced Canadian loyalty to the Empire. Modern scholarship on celebrations indicates that parades and other celebrations create and display a sense of cultural solidarity in various milieus.<sup>57</sup> Victoria Day, like the celebration of Empire Day on May 23, remained an important Canadian holiday only as long as "the majority of English-speaking Canadians could equate Canadian nationalism and British imperialism."<sup>58</sup> Both Empire Day and the Queen's Birthday were Canadian-created holidays that celebrated the imperial connection. Thus, while they reinforced imperial loyalty, they were also seen as holidays that demonstrated Canada's uniqueness within the Empire.

Nineteenth-century novelists described the celebration of the Queen's Birthday as a simultaneous example of Canadian national identity and Canadian imperial loyalty. Most authors emphasized the imperial context of the holiday by describing bands dressed as British soldiers, banners proclaiming "God Save the Queen," and the display of the British flag as

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<sup>57</sup>Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 374-375; Craig Heron and Steve Penfold, "The Craftmen's Spectacle: Labour Day Parades in Canada, The Early Years," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 26 (Nov. 1996); 357-390; Michael Cottrell, "St. Patrick's Day Parades in Nineteenth-Century Toronto: A Study in Immigrant Adjustment and Elite Control," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 25 (May 1992); 57-73; Peter G. Goheen, "Symbols in the Streets: Parades in Victorian Urban Canada," *Urban History Review* 18 (Feb. 1990); 237-243; Bonnie Huskins, "The Ceremonial Space of Women: Public Processions in Victorian Saint John and Halifax," in *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, ed. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 145-159; Robert Rutherford, "Canada's August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory," *Canadian Historical Review* 77 (June 1996); 221-249; H. V. Nelles, "Historical Pageantry and the 'Fusion of the Races' at the Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 26 (Nov. 1996); 391-415.

<sup>58</sup>Robert M. Stamp, "Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: The Training of Young Imperialists," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8 (Aug. 1973); 32; Francis, *National Dreams*, 64-66.



essential components of the celebration.<sup>59</sup> Yet English-Canadian authors also described the Queen's Birthday celebrations as indicative of Canadian national identity. Sara Jeannette Duncan, in particular, felt that Canada celebrated the Queen's Birthday with greater faithfulness and enthusiasm than other nations within her Empire. Born in Ontario, Duncan had traveled extensively in the British Empire and lived in England and India for many years prior to writing her now most famous novel, *The Imperialist*. This novel, set in Elgin, Ontario, began with a description of the celebration of the Queen's Birthday:

I will say at once, for the reminder of persons living in England, that the twenty-fourth of May was the Queen's Birthday. Nobody in Elgin can possibly have forgotten it. . . . But Elgin was in Canada. In Canada the twenty-fourth of May was the Queen's Birthday. . . . Travelled persons, who had spent the anniversary [in England], were apt to come back with a poor opinion of its celebration in "the old country". . . . Here it was a real holiday, that woke you with bells and cannon . . . and went on with squibs and crackers till you didn't know where to step on the sidewalks, and ended up splendidly with rockets and fire-balloons.<sup>60</sup>

By celebrating Queen Victoria's birthday with such enthusiasm, the people of Elgin demonstrated their imperialistic loyalty, while the very fervor of the celebration was depicted as an indicator of Canadian uniqueness. By contrasting Canadian fervor with English indifference, English-Canadians were able successfully to combine Canadian identity and British

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<sup>59</sup>Austin Potter, *Wealth to Poverty; or, The Tricks of the Traffic: A Story of the Drink Curse* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884; CIHM 12098), 45; Millie Magwood, *Pine Lake: A Story of Northern Ontario* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1901), 83-84.

<sup>60</sup>Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Imperialist* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1904; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 8-9. For Duncan's biography, see Thomas E. Tausky, "Sara Jeanette Duncan," in New, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 97-104; Marian Fowler, *Redney: A Life of Sara Jeannette Duncan* (Toronto: Anansi, 1983); Misao Dean, *A Different Point of View: Sara Jeannette Duncan* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

imperialism. In the celebration of the Queen's Birthday, Canadian nationalism was acted out in an imperial context.

For English-Canadian novelists, the Boer War served as another example of the expression of Canadian nationalism combined with imperialism. Canadian imperialists believed that Canadian participation in Great Britain's conflict with the Boers (Afrikaners) in South Africa between 1898 and 1902 demonstrated Canada's maturity as a nation.<sup>61</sup> Although Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier was initially reluctant to support the war, the Canadian government equipped and financed two contingents of Canadian volunteers, each consisting of about a thousand men. In addition to these official units, over five thousand additional Canadians entered the conflict on behalf of the British in a variety of ways, including joining privately financed units and the British army. Laurier was reluctant to send troops to aid the British military effort for the same reason that English-Canadian imperialists were in favor of the endeavor. Laurier feared that this action would lead to future entanglements in imperial difficulties; the imperialists, on the other hand, believed that it was necessary for Canada to begin to participate in imperial conflicts in order to prove their ability to participate in an Imperial Federation.<sup>62</sup>

English-Canadian novelists largely concurred with the imperialists and depicted Canadian participation in the Boer War as an example of

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<sup>61</sup>Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 19, 63; Donald M. Schurman, "Writing About War," in *Writing About Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History*, ed. John A. Schultz (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1990), 239.

<sup>62</sup>Laurier was sensitive to nation-wide opposition, especially in French Canada, to spending Canadian money on a war that was not a direct threat to Canadian interests. See Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 16-48.

imperial solidarity.<sup>63</sup> In one turn-of-the-century novel about British Columbia, the admirable young man who did not win the love of the heroine joined Strathcona's Horse, one of the Canadian regiments formed in response to Great Britain's call for troops for the Boer War. He served heroically until he lost his life while leading his men in a charge. He was depicted as a man whose sacrifice benefited Canada and the Empire. In the concluding lines of the novel, one of his friends reflected that "the blood spilt by that brave man of Strathcona's Horse will help to keep Canada for ever green in the heart of the British Empire."<sup>64</sup> At the turn of the century, English Canadian nationalist imperialists believed that the lives that Canadians gave in the service of the Empire in South Africa enhanced Canada's prestige within the Empire. The Boer War was seen as a nation-building event, because the successful participation of Canadian troops in an imperial war indicated that Canada had come of age as a nation. Imperialists believed that Canadian ability to give aid to Great Britain proved that they were no longer a dependent colony.

Novelists and nationalists saw the sacrifice and service of these gallant young Canadians as proof that Canada had come of age as a nation and deserved to take its place as an equal within the Empire. This linkage of Canadian national development with continuing ties to the Empire was most clearly articulated by members of the Imperial Federation League, formed in 1884, and the British Empire League after 1894. These organizations had extensive political and cultural influence because so much of their membership was from Canada's social, intellectual, and

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<sup>63</sup>Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 39; Morton, *Military History of Canada*, 117.

<sup>64</sup>Julia W. Henshaw, *Why Not Sweetheart?* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901), 246.

political elite, including as many as 60 members of Parliament in 1888. Nor were these men the only advocates of an imperialist destiny for Canada. Their ideas were shared, defined, and conveyed by the intellectual and literary communities of urban Canada, including writers of fiction.<sup>65</sup>

One novelist, an Ontario judge who wrote under the pseudonym of Christopher Oakes, argued that Canada could only attain full national development and prosperity within the British Empire. In Oakes's 1890 novel, a Canadian Senator on a fact-finding tour to the West fell into conversation with an avowed Imperial Federationist in Winnipeg. The Imperial Federationist used a familial analogy to describe the benefits of Imperial Federation for Canada. He compared his own success as a partner within his father's firm to the failure of a friend who attempted to open a business by himself. This friend had to sell his business to a firm that was his father's business rival and he now worked for that company in a position inferior to that which he could have had in his father's concern. The parallels with national issues are obvious here, with the father's company standing for Great Britain and the rival firm for the United States. The Canadian Imperial Federationist used this analogy to argue that Canada would attain an honored position within the British Empire, but to leave it would probably lead to failure for the nation. The imperialist character concluded: "When I think of . . . what we have achieved and what we may yet achieve, as a mighty part of a mighty Empire. . . . When I think of the honored position which Canada will, if she is wise, in a few years occupy, within the British Empire, and of the other alternative destinies within her

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<sup>65</sup>Berger, *Sense of Power*, 3-5, 135; Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 7-8.

reach, I am an Imperial Federationist every time!"<sup>66</sup> This young man believed that in the future, Canada would become a main economic support for the Empire and would find her own national greatness in doing so. The continuing nervousness about possible American domination also flavored the young Canadian's declarations about Imperial Federation, indicating that this was an important factor in English-Canadian enthusiasm for the idea.

In the late nineteenth century, many English Canadians believed that when their nation matured, by gaining population and producing additional wealth through manufacturing and agriculture, it would take its place as an equal in an Imperial Federation of Great Britain and its other former colonies. One writer, pretending to look backward from the year 1983, predicted that by that time the danger of American annexation of Canada would be at an end. His narrator declared that:

They could only annex us by so improving their constitution as to make it plainly very much superior to ours. . . . At present the chances are all the other way. The only sort of union that is quite likely to come about is the joining by the Americans of the United Empire, or Confederation of all English-speaking nations, with which we have been connected for some years.<sup>67</sup>

This portrait of the future went beyond the expectation that Canadians would be preserved from American aggression by the protection of Great Britain. In this vision, Canada has so advanced in power and prestige that it has taken its place within a United Empire to which a disorganized, impoverished United States seeks entry. This hope for the future was at

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<sup>66</sup>Christopher Oakes, *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* (Toronto: National Publishing Company, 1890; CIHM 30422), 26-27. The identification of Oakes is from a column on "Canadian Books and Authors," *Books and Notions* 9 (March 1893): 7.

<sup>67</sup>Centennius, *Dominion in 1983*, in *Other Canadas*, 312.

odds with the state of the American-Canadian relationship in the late nineteenth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century, some English-speaking Canadians recognized the growing wealth and power of the United States and began to advocate strategies that would allow Canada to share in this prosperity. Most popular among these were the options of commercial union, which would have allowed Canada to retain its political independence while lowering tariff barriers between it and the United States, and annexation, which indicated a political union in which Canada would be absorbed by the United States. Those who advocated these measures believed that Canada's ability to remain an independent nation was hampered by its geography and its racial character. They believed that the division between French and English would ultimately result in the sundering of Canada and that the distribution of Canada's population in a narrow east-west band along the American border encouraged commerce and political union with the United States rather than among Canadians. Some, including British-born Goldwin Smith, believed that the union of Canada with the United States was a more practical beginning to a union of English-speaking peoples worldwide. Annexationists believed that joining the United States was much more possible and practical than the idea of Imperial Federation.<sup>68</sup>

English-Canadian authors of fiction did not approve of the arguments for annexation or any other type of union with the United States. While the ideas of the imperialists found much sympathy among writers of fiction,

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<sup>68</sup>Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1891); also see Frank H. Underhill, *The Image of Confederation* (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1964), 27-33; Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?*, 44-49; Thompson and Randall, *Canada and the United States*, 60-62.

authors ridiculed the annexationists and dismissed their ideas. One reason for this may be that, as historians J. L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer argue, annexationist sentiment was a matter of “the purse and political advantage, seldom of the heart.”<sup>69</sup> In contrast, English-speaking Canadians felt a loyalty to the Empire that went beyond practical politics into the realm of familial loyalty. Such deeply held beliefs were far more suited to being expressed in fiction than the economic arguments generally advanced by the annexationists. In addition, English-Canadian novelists were overwhelmingly either British emigrants or descended from British emigrants.<sup>70</sup> Such people could not countenance the idea of deserting their imperial heritage for mere monetary or political gain. Their identity was based on a British heritage that they believed would be lost by becoming part of the United States.

Some Canadian imperialists and authors of fiction believed that Canada’s independence from the United States was also critical to the future of the British Empire as a whole. In the late nineteenth century, Canadian imperialists believed that their young, vigorous nation would be able to avert the decline and fall that they saw before the British Empire. By the end of the nineteenth century people from all parts of the British Empire had begun to fear that the Empire was sick at its heart. Though this conviction became especially strong after the Boer War, a conflict that revealed the physical inadequacy of British troops, the theme of the

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<sup>69</sup>Granatstein and Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse*, 20. Examples of fictional disregard for annexation include: Brown, *She Might Have Done Better*, 2: 162; Robert Wilson, *Never Give Up; or, Life in the Lower Provinces* (Saint John, New Brunswick: Daily News Steam Job Office, 1878; CIHM 32337), 276; Thomas B. Smith, *Young Lion of the Woods; or, A Story of Early Colonial Days* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1889; CIHM 15222), 119, 144.

<sup>70</sup>See footnote #3 for biographical data on English-Canadian authors.

decadence and effeminacy of the imperial center began to be seen as early as the 1880s.<sup>71</sup> In the face of this internal threat, many believed that the white colonies of settlement would prove the salvation of the Empire because they produced people who were more physically and mentally fit than those who spent their lives in the cities of Great Britain. In Australia, this belief in the colonies of settlement expressed itself in the myth of the Coming Man, the truly virile Australian who would save the Empire and individual Englishmen from their own effeminacy.<sup>72</sup> Canadians, however, saw themselves as the true heirs and best regenerators of the Empire. This vision was reinforced by their belief in themselves as a Northern nation, with all the purity of spirit and flesh that implied. In the minds of many English Canadians, Canada would become both the savior and the center of the British Empire of the future.<sup>73</sup>

Canadian imperialists believed, with Lorne Murchison, the hero of *The Imperialist*, that "In the scrolls of the future it is already written that the centre of the Empire must shift—and where, if not to Canada?"<sup>74</sup> They feared that the United States might step into the power vacuum if Canada's

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<sup>71</sup>P. J. Marshall, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 59-60; Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 33, 230; Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 436-438; Carter F. Hanson, "'Working' in the West: The Canadian Prairies as Playground in Late-Victorian Literature," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31 (Winter 2001): 660.

<sup>72</sup>Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, 3, 126, 129, 165.

<sup>73</sup>R. Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Responses to the Canadian Prairies* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 74; Kaufmann, "Condemned to Rootlessness," 127; Allan Smith, "American Culture and the Concept of Mission in Nineteenth Century English Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1971), 178-180; Carl Berger, "The True North Strong and Free," in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 17.

<sup>74</sup>Duncan, *Imperialist*, 262. See also Berger, *Sense of Power*, 126.



continuing membership in the Empire did not provide an alternative heir to British power. Canadian authors used familial metaphors to express their conviction that Canada was destined to become more than the equal of Great Britain within the imperial framework. Sara Jeannette Duncan's character, Lorne Murchison, made this argument during a trip to London, England. He was discussing Canada's position in the Empire with a young Englishman:

“Doesn't there come a time in the history of most families, when the old folks look to the sons and daughters to keep them in touch with the times? Why shouldn't a vigorous policy of Empire be conceived by its younger nations—who have the ultimate resources to carry it out? . . .”

“England isn't superannuated yet, Murchison.”

“Not yet. Please God she never will be. But she isn't as young as she was, and . . . coming here as an outsider, it does seem to me that it's from the outside that any sort of helpful change in the conditions of this country has got to come.”

The nineteenth-century historian, economist, political scientist and humorist Stephen Leacock had described the Great Britain/Canadian relationship in similar terms, comparing England to an aged and feeble farmer whose sons had arrived at maturity. This led him, as it did Duncan's character, to the conclusion that “the boys have got to step right in and manage the farm.”<sup>75</sup> The young imperialist Lorne Murchison believed, as did many non-fictional English Canadians, that it was important to make sure Canada became as strong as possible so as to be able to fill the vacuum of power he anticipated would be created by Great Britain's decay. Unless the colonies were so strengthened, he foresaw that Great Britain's imperial power would shift out of the Empire entirely, into the hands of the United States.

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<sup>75</sup>Duncan, *Imperialist*, 137-138. Leacock is quoted in Berger, *Sense of Power*, 261.

The fact that English Canadians did not feel that they had to explain why the shift of imperial power to the United States would be undesirable indicated the extent to which anti-Americanism and imperialism were intertwined in Canadian nationalism. Canadian imperialism led to a fear of being absorbed by the United States, while their anti-Americanism led Canadians to cling more closely to their imperial connection as protection against the Americans and as a means of differentiating themselves from the Americans.

English-Canadian fiction reflected the interaction of imperialism and anti-Americanism in a variety of ways, beginning with the depiction of the Loyalists who settled in Canada. Canadian writers showed the Loyalists as rejecting the American Revolution out of motives that were simultaneously anti-American and imperialist. Similarly, the arguments for Imperial Federation and against annexation to the United States were equally anti-American and imperialist. Both of these arguments turned around the idea that Canadian national identity could not survive being annexed to the United States, but would be allowed full development within an imperial federation. And the narratives of past and future American invasions of Canada, though obviously anti-American in the way they depicted the Americans as rapacious invaders, were also imperialist in that they depicted the Empire as an important factor in Canada's survival.

English-Canadian authors of fiction frequently combined pro-imperial and anti-American sentiments when they wrote about their nation's history as a source of its future identity. These writers depicted loyalty to the British Empire as a central facet of Canadian identity while simultaneously clinging to the Empire so that they would not become Americans. Imperialism and anti-Americanism reinforced each other in

nineteenth-century English-Canadian concepts of their national identity. In addition to defining themselves through their relationship to their unique landscape, as discussed in chapters two through four, English-Canadian authors imagined their national identity in relationship to these two powerful "Other" nations.

## Chapter 6

### ETHNICITY AND RACE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CANADIAN IDENTITY

Within the past decade Canada has risen from the status of a colony to that of a nation. A national consciousness has developed—that is, a nation has been born. A few years ago Canadian-born children described themselves as English, Irish, Scotch or French, according as their parents or ancestors had come from England, Ireland, Scotland or France. To-day our children boast themselves as Canadians, and the latest arrivals from Austria or Russia help to swell the chorus, “The Maple Leaf Forever.” There has not been sufficient time to develop a fixed Canadian type, but there is a certain indefinite *something* that at once unites us and distinguishes us from all the world besides. Our hearts all thrill in response to the magical phrase— “This Canada of Ours!” We are Canadians.<sup>1</sup>

In 1909 J. S. Woodsworth, the superintendent of the All People’s Mission in Winnipeg, wrote and published the above words in the book that would become one of the most famous piece of literature on immigration in Canada: *Strangers Within Our Gates*. Woodsworth’s was one of the first books to deal with the increasing immigration to Canada of various non-British, non-French ethnic groups, a movement that began to swell in volume in the 1890s and was the subject of great concern to Canadians in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Yet Woodsworth’s discussion of the effect of immigration on the creation of Canadian identity also reflects earlier concerns about the ability of Canadians to subsume their racial and ethnic identifications within an

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<sup>1</sup>J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates; or, Coming Canadians*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Methodist Mission Rooms, 1909), 13.

overarching Canadian national identity. His reference to English, Scottish, Irish, and French as important markers of identity for various people living within Canada during the late nineteenth century is consistent with the concerns expressed by Canadian writers of fiction in English in the period between Confederation and the turn of the century.

Even before the influx of non-British, non-French ethnic groups that began in 1896, Canadians writing fiction in English worried about whether it would be possible to combine disparate ethnic groups to create a distinctively Canadian identity. Their fiction frequently contained references to what they considered the diversity of Canadian society, the English, Irish, Scottish, French, and First Nations peoples who made up the Canadian community. They also attempted to describe the unification of these groups within Canada by describing their combination in Canadian communities, in Canadian marriages, and in Canadian people. Ethnically and racially mixed communities, marriages, and characters were common in fiction written in English in late-nineteenth-century Canada. They appeared as part of the writers' attempts to define Canadian identity as based upon the combination of these specific ethnic and racial groups. For these writers, this amalgamation of peoples was a critical element in the creation of Canadian national identity.

Despite this ongoing concern, most historians of Canadian ethnicity have portrayed English-Canadian society in the 1870s, 1880s, and even the 1890s, as culturally unified. They describe this period as an era when non-British immigration had not yet expanded and the Scottish and Irish within Canada were beginning to lose their ethnic distinctiveness and assimilate

into the English-speaking mainstream society.<sup>2</sup> In current writings on ethnicity in Canada, the period between Confederation and 1896 seems to be a peaceful era of scant immigration in which British Canada was culturally unified and worried only about assimilating French Canada. The supposed tranquillity of the period was such that many historians believe that English-speaking Canadians did not write substantially about the concerns raised by immigration before Woodsworth's book in 1909.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, the period between 1896 and the First World War has attracted overwhelming attention from historians of ethnicity in Canada.<sup>4</sup> During this period the first large-scale immigrations of non-British ethnic groups took place. These migrations were actively encouraged by Clifford Sifton, who was appointed Minister of the Interior by Wilfrid Laurier in

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<sup>2</sup>J. M. Bumstead, "Scottishness and Britishness in Canada, 1790-1914," in *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory: Scotia and Nova Scotia, c. 1700-1990*, ed. Marjory Harper and Michael E. Vance (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999), 100-103; J. R. Miller, "Anti-Catholicism in Canada: From the British Conquest to the Great War," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1830*, ed. Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 38; Mark McGowan, "The De-Greening of the Irish: Toronto's Irish-Catholic Press, Imperialism and the Forging of a New Identity, 1887-1914," *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers* (1989): 118-145; Michael Cottrell, "St. Patrick's Day Parades in Nineteenth-Century Toronto: A Study of Immigrant Adjustment and Elite Control," *Historie Sociale/Social History* 25 (May 1992): 57-73. In addition, Gregory S. Kealey argues, in *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), that with two exceptions, violence between Orange and Green Irish in Toronto was ritualized and "showed more bravado than blood." (p. 117)

<sup>3</sup>Dirk Hoerder, "Ethnic Studies in Canada from the 1880s to 1962: A Historiographical Perspective and Critique," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 24 (1994): 1.

<sup>4</sup>For example, Howard Palmer focuses on this period in *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982). Other overviews of the reaction of the host society in Canada to these immigrants include: Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990). This point also becomes clear in overviews of Canadian ethnic history, such as Franca Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History, Canada's Ethnic Group Series, booklet # 22* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1997); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1997, Rev. ed.* (Toronto: Dundrun Press, 1997).

1896. Sifton's policy of actively recruiting settlers from Eastern Europe and anywhere else he could find able agriculturists changed the face of the Canadian West, bringing Ukrainians, Germans, Russians, Poles, and other "men in sheepskin coats" to populate the Canadian prairie provinces. Although the actual numbers of such immigrants remained small compared to continuing British immigration, the rapidly increasing nature of such immigration, the visibility of these unfamiliar groups, and their concentration within western and urban Canada, led many Canadians of British heritage to wonder if these diverse immigrants could ever adapt to British institutions and be "Canadianized." Because English-speaking Canadians identified so strongly with their imperial heritage, as discussed in the previous chapter, the assimilation of relatively large numbers of British immigrants was of less concern than that of Galician, Russian, Jewish, and Italian immigrants. The rapidly-increasing nature of this immigration also led to concern among English-speaking Canadians, causing them to worry that they would be overrun within their own country if the trend continued.<sup>5</sup>

In the period between 1867 and the turn of the century, however, English-speaking Canadian writers were more concerned with the integration of the various British ethnic groups with each other and with

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<sup>5</sup>Woodsworth, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 15, 22-24. In the period between 1900 and 1907, Canada received approximately 440,000 immigrants from the British Isles; 55,000 Galicians, 43,000 Italians, 23,000 Russians, and 37,000 immigrants described as "Hebrew." These immigrants, and others, including 332,000 from the United States, were in addition to Canada's total 1901 population of approximately 5,370,000. Between 1901 and 1907, Galician immigration, for example, increased from 4,000 people per year to 15,000. Galician was the late-nineteenth-century term for people who came from the Ukraine. Also see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 147-152; Douglas Cole, "Canada's 'Nationalistic' Imperialists," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (August 1970): 45-48; on the racial assumptions of imperialists and English-Canadian unease about non-British immigration.

the French, and even First Nations peoples, than they were with the problem of even more disparate ethnic groups. In the decades prior to 1900, English Canadians hoped that French- and English-Canadian cultures could be harmoniously blended into a Canadian identity. From this point of view, the greatest race problem in Canadian society was the current cultural and social division between English and French speakers. Many contemporary commentators, such as the Frenchman André Siegfried, described this as Canada's "race question."<sup>6</sup> Writers of fiction in English attempted to bridge this gap by depicting marital unions between the two groups and by writing about characters whose heritage included both French and English.

English-Canadian authors also attempted to include Canada's First Nation peoples in the imagined community of the Canadian nation.<sup>7</sup> While many anthropologists and politicians expected Canada's native peoples to die out and thereby remove themselves from the population, English-speaking Canadian writers attempted to include the native heritage of wilderness skill and adaptation to the Canadian climate within their national identity.<sup>8</sup> Again, they did so by including characters and marriages of mixed race in their fiction. Such marriages and characters delimited the

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<sup>6</sup>André Siegfried, *The Race Question in Canada* (London, 1907; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966).

<sup>7</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). The currently most correct term for referring to this ethnic group in Canada is First Nations. Unlike Native Americans, the First Nations peoples of Canada object to the term "Indian." I have, however, continued to use "Indian" to refer to First Nations peoples as portrayed in late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian fiction, largely in the interests of historical accuracy. As the reader will see in the course of the chapter, Indian was as polite a term as existed at the time to refer to these peoples. To refer to Indian characters in these novels as First Nations peoples would be anachronistic and ahistorical.

<sup>8</sup>See Chapter Three: "Wilderness and the Canadian Identity." Also see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).



boundaries of national identity as writers included those groups that could be imagined as part of the nation and excluded those that could not.

Immigrants from the United States were the most notable group excluded from this imagined Canadian identity. Substantial numbers of Americans did move north across the border, including 65,000 New Englanders and New Yorkers between 1791 and 1812 and over 243,000 between 1896 and 1914. Authors preferred to concentrate upon the British elements in their national heritage, a preference justified by the volume of British immigration, which, in the 1851 census, outnumbered American seven to one.<sup>9</sup> The lack of discussion of American immigration within Canadian novels was also consistent with the anti-Americanist tendencies in the creation of Canadian identity that were discussed in the previous chapter. In order to establish their own national identity, English-speaking Canadian authors were careful to articulate the ways in which they were different from Americans. Admissions of the importance of immigration from the United States in the population of Canada would have hampered these authors in their attempt to define Canada by its difference from the "American Other."<sup>10</sup> With the exception of the United Empire Loyalists, authors of fiction in English seldom discussed American immigrants in general terms or as admirable main characters.

When authors did include American characters, they explicitly articulated how these characters differed from Canadians. One of these

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<sup>9</sup>John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 17, 27, 77-78.

<sup>10</sup>See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 5-6, on the importance of an imagined Other which allows for the formation of a national identity through the identification of what one is not; J. L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 7-8, on the Canadian heritage of defining themselves as not Americans.

distinctions, as discussed in the previous chapter, was that Canadians had remained loyal to the British monarchy when Americans rebelled. Another important discrepancy between Americans and Canadians was over this issue of civility. The aspect of American uncouthness that most upset English-speaking Canadians was the forwardness of American women. Canadian authors frequently described American women as pushy and unfeminine.<sup>11</sup> Canadians believed that their British heritage encouraged them to preserve a gentility that was lacking in American life. Thus one of the central concerns of Canadians writing fiction in English was the problem of how to combine the various British groups—Irish, English, and Scottish—in order to preserve their virtues while creating a unique Canadian identity.

Late-nineteenth-century Canadians did not assume that all English-speaking Canadians were a united cultural group. For them, Scottish, English, and Irish immigrants and their descendants formed separate races, all of which would have to be combined somehow and then united with the French, in order to create a distinctive Canadian nationality. To paraphrase the American scholar Matthew Jacobson, in the late nineteenth century, English-speaking Canadians discussed people within a system of difference within which one could be both British and racially distinct from other Britons.<sup>12</sup>

These overlapping concepts of racial division were based upon definitions of "race" that were not the same as those of the late twentieth

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<sup>11</sup>Examples can be found in: J. Shinnick, *The Banker's Daughter; or, Her First and Last Ball* (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, 1891; CIHM 13611), 71; [Mrs. Dobbin], "Thos." *A Simple Canadian Story* (Montreal: Lovell, 1878; CIHM 32580), 113.

<sup>12</sup>Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 6.

century. While the English-speaking world in the late nineteenth century did use the term to separate people of different skin colors, they also used "race" when attempting to differentiate between various "white" groups. Often, "races" were separated from each other based upon national heritage. The term "race" was used to describe any group of people who were "descended from a common stock." Such a definition included distinctions made between groups within the "white race" as well as differentiations between "other races." This use of "race" to describe many levels of biological distinctions was extended to groups that twentieth-century commentators describe as culturally-based "ethnic groups." Thus Victorian ideas of racial difference included both the discussion of "the British race" and the discussion of racial distinctions, including Anglo-Saxon and Celt, within the British race.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars of Canadian ethnic history have not adequately recognized and explored this late-nineteenth-century view of the British as made up of separate races. Many works on ethnicity in Canada treat the nineteenth-century British as a single ethnic group.<sup>14</sup> Those scholars who do discuss

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<sup>13</sup>Discussions of the nineteenth-century concept of race include Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 2-7, 39-90; Joseph Levitt, "Race and Nation in Canadian Anglophone Historiography," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 8 (Spring 1981): 1-16; Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), xiv; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 48; Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). From this point forward, I will be using the term "race" within its Victorian meaning, although I will no longer set it off within quotation marks.

<sup>14</sup>In their introduction to *"Coming Canadians": An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988), Jean Burnet and Howard Palmer decline to discuss the French and the British, whom they identify as the charter groups who shaped the institutions to which other immigrants had to adapt. Examples of the discussion of the British as a unified ethnic group include: Helen Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, especially in Chapter 3, "British Immigration Transforms the Colonies," 29-46; Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 168-169; Jean Burnet, "Introduction" in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: an Exploration in Women's History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: The Multicultural Society of Ontario, 1986), 1-3; A. Ross McCormack, "Networks Among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society, 1900-1914," in *Immigration in*

Scots, Irish, and English as separate groups concentrate on these groups in earlier periods of Canadian history. Most frequently, scholars discuss the nativist response to the Irish in the mid-nineteenth century and the Scottish immigration of the late 1700s and early 1800s.<sup>15</sup> Despite evidence of distinctive groups within the category of "British immigrants" as late as the turn of the century, scholars of Canada's ethnic heritage have been slow to examine the ways in which these British groups were regarded within English-Canadian society between 1867 and the turn of the century. For example, Dirk Hoerder, who examined Canadian fiction about immigration in an effort to trace the relationship between scholarly and wider public interest, maintains that between 1880 and 1905 "immigrants hardly made a debut at all" in Canadian literature. Yet he follows the observation with an example of a novel that "described the 'insularity' of settlers from the British Isles, Scots, English, and Irish, whose cultural distinctiveness and ethnic chauvinism as yet precluded a monocultural charter group stance."<sup>16</sup> At work here is the anachronistic twentieth-century assumption that all British cultures were similar enough that they could be regarded and discussed as one people.

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*Canada: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Gerald Tulchinsky (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), 203-222.

<sup>15</sup>For example, see Scott W. See, "'An unprecedented influx': Nativism and Irish Famine Immigration to Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 30 (Winter 2000): 429-454; A. J. B. Johnston, "Nativism in Nova Scotia: Anti-Irish Ideology in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century British Colony," in *The Irish in Atlantic Canada, 1780-1900*, ed. Thomas P. Power (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1991), 13-22; Donald Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984). Works on early Scottish immigration include J. M. Bumstead, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1982); Marianne McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

<sup>16</sup>Hoerder, "Ethnic Studies in Canada," 3. The novel cited is Mary Esther MacGregor (pseud. Marian Keith), *The Silver Maple: A Tale of Upper Canada* (New York, 1906 or 1908).

Understandably, confusion arises because of the late-nineteenth-century English-speaking Canadian habit of discussing themselves as a British people, following British laws and institutions and drawing on a British cultural heritage. This was, however, only one aspect of English-Canadian ideas about ethnicity. They saw no inconsistency between the idea of a British imperial identity and the seemingly contradictory consciousness of the various British ethnic groups as distinct from each other. Unlike the English within Great Britain, who tended to “use the words British and English indistinguishably,” Canadians used the term British to refer to all those within the British Isles and their descendants throughout the empire.<sup>17</sup> They did not equate the British Empire with the expansion of England. While English-speaking Canadians had a very high opinion of the British Empire and the British race, their opinion of English immigrants to Canada was not positive.

In contrast, English-speaking Canadians wrote positively about the Scottish element in their national heritage.<sup>18</sup> Many Canadian writers, especially those of Scottish descent, created characters whose sense of themselves combined Canadian and Scottish national affiliations. As one such character, Alan Campbell, said of himself, “I was born within sight of Ben Nevis, but as I remember no country but this, I consider myself a

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<sup>17</sup>Phillip Buckner, “Whatever Happened to the British Empire?” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 4 (1993): 9. Also see Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12; Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6, 49.

<sup>18</sup>J. M. Bumstead, “Scottishness and Britishness in Canada, 1790-1914,” in *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory: Scotia and Nova Scotia, c. 1700-1990*, ed. Marjory Harper and Michael E. Vance (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999), 101.

Canadian."<sup>19</sup> In this, he was like another character who thrilled to Scottish ballads, "a lover of his Scotland still, though he had come to his adopted country in his early childhood—a loyal Canadian, but Scotch to the core."<sup>20</sup> Neither of these characters, nor their creators, felt that there was a contradiction between an emotional loyalty to Scotland and the identification of themselves as Canadians. Had these characters felt the need to qualify their Canadian identity, they would surely have called themselves Scottish Canadians, rather than English Canadians.<sup>21</sup>

The various ethnic groups who spoke English in nineteenth-century Canada would almost certainly have not described themselves as English Canadians. Indeed, this twentieth-century designation for those Canadians who are not French can be quite misleading when applied to late-nineteenth-century Canadians. Many of those who wrote fiction in the English language would have described themselves as Scottish Canadians, others might have been English Canadians, in that they were from England or descended from English immigrants, and some would have described themselves as Irish Canadians.

More commonly, those who spoke and wrote in English in late-nineteenth-century Canada simply called themselves Canadians. They felt no need to differentiate themselves from French Canadians by creating the concept of English versus French Canadians. For these English-speaking Canadians, their identity was *the* Canadian identity into which the French

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<sup>19</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *Lost and Won: A Canadian Romance*, In *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* 7 (January 1875): 20.

<sup>20</sup>Millie Magwood, *The Year that Followed (Sequel to Pine Lake)* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907), 94.

<sup>21</sup>This would also have been the ethnic affiliation of one of the authors, Agnes Maule Machar, who was the daughter of Scottish Presbyterian parents.

would be absorbed. In fact the term English-Canadian was not used in Canadian fiction written in English until 1898. This first use of the term was in S. Frances Harrison's novel, *The Forest of Bourg-Marie*, in which it is used to refer to English-speakers as a group distinct from the Franco-Canadians (Harrison's term) who are the main focus of the novel.<sup>22</sup>

The late appearance of the term English-Canadian also indicates the extent to which these English-speaking Canadians still defined their identities by their specific British ethnic groups. Based on his reading in immigrant diaries and letters of settlers in the Canadian West between 1870 and 1914, the historian J. M. Bumstead notes:

Historians talk of these immigrants as "British." But in the documents I have always been struck by the paucity of the use of the term "British" to refer to customs, culture, or the nationality of one's friends and neighbours. The letter writers and diarists are far more likely to use national or even local labels—"a Scot from Glasgow," "a Cockney from London"—than a more all inclusive term. "British" is used far more often in formulistic ways: "British pluck," for example.<sup>23</sup>

These Canadian immigrants had a dual sense of their own identity. Their ethnic identity was specific to their heritage, Scottish, Irish, or English, yet they also included themselves in the British Empire, with all the mythic virtues this implied.

This dual attitude toward the British Empire and British ethnic groups clearly appeared in nineteenth-century Canadian fiction. An excellent example of this is the life and the Canadian fiction of Sara Jeanette Duncan. Duncan's father had immigrated to Canada from Scotland in 1852

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<sup>22</sup>S. Frances Harrison, *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* (Toronto: George M. Morang, 1898; CIHM 05388), 27, 33-34.

<sup>23</sup>Bumstead, "Scottishness and Britishness," 101-102.

and become a successful merchant in Brantford, Ontario. Duncan grew up in Ontario and spent most of her career as a journalist there and in Montreal. Then, in 1890, when she was twenty-eight years old, she undertook a round-the-world voyage that she wrote about for the *Montreal Star*. While in India, she met Everard Cotes, then a Calcutta museum official, and married him in December of 1890. She spent the remainder of her life in India and was living in Simla when she wrote her most Canadian novel, *The Imperialist*. The ease with which Duncan relocated herself and her career from one British colony to another suggests the strength of imperial ties in late-nineteenth-century Canada.<sup>24</sup> Yet throughout *The Imperialist* Duncan portrayed Canada as a unique place within the Empire.

Within the pages of *The Imperialist*, Duncan showed herself capable of considering the British within Canada in two contrasting ways: both as an aspect of Canada's imperial heritage and as made up of disparate racial or ethnic groups. On the one hand, she stressed Canada's imperial heritage and the immigrants who reinforced it:

They come in couples and in companies from those little imperial islands, bringing the crusted qualities of the old blood bottled there so long, and sink with grateful absorption into the wide bountiful stretches of the furthest countries. They have much to take, but they give themselves; and so it comes about that the Empire is summed up in the race, and the flag flies for its ideals.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Thomas E. Tausky, "Sara Jeannette Duncan," in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), 97.

<sup>25</sup>Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Imperialist* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1904; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 247-248. Other examples of this type of discussion of Canada's British heritage occur in Thomas B. Smith, *Young Lion of the Woods; or, A Story of Early Colonial Days* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1889; CIHM 15222), 143-147; Agnes Maule Machar, *Down the River to the Sea* (New York: Home Books Co., 1894; CIHM 09603), 56, 103; Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (1899; facsimilie reprint, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 26.



In this passage, Duncan discussed the British heritage in Canada, and throughout the Empire, in unitary terms. In doing so, she exemplified one nineteenth-century tendency, that of describing the British as a unified race who were bringing their racial heritage of liberty to the rest of the globe.<sup>26</sup> She also emphasized the role of Canada as a place where this British heritage can come to its full fruition.

Yet Duncan also displayed the nineteenth-century tendency to view the British as made up of three separate racial groups: the English, Irish, and Scots.<sup>27</sup> The previous quote appeared in the midst of Duncan's description of two Scottish ladies who had just arrived in Canada. For this child of Scottish immigrants, the Scots were the best example of Canada's British heritage. Indeed, she made a distinction between her main characters, the Murchison family, who are so fully adapted to Canada that the reader has to pick out their Scottish ancestry from clues such as their attendance at the Presbyterian Church, and the Milburns, who were something of an anomaly in the town's society because they insisted on clinging to English propriety and exclusiveness. Duncan's novel reflected the late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian focus upon the Scots and the English as the primary British ethnic groups in the formation of a Canadian character.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>For a further discussion of this idea of the British imperial mission to civilize the less fortunate races, see Berger, *Sense of Power*, 226-230.

<sup>27</sup>Canadians writing in English seldom mentioned the Welsh as a separate nationality within the British isles. One reason for this may be the lack of a strong Welsh nationalist movement prior to the twentieth century. This interpretation was suggested by Professor Terry McDonald of the Southampton Institute in England, after a presentation of this chapter as a paper at the conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, November 17, 2001. For background on the definition of "Welshness" see Prys Morgan, "From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 43-100.

<sup>28</sup>English immigrants were the main focus of Lily Dougall, *What Necessity Knows* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1893; CIHM 05750); of W. H. Brown, *She Might Have Done*

English-speaking Canadian authors rarely focused upon the Irish as main characters in their novels. Writers were also reluctant to include the Irish as part of the typical Canadian character's ethnic background.<sup>29</sup> The Irish were largely reduced to background characters in novels. They appeared as comic relief, as servants to the main characters, or as aspects of a village scene that indicated the way Canada was constructed out of mix of nationalities.<sup>30</sup> It would be overly simplistic to assume that this was the result of the ideological complications of imagining a Catholic people as part of a Protestant nationality. Irish Catholics actually appeared more frequently in Canadian fiction than did Irish Protestants, despite the reality that more Irish Protestants came to Canada than did Catholics.<sup>31</sup>

The popular stereotype of the Irish Catholic may be one reason for both the Canadian reluctance to include the Irish in their national mix and the authors' use of Irish Catholics when they did write about the Irish. The

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*Better*, 2 vols. (St. Johns, Quebec: News Steam Printing House, 1877; CIHM 03748 & 03749). The Scots were the focus of an even larger number of books, including Margaret Murray Robertson, *Shenac's Work at Home: A Story of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1868; CIHM 28884); Leslie Vaughan, *Charlie Ogilbie: A Romance of Scotland and New Brunswick* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1889; CIHM 25320); Josephine Smith, *Perth-on-the-Tay: A Tale of the Transplanted Highlanders* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Co., 1901); Elizabeth S. MacLeod, *Donalda: A Scottish-Canadian Story* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905).

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, although Irish characters appeared in many novels which will be discussed later in the chapter, the only novel in which Irish immigrants were the primary focus was W. A. C., *Tim Doolan, The Irish Emigrant* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1869; CIHM 13409). Tim Doolan was an anomalous figure, in that he and his family were portrayed as Irish Catholics who had converted to Protestantism, and who emigrated because they were being persecuted by their Catholic neighbors in Ireland.

<sup>30</sup>One example of such a village description that included both Catholic and Protestant Irish as parts of the Canadian scene occurred in R. & K. M. Lizars, *Committed to His Charge: A Canadian Chronicle* (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1900; CIHM 09186), 36-38. Examples of Irish servants appeared in Elizabeth Walshe, *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1863; CIHM 18077); J. E., *The Old and the New Home: A Canadian Tale* (Toronto: James Cambell and Son, 1870; CIHM 06368).

<sup>31</sup>Donald Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

negative aspects of the stereotype, which portrayed the Irish as illiterate, drunken savages, would have discouraged English-speaking Canadians from including them in a racial mixture that was intended to create a civilized national group. Yet the amusement value of the same stereotype led some writers to include Irish Catholic characters in their novels.<sup>32</sup> In the absence of such an easy characterization, writers of fiction treated Irish Protestants as simply British, without recognizing that their residence in Ireland gave them a separate identity.

Despite the Canadian attachment to the idea of themselves as a British society, they were far from fond of the idea of English immigrants in Canada. As Susan Jackel notes, "the appellation 'English' was not always a term of compliment in Canadian usage, though 'British' usually was." In Jackel's opinion, Canadians disliked the English because of their insistence on genteel behavior and the class distinctions it upheld.<sup>33</sup> This attitude was exemplified in Lily Dougall's description of an English settlement in the Province of Quebec. Like Sara Jeannette Duncan, Dougall was a Canadian-born daughter of Scottish immigrant parents.<sup>34</sup> These English immigrants, in Dougall's words:

prided themselves upon adhering strictly to rules of behaviour which in their mother-country had already fallen into the grave of outgrown ideas. Their little society was, indeed, a

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<sup>32</sup>On stereotypes of the Irish Catholics in both the British Empire and the United States, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); 52-56; Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity*, 152-153; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, rev. ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

<sup>33</sup>Susan Jackel, ed. *A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), xx-xxi.

<sup>34</sup>Lorraine McMullen, "Lily Dougall," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 85-86.

curious thing, in which the mincing propriety of the Old World had wed itself right loyally to the stern necessity of the New.<sup>35</sup>

This was a portrait of the English as an ethnic group who were willing to give up anything rather than the trappings of upper-class status. The English in the settlement, including the central characters in the novel, were mainly upper-class people who had fallen upon hard economic times in England and emigrated to Canada in order to improve their family finances. These were the type of people who could look down upon an educated man who chose to work as a butcher, in spite of the fact that the men of the settlement butchered their own beef and pork. Although they were willing to do the work necessary to survive in Canada, it was essential to their self-definition that they not admit to themselves or others that they had compromised their standards to this extent. By not fully accepting the realities of Canadian life, they had shown themselves incapable of truly becoming Canadian. Their lack of desire to adapt to Canada was additionally signaled by their practice of referring to England as “home,” even if they had never been there.

More commonly, writers of fiction depicted the English as unable to survive the rigors of Canadian life, as in Agnes Maule Machar’s novel *For King and Country: A Story of 1812*. Machar was another descendent of Scottish immigrants.<sup>36</sup> In one passage in her novel, the narrator comments upon a healthy Canadian girl as she looked at a portrait of her English mother:

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<sup>35</sup>Lily Dougall, *What Necessity Knows* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1893; CIHM 05750), 97-98.

<sup>36</sup>Carole Gerson, “Agnes Maule Machar,” *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 221.

The appearance of excessive delicacy and fragility which characterised the portrait was not nearly to the same extent perceptible in the living face, on which the extreme fairness and faint bloom of the picture were replaced by tints more suggestive of health and freshness. . . . Moreover, the rounded figure of the girl . . . had a firm elasticity about it that could never have belonged to the original of the portrait—Lilias Meredith's fair young mother,—who, transplanted to a rough and uncongenial atmosphere, had drooped and died some twenty years before. . . . But Lilias . . . had grown up in her free, open country life . . . blossoming into a womanhood as vigorous in its apparent fragility as the graceful Canadian columbine that bloomed on her native rocks.<sup>37</sup>

This description of an Englishwoman and her daughter suggested that the English inability to adapt to Canada was not racial, but rather a product of English civilization. While the mother, with her early training in England, could not survive the rigors of the Canadian climate, her daughter, of the same racial heritage but with no familiarity with English civilities, grew strong in Canada. In such a manner, English-speaking Canadians combined their faith in an English heritage with their disdain for English immigrants within Canada.

Other commentators noted the effect of English civilization and urban life on the lack of success for English immigrants within Canada. In 1909 J. S. Woodsworth opined that the failure of the English was partially due to their lack of adaptability, but also to the general unsuitability of English immigrants for Canadian life. Woodsworth believed that English emigrants were unsuited to Canada because so many of them were the failures of English cities. He felt that Canada needed agricultural

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<sup>37</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *For King and Country: A Story of 1812* (Toronto: Adam, Stevenson & Co., 1874; CIHM 09602), 22-23.

immigrants and that these city failures were no more suited to farming than were upper-class English who clung to their aristocratic dislike of work.<sup>38</sup>

The most common type of unfit Englishman to appear in fiction was the remittance man. Strictly speaking, the remittance man was any young Englishman who received an allowance from home, but in general usage the term "implied a social outcast, an emigrant who had been exiled to the colonies and who was paid to remain there because he was an embarrassment to his family in Britain."<sup>39</sup> English-speaking Canadian authors frequently portrayed such characters in an unfavorable light. In one exemplary piece, "A Typical Tenderfoot: A North-West Story," published in *The Canadian Magazine* in 1899, an idle young Englishman, Bernard Dalton, was sent out to Canada for the relief of his relations. As described in the story, the remittance man "could play cricket a little, ride a little, shoot a little, and drink Scotch and soda a great deal."<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately for his future success in Canada, he knew nothing of the hard manual work necessary for success in colonial life. This dilettantish attitude greatly handicapped his efforts to succeed on the Canadian ranching frontier.

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<sup>38</sup>J. Lee and John H. Thompson, "Ralph Connor and the Canadian Identity," *Queen's Quarterly* 79 (1972): 163; Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*, 51-54.

<sup>39</sup>Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981), 124.

<sup>40</sup>Basil C. D'Easum, "A Typical Tenderfoot: A North-West Story," *The Canadian Magazine* 13 (September 1899): 443, 445. Additional examples of the feckless young Englishman who comes to Canada include [Ellen McGregor] Ross, *A Legend of the Grand Gourbons* (Montreal: A. A. Stephenson, 1873; CIHM 12957), 236; Zero, pseud., *One Mistake: A Manitoban Reminiscence* (Montreal: Canadian Bank Note Company, 1888; CIHM 30578), 8; A. L. O. M., *The Brock Family*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890; CIHM 30197), 116-118; [Margaret] Marshall Saunders, *Daisy* (Philadelphia: Charles H. Banes, n. d.; CIHM 17023), 9-10; Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (Toronto: The Westminster Co., 1898; CIHM 11872), 83.

When authors depicted Englishmen who had successfully adapted to Canadian life, they indicated that it caused the character to decline in the social scale. In an 1886 story by Susie Frances Harrison, the hero described himself:

I am quite a Canadian, of course, though I once was an Englishman. I array myself in strange raiment, thick and woollen, of many colours; my linen is coarse and sometimes superseded by flannel; I wear a cast-off fur cap on my head and moccasins on my feet. I have grown a beard and a fierce mustache. I have made no money and won no friends except the simple settlers around me here.<sup>41</sup>

Although this Englishman has adapted to Canadian life, he does not seem to have improved his financial or class position by emigrating. Becoming Canadian indicated a loss of both national and class identity.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast, Canadian writers portrayed Scottish immigrants as being improved by their association with Canada. In late-nineteenth-century Canadian fiction written in English, the Scots were consistently depicted positively. One example of this reverence for Scots-descended Canadians appeared in a novel about a Scots settlement in Perth, Ontario. So superior were these Canadian Scots that when one young girl from the settlement visited Scotland, matrons wondered how she became so much more attractive and personable than her Scottish relatives. A young Englishman explained:

It is the influence of the new surroundings on the old blood, roaming in the shadows of the primeval forest, clambering over the outcropping Laurentian rocks, sailing in a skiff on the

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<sup>41</sup>Harrison, Susie Frances Riley [Seranus, pseud.] *Crowded Out! and Other Sketches* (Ottawa: Evening Journal Office, 1886; CIHM 06401), 38.

<sup>42</sup>On dress as an indicator of class status, see Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 150-162.

broad, blue St. Lawrence, lifts one above the commonplace. Scotland's lassies are no' to be despised, and Scotland's lassies raised in the new land, where they are not cramped by modelling after worn-out traditions, but develop in natural lines all that made Scotland's womanhood a boast centuries ago—well, earth produces nothing fairer.<sup>43</sup>

Though descended from Scots, this young lady has become Canadian and is shown as being all the better for it. This indicated the writer's belief that the relationship between Scotland and Canada went both ways: the Scots were good for Canada, producing many of her great merchants and political leaders, but Canada has also been good to the Scots by allowing them the freedom to develop to their full potential.<sup>44</sup>

Canadians writing in English emphasized the Scottish heritage as particularly important in the formation of Canadian identity. Canadian writers appropriated many elements of Scottish ethnic identity as typically Canadian. They admired the Scots for their Presbyterian work ethic, their agricultural abilities, and their thriftiness as a people. Many of these qualities, and more obscure Scottish traditions such as the wearing of the kilt and the sport of curling, came to be seen as Canadian characteristics.<sup>45</sup> This incorporation of Scottish symbology into Canadian identity has

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<sup>43</sup>Josephine Smith, *Perth-on-the-Tay: A Tale of the Transplanted Highlanders* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Co., 1901), 178-179. Another example of this type of description of Scots being influenced and improved by their Canadian surroundings can be found in Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Man From Glengarry* (Toronto: Westminster, 1901; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960), xiii.

<sup>44</sup>Politicians such as Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald and his successor Alexander Mackenzie; railroad builder Donald Smith; and wealthy fur traders Simon McTavish, head of the North-West Company, and James McGill, founder of McGill University; are emblematic of the participation of Scots and those of Scottish descent in Canadian economic and political life.

<sup>45</sup>Bumstead, "Scottishness and Britishness," 100. Also see Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," *Acadiensis* 21 (Spring 1992): 5-47.



continued into the twenty-first century. Between 1871 and 1901, however, Scottish immigrants to Canada and those of Scottish descent already in Canada were consistently outnumbered, not only by Irish immigrants and descendants, but also by the English.<sup>46</sup> Thus population statistics cannot explain the predominance of the Scots in Canadian national identity.

One reason for this reverence of the Scots may be the predominance of Scots in the Canadian literary world. Canadian authors of Scots ancestry included: Margaret Murray Robertson, Sara Jeanette Duncan, Ralph Connor, Agnes Maule Machar, William McLennan, Lily Dougall, and Jean Newton McIlwraith.<sup>47</sup> There are many more examples; these are merely those that result from a consideration of the backgrounds of authors discussed in this chapter. Scots had a disproportionate effect upon the intellectual life of nineteenth-century Canada,<sup>48</sup> evidenced in this case by their ubiquity in the writing of fiction. This intellectual prevalence may have resulted in the connection of Scottishness and Canadian national identity. This effect resulted not only from these authors' Scottish backgrounds, but from their tendency to focus upon Scots when they wrote about Canada.

Another factor in the nineteenth-century adoption of a Scottish heritage as part of Canadian identity was the popularity of fiction about Scots

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<sup>46</sup>Woodsworth, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 15.

<sup>47</sup>Lorraine McMullen, "Robertson, Margaret Murray," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 12:904-906; Tausky, "Sara Jeannette Duncan," Michael Hurley, "Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon)," *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 92, 50-55; Carole Gerson, "Agnes Maule Machar," *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 92, 220-221; Neil K. Besner, "William McLennan," *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 92, 242-245; Leslie G. Monkman, "McLennan, William," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 13: 665-666; Lorraine McMullen, "Lily Dougall," *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 92, 85-87; Misao Dean, "Jean Newton McIlwraith," *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 92, 239-242.

<sup>48</sup>D. C. Masters, "The Scottish Tradition in Higher Education," in *The Scottish Tradition in Canada*, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).

and Scotland. Sir Walter Scott's works were immensely popular in Canada throughout the nineteenth century. Novels that had Scottish-sounding titles or focused upon Scottish settlers were also popular, especially those written around the turn of the century by Ralph Connor.<sup>49</sup> By glamorizing Scottish traditions, the works of Sir Walter Scott probably encouraged English-speaking Canadians to emphasize these traditions when they wrote about Canadian society. Scott's positive depiction of the Scottish character made Canadians eager to include its elements in their own national identity.

These characteristics were displayed by one fictional Scot who took full advantage of Canadian opportunities. Charlie Ogilbie was the title character of an 1889 novel. In the story, he emigrated to New Brunswick because the British agricultural crisis made it impossible for him to succeed as a farmer, despite his "fine proportions," "tall, athletic form," and "ample chest." Charlie was the ideal type for a Canadian settler, being used to hard labor even before he set out. He was depicted as being a perfect immigrant:

with his brave young face bronzed by the breezes of the sea; his daring look; a man to hold his head erect, conscious, while yielding deference where deference was due, that "a man's a man for a that!" Besides, Charlie had an air and look of refinement which would have become a station far above his own.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 67-79; Elizabeth Waterston, "Books and Notions: The Canadian Popular Novel in the Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 9 (September 1982): 444; W. Kent Power, "The Reading of Canadian Students," *University Magazine* 8 (February 1909): 130-131.

<sup>50</sup>Leslie Vaughan, *Charlie Ogilbie: A Romance of Scotland and New Brunswick* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1889; CIHM 25320), 13.

Charlie had been prevented from prospering in Scotland only by the shortage of land. The high rent on the land he and his parents could find to farm was making it impossible for them to make an adequate living. In New Brunswick, however, this was not a problem. After a few years of cheerful and competent work in the lumber woods, Charlie earned enough to buy his own farm. Despite the emotional hardships that make up the plot of the novel, Charlie prospered in New Brunswick. By the end of the novel, Charlie had expanded his agricultural holdings to such an extent that he was able to hire his old lumbering friends to work for him. From a penniless tenant farmer in Scotland, Charlie had transformed himself into a wealthy farmer and landlord in New Brunswick. The young Scot's potential has been released by Canadian opportunities and he had truly become a Scottish-Canadian success story.

Canadian authors writing fiction in English regarded Charlie's combination of knowledge of his social place and ability to do manual work as uniquely Canadian. Over and over, they characterized Canadians with this mixture of gentility and manual ability.<sup>51</sup> English-speaking Canadians believed that these blended traits were the true heritage of the British race. By accepting such immigrants, some English-speaking Canadians believed, they could save their nation from the excessive republicanism that was leading to social turmoil in the United States. Many Canadian intellectuals believed that the violent nature of American society, while being one of the

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<sup>51</sup>Other young men who succeed because of this combination are depicted in: Mrs. J. J. Colter, *Robbie Meredith* (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., 1876; CIHM 29300); Rev. Robert Wilson, *Never Give Up; or, Life in the Lower Provinces* (Saint John, New Brunswick: Daily News Steam Job Office, 1878; CIHM 32337); Rev. W. H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Laurence Temple's Probation. A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 34392).

heritages of its revolutionary past, was being increased by the influx of non-English-speaking immigrants into the country.<sup>52</sup>

Thus one of the major concerns displayed by late-nineteenth-century Canadians writing in English was how to absorb and “Canadianize” these other European races without losing the country’s British character and heritage. One expression of this anxiety was Ralph Connor’s preface to his 1909 novel, *The Foreigner*:

In Western Canada there is to be seen to-day that most fascinating of all human phenomena, the making of a nation. Out of breeds diverse in traditions, in ideals, in speech, and in manner of life, Saxon and Slav, Teuton, Celt and Gaul, one people is being made. The blood strains of great races will mingle in the blood of a race greater than the greatest of them all.

It would be our wisdom to grip these people to us with living bonds of justice and charity till all lines of national cleavage disappear, and in the Entity of our Canadian national life, and in the Unity of our world-wide Empire, we fuse into a people whose strength will endure the slow shock of time for the honour of our name, for the good of mankind, and for the glory of Almighty God.<sup>53</sup>

He equated the making of a nation with the making of one race out of many divergent races. In addition, Connor assumed that the assimilation of these races into Canadian society included their assimilation into the British Empire. In the face of the Southern and Eastern European immigration that transformed the Canadian West, this Winnipeg clergyman hoped that the

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<sup>52</sup>Berger, *Sense of Power*, 155-165.

<sup>53</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Foreigner: A Tale of Saskatchewan* (New York: George H. Doran, 1909), Preface. Ralph Connor was the pseudonym of the Reverend Charles William Gordon, a Presbyterian minister of Scottish descent raised in Glengarry, Ontario. He began his pastoral career as a missionary to miners and lumbermen in Banff, Alberta in 1890. In 1894 he was transferred to Winnipeg’s St. Stephen’s Church, where he remained as pastor for the rest of his life. However, he reached far more people through his phenomenally successful writing career as Ralph Connor. Michael Hurley, “Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon)” in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 92, 51.

inclusion of many races in the Canadian national character would allow Canadians to adopt the virtues of each racial group without losing their British cultural heritage.

Many other English-speaking Canadian writers shared this hope in the late nineteenth century. Prior to 1900, immigration from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe was minimal, especially in Ontario, Quebec, and Eastern Canada. Therefore, writers before 1900 were primarily concerned with the integration of, in Connor's terms, Saxon, Celt, and Gaul into one nationality. One aspect of this attempt to include the French (the Gauls) within the Canadian nationality was the emphasis on the common racial heritage of France and England as northern nations, described in Chapter Two.

Connor's terminology demonstrated the continuing concern with the necessity of adapting the various British races to each other. By separating Saxon, generally used to refer to the English, from Celt, which referred to the Scots and the Irish, Connor reflected Canadian concerns about the divisions within the British race and the need to erase these divisions between the representatives of those groups who had settled in Canada. Connor's mention of the French also reflected concerns from the late nineteenth century, prior to the large-scale immigration of the Teutons and the Slavs, that the French needed to be harmoniously combined with the English-speaking Canadians in order for a truly Canadian identity to emerge.

Authors of fiction in English articulated these concerns over the necessity to combine different races, French, English, Irish, and Scottish, in order to create a Canadian national identity in seemingly contradictory ways. They betrayed their fear that such a combined nationality might never be

created by writing about communities in which no mixture of races had taken place. Alternatively, the writers revealed their hopes for the present and future identity of Canadians by depicting successfully merged communities. In addition, they described the creation of a new Canadian race by writing about mixed marriages and characters. Such marriages, characters, and communities were emblematic of the hopes, such as those expressed by Connor, that "The blood strains of great races will mingle in the blood of a race greater than the greatest of them all."<sup>54</sup>

Canadian authors writing fiction in English showed their anxiety that these peoples might never combine into a distinct Canadian nationality by portraying Canada as a mosaic of different ethnic or racial communities. One Nova Scotian character described this mosaic: "I think in Canada we take our nationalities in streaks like bacon. This place and Mal Baie are French; round the corner there's Douglastown, a Scotch settlement, while Lanse Louise, in spite of its name, is Protestant Jersey."<sup>55</sup> Other authors made this same point by writing novels that focused on a single ethnic group within a separate community, such as Margaret Murray Robertson's and Ralph Connor's depiction of the Highlanders of Glengarry, Ontario.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Connor, *The Foreigner*, Preface.

<sup>55</sup>Alice Jones, *Marcus Holbeach's Daughter* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1912), 107.

<sup>56</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *Glengarry School Days: A Story of Early Days in Glengarry* (New York: Grossett & Dunlap, 1902); Margaret Murray Robertson, *Shenac's Work at Home: A Story of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1868; CIHM 28884); Josephine Smith, *Perth-on-the-Tay: A Tale of the Transplanted Highlanders* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Co., 1901). Another such settlement is alluded to in an anonymous work, *The Hunted Outlaw; or, Donald Morrison, The Canadian Rob Roy* (Montreal: Montreal News Co., 1889; CIHM 08787), 5. Robertson and Connor probably based their novels on the same Scottish community in Glengarry, Ontario. Both were of Scottish descent. In fact, Robertson was Ralph Connor's aunt. Robertson's sister Mary married Rev. Daniel Gordon, Ralph Connor's father.

In these depictions of Canada's ethnic groups in separate communities, authors reflected their fears that Canada's various races were not coming together to create a unified Canadian identity. As one Ottawa author described the Canadian character:

Canada has not yet shaken off the fetters of her great grandparents sufficiently to bring out in a clear, marked way her own individuality. Her native sons and daughters inherit too faithfully the English, Irish, Scotch or French tenor of the characters of their predecessors to be able to grant to our ambitious country the national peculiarities and idiosyncrasies which she covets, in order to assert herself freely as the mother of a people who bear her resemblance stamped upon their mental and moral features. When a country has succeeded in fixing a seal upon the brow of every son that is born to her, she has secured the right of being paralleled, at least in one respect, with the greatest nations of the world. In time, Canada will accomplish this, for Canadians should be a wonderful people.<sup>57</sup>

These nineteenth-century authors did not embrace an idea of their nation as a mosaic within which various ethnic or racial groups could retain their individual identities. In a nation shaped from its foundation by responses to racial turmoil, including the Red River Rebellion in 1870, such a vision of national identity would likely have seemed impossible. English-speaking Canadians of this time period had no frame of reference that would allow them to imagine the concept of two national groups inhabiting a single nation-state. For them, the only way to ensure the continuation of Canada as a unified state was to ensure that it became a single nation, with a national identity that encompassed all the racial groups within its boundaries.

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<sup>57</sup>Kate Madeline Bottomley, [Vera, pseud.], *The Doctor's Daughter* (Ottawa: A. S. Woodburn, 1885; CIHM 00557), 72-73.

Thus the authors attempted to portray Canada as a place in which various racial and ethnic groups lived together in harmony and were in the process of melting into one another. Their imagined ideal Canada was a product of an mixture of a variety of peoples, including English, Scottish, Irish, French, and Indian. The first step in this direction in Canadian fiction came in the shape of ethnically mixed communities. When authors wanted to tell "a story of Canadian life," they almost invariably created ethnically diverse communities as typically Canadian.

One such multi-ethnic and multi-racial community is the lumbercamp described by William Withrow in *The King's Messenger*, published in 1879. When Lawrence Temple, a Methodist minister's son, went into the lumberwoods to earn money to go to college, he found himself surrounded by a sampling of Canadian ethnic groups. The ethnic diversity of the logging camp was best represented by the Christmas celebration of the loggers. After dinner, each lumberman sang a song from his "national" tradition. Jean-Baptiste Latour sang "Noel," then Evans, an Englishman sent down from Oxford and shipped to Canada in disgrace, began "The Boar's Head Carol," but none of the others liked it or would sing with him. Lawrence gave out a Methodist hymn; a Yorkshireman sang "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen;" a Cornishman sang "I saw three ships come sailing in, on Christmas Day;" Dennis, the Irishman, remembered midnight mass and a few lines of "Adeste Fidelis;" Evans gave "Good King Wenceslaus," which was as little appreciated as "The Boar's Head Carol" had been; and Jim Dowler, the Canadian, sang "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Rev. W. H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation. A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 34392), 20, 103-109, 30.



Indians were at work in the lumber camp, but they did not join in the Christmas celebration. The silent presence of the Indians can be taken to symbolize the position they were expected to take within Confederation. As the cultural scholar Eva Mackey argues, "Aboriginal peoples were not erased in Canada's nationalist narratives, but were important supporting actors in a story which reaffirms settler progress."<sup>59</sup> In fiction, at any rate, English-speaking Canadians attempted to include Indians within their national character, although their role was not to be as vocal as that of the groups who did sing carols.

This fictional lumbercamp's Christmas celebration was a blending of various old world traditions and so, by implication, was Withrow's imagined ideal Canadian society. The ethnic variety of this Christmas celebration symbolized the racial and ethnic variety that the author felt was forming a new Canadian nationality.

Wilderness communities were not the only places depicted as typically Canadian and multi-ethnic, multi-racial communities. A later novel describes the ethnic diversity of a fictional district of Ontario in a similar fashion. Mapleton, Ontario is described as a typical Canadian village. "Walking through our quiet streets you might hear the rich Irish brogue, the broad Scotch burr, the deep German guttural, or the sharp nasal twang of the 'American,' as we call our neighbors of the United States."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 39. Another multi-racial Canadian wilderness community is the Hudson's Bay post depicted in J. MacDonald Oxley, *Fergus MacTavish; or, Portage and Prairie: A Tale of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892; CIHM 30437).

<sup>60</sup>Adeline M. Teskey, *Where the Sugar Maple Grows: Idylls of a Canadian Village* (New York: R. F. Fenno & Co., 1901), 9. Similarly multi-ethnic communities were described in Mrs. William T. Savage, *Miramichi* (Boston: Loring, 1865; CIHM 48081), 8; R. & K. M. Lizars, *Committed to His Charge: A Canadian Chronicle* (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1900; CIHM 09186), 36-38.

Like the lumbermen with their Christmas carols, these villagers indicated their racial distinctions through their accents; they indicated their growing Canadian identity through their harmonious lives within a single community.

In this village, however, the various ethnic groups had also blended into a unique Canadian type in a way that was unavailable to the single-sex community of a lumbercamp. One Irish immigrant lamented that he was the only “thorrybred” Irishman among all the Irish of Mapleton. There are other Irish in Mapleton, “‘But the Irish blood in most of ‘em, worse luck! is mixed with English, Scotch or German,’ said Jerry McCloskey.”<sup>61</sup> Although Jerry regretted that the other Irishmen in the village had intermarried with other ethnic groups, the author did not share this opinion. For her, intermarriage and the loss of a specifically Irish identity was precisely the formula needed to create a unified Canadian identity.

By “mixing their blood” with each other, the author argued, the various peoples of Mapleton had created “a type of man and woman distinctly our own, which type stood strongly in the foreground of most of the village.”<sup>62</sup> This type was the Canadian, a result of the combination of the Scotch, Irish, English, and others who inhabited Mapleton. This process of the amalgamation of ethnic groups into the Canadian type was also described by Sara Jeannette Duncan. Her fictional town of Elgin, Ontario was originally settled by Protestant Englishman, but this changed over time as other groups arrived. “The [original settlers’] grandsons married the

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<sup>61</sup>Teskey, *Where the Sugar Maple Grows*, 95.

<sup>62</sup>Adeline M. Teskey, *Alexander McBain, B. A.: A Prince in Penury* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906), 12.

daughters of well-to-do persons who came from the north of Ireland, the east of Scotland, and the Lord knows where. . . . Any process of blending implies confusion to begin with; we are here at the making of a nation.”<sup>63</sup> Thus the creation of a Canadian nation was explicitly linked, in fiction at least, to the marriage of people of various races and ethnic groups to people from different groups. Such marriages signaled a biological basis for the amalgamation of the British with each other and with the French that authors believed would create a uniquely Canadian identity.

Indeed, fictional marriages can be an important indicator of the boundaries of the sense of imagined community that makes up a modern nation. The specific combinations of ethnic and racial identities within these fictional bonds illustrate the acceptability of these groups within the nation. In late-nineteenth-century Canadian fiction, the community thus suggested was perhaps more inclusive than the society itself. Between 1867 and 1900, English-Canadians depicted many types of “mixed” marriages in their fiction. One such marriage was shown in Ralph Connor’s novel *The Doctor*, in which the village miller, an Irishman, was married to a Scotswoman.<sup>64</sup> Such a marriage symbolically united two groups into a Canadian identity. Yet a marriage that only combined two of Canada’s ethnic groups was relatively rare in fiction. Far more common was the type of complicated combination that occurred in *Archie of Athabasca*. Archie’s father, Donald McKenzie, was the factor at a Hudson’s Bay post; he married a woman named Virginie Latour. Her father was a French-Canadian

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<sup>63</sup>Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Imperialist* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1904; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 49.

<sup>64</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Doctor: A Tale of the Rockies* (Toronto: The Westminster Co., 1906), 11.

trapper and her mother was a Cree.<sup>65</sup> This marriage symbolically united three major Canadian racial groups: Scots, French, and Indian.

Considering nineteenth-century ideas about Indians, Canadian fiction contains a strikingly high number of Indian/white marriages, especially in comparison with American fiction from the same time period. Also unlike American depictions of Indian/white marriages, in Canadian fiction the husband, wife, and children of these unions typically survived.<sup>66</sup> The relative frequency of such marriages in Canadian fiction may be the result of the comparative frequency of mixed-race marriages between white men and native women in Canada in the nineteenth century. As a result of the specific conditions of the fur trade, the marriages of white officers of the trade to native and mixed-race women remained common into the 1860s and 1870s in the western areas of what would become Canada.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the Red River and North-West Rebellions meant that Canadians in the east were familiar with the existence of the Métis, a group descended from such unions between French-Canadian fur traders and native women.

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<sup>65</sup>J. MacDonald Oxley, *Archie of Athabasca* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1893; CIHM 30438), 4-5.

<sup>66</sup>Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 222. Incidentally, "langscape" is not a typographical error, McGregor uses it deliberately to indicate that her topic is the way in which words and landscape interact and thereby shape each other. Examples of Indian/white marriages occur in: Alexander Begg, *"Dot it Down;" A Story of Life in the North-West* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, & Co., 1871; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 350-361; Joseph Edmund Collins, *The Story of Louis Riel The Rebel Chief* (Toronto: J. S. Robertson & Brothers; reprint, Toronto: Coles Canadiana Collection, 1970); Joseph Edmund Collins, *Annette, the Metis Spy; A Heroine of the N. W. Rebellion* (Toronto: Rose, 1886; CIHM 02152); Gilbert Parker, *The Translation of a Savage* (New York: D. Appleton, 1893; reprint, New York: Scribner, 1913); James Donald Dunlop, *Forest Lily* (London & New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1898; CIHM 32194).

<sup>67</sup>Sylvia Van Kirk, *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980).

The imaginative inclusion of Indians in the Canadian community, even as they were being increasingly segregated in space and ideology, may also indicate that at least some English-speaking Canadians believed that Indians were an important factor in their national identity. One of the best examples of this is Lucia Costello, the title character of *A Canadian Heroine*.<sup>68</sup> The very title of the book proclaimed her a typically Canadian character; she was the offspring of an English mother and a Mohawk father. This inclusion of the Indian into the Canadian character was one aspect of the Canadian identification of themselves as a wilderness nationality, as discussed in Chapter Three.

Even more critical for the formation of an imagined Canadian identity were the visions of unity reflected in novelistic marriages between French and English-speaking Canadians. Such marriages were common in fiction written in English by Canadians, despite their rarity among the English-Canadian literary classes. Of those writers for whom biographies are available, only Rosanna Mullins Leprohon married a francophone. In her case, such a step was made easier by their common religion, as both partners were Catholics.<sup>69</sup> The popularity of such mixed marriages in nineteenth-century novels of contemporary<sup>70</sup> and historical<sup>71</sup> Canada indicates that the

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<sup>68</sup>Anna Louisa Walker, *A Canadian Heroine: A Novel in Three Volumes* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1873; CIHM 06442, 06443, & 06444). Another example is Gilbert Parker's most famous character, Pretty Pierre, depicted as connecting two races and linking the past to the Canadian present. Gilbert Parker, *Pierre and His People: Tales of the Far North* (1892; reprint, New York: MacMillan, 1906), vi. Other examples of mixed-race characters include Mr. St. Clair in Charles Shrimpton, *The Black Phantom; or, Woman's Endurance* (New York: James Miller, 1867; CIHM 13614), 186-189; Marc de Mer in Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Forge in the Forest*, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe and Company, 1896), 15; and the title character in Hampden Burnham, *Marcelle: An Historical Novel* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905).

<sup>69</sup>J. C. Stockdale, "Mullins, Rosanna Eleanora (Leprohon)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 10: 536-538.

<sup>70</sup>Mixed French-English marriages appeared in Charles Heavyseage, *The Advocate* (Montreal: Richard Worthington, 1865; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 6;

such marriages were a hope for unity instead of a reflection of reality. As literary critic Dennis Duffy points out, such marriages represented a national union that tied "French imaginativeness, style and ingenuity to English efficiency, boldness, and resolution. The successor state to the old regime was not imposed: it married its predecessor."<sup>72</sup> In this fiction, the two Canadian races were symbolically united through the marriage of French and English characters.

The relationship of these fictional marriages to English-speaking views of Canada's political future was particularly clear in William McLennan and Jean McIlwraith's 1899 book, *The Span O'Life: A Tale of Louisbourg and Quebec*. After the capture of Quebec City by Wolfe's forces, a Scottish officer of the conquering forces, Captain Nairn and a *canadienne*, Angelique, fell in love and prepared to marry after the first ships arrived in

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George Graham, [Mrs. Dobbin, pseud.], *"Thos.": A Simple Canadian Story* (Montreal: Lovell, 1878; CIHM 32580); Maud Ogilvy, *The Keeper of Bic Light House: A Canadian Story of To-Day* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1891; CIHM 11501), 6.

<sup>71</sup>Examples include marriages in Rosanna Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864; reprint, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989); Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald, *An Algonquin Maiden: A Romance of the Early Days of Upper Canada* (Montreal: Lovell, 1887; CIHM 00008), in which the English hero marries a French woman instead of the Algonquin maiden of the title; Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty: A Romance of Old Quebec* (New York: D. Appleton, 1896). Charles G. D. Roberts also made much use of the intermarriage of Acadians and English-speakers in his stories about Acadia before the Expulsion. Acadian women married men from New England or British officers, while in *The Forge in the Forest* an Acadian officer and his son both married women from New England. In only one of these books did an Acadian character marry an Acadian, in *A Sister to Evangeline*, and even here the plot included a rival lover from New England. Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Raid from Beauséjour and How the Carter Boys Lifted the Mortgage: Two Stories of Acadie* (Toronto: Musson, 1894; CIHM 12229); *The Forge in the Forest* (Boston, New York, & London: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1896); *A Sister to Evangeline* (Boston, New York, & London: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1898); *By the Marshes of Minas* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900; CIHM 50970).

<sup>72</sup>Dennis Duffy, *Sounding the Iceberg: An Essay on Canadian Historical Novels* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1986), 17. Also see Carl Murphy, "The Marriage Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century English-Canadian Fiction," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 13 (1988): 1-19; Pilar Cuder-Dominquez, "Negotiations of Gender and Nationhood in Early Canadian Literature," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 18 (1998): 115-131.

the spring. In this case, the couple agreed that the balance of power in their marriage would be determined by the military and political fate of Quebec City. They pledged that if the British ships arrive first, Nairn would marry Angelique and if the French came first, she would marry him.<sup>73</sup> The British ships arrived first and Captain Nairn took what was believed to be his rightful place as the dominant partner in his marriage. This outcome implicitly supported a common nineteenth-century English-Canadian perception of the rightful place of the British as the dominant race within the Canada.

These fictional marriages served to symbolize the unification of French and English into Canadians. For a French character to marry an English character reassured English Canadians that the two major language groups within their nation could be reconciled and come to inhabit one nation in harmony, despite contemporary political tensions. This sense of reassurance was probably one reason that such marriages were so common in historical fiction, despite their rarity in the Conquest period. Writers of fiction in English probably found the most frequent fictional arrangement in which a French woman married a British man particularly reassuring. This arrangement symbolically assured the English-speaking reader that the French would take the subordinate part within Canada, as women were expected to be subordinate in a nineteenth-century marriage.<sup>74</sup>

Even stronger fictional symbols of the possibility of the unification of Canada's various racial or ethnic groups into a single national identity were

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<sup>73</sup>William McLennan and J. N. McIlwraith, *The Span O'Life: A Tale of Louisbourg and Quebec* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899; CIHM 53209), 296.

<sup>74</sup>Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love, and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 156.

the many mixed-race characters who appear in late-nineteenth-century English-Canadian fiction. One such character was Archie McKenzie, the son of the Hudson Bay Company factor Donald McKenzie and his Cree and French wife, Virginie Latour, mentioned earlier. The author described Archie as an ideal Canadian boy.

By the time he was ten years old, he stood but a few inches short of five feet in height, and was the very picture of health and heartiness. Three different races were represented in him, and he showed some of the most striking traits of each.

The bright frank face, the firm mouth, the steadfast purpose were as clearly Scotch as the merry laugh, the love of music, the fondness for dress were French, and the piercing eye, the acute ear, and the wild passion for out-door sports were Indian in their source.<sup>75</sup>

Although each of Archie's characteristics remained racially identified, in keeping with nineteenth-century ideas of inheritable racial traits, his joint inheritance of all of them indicated the beginning of a new Canadian race. In his very person, Archie represented the author's expectations that the mixture of Canada's races—French, Anglo-Saxon, Celt, and Indian—would create a national group of extraordinary virtues, skills, and health.

The author's choice of Archie as the hero of a story for boys was particularly striking in view of the prevailing Victorian ideas about racial mixing.<sup>76</sup> Nineteenth-century theory regarding "miscegenation" held that the mixed-race child of an inter-racial union could never rise to the height of the superior civilization. For example, though a mulatto might be

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<sup>75</sup>Oxley, *Archie of Athabasca*, 7. Other characters portrayed as typically Canadian because they are ethnically (or racially) mixed are found in, for example, J. W. Griffin, *Help in the Distance: A New Dominion Story* (Elora, Ontario: for the author, 1868), 59; Thomas Stinson Jarvis, *Geoffrey Hampstead* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1890; CIHM 07420), 23-24.

<sup>76</sup>Archie of Athabaska was originally published in *The Boy's Own Paper*, a periodical read throughout the British Empire. R. G. Moyles, "A 'Boy's Own' View of Canada," *Canadian Children's Literature* 34 (1984): 47-48.



superior to a “pure-blooded Negro,” he or she would never be as intelligent or capable as a white person.<sup>77</sup> It seems as if this view was not totally accepted, especially within Canada. Archie and other characters of mixed race were often treated positively in Canadian fiction. In their diversity, such characters reflected the imagined nature of Canada as a nation whose identity grew out of the combination of many ethnic and racial groups. Most nineteenth-century English-speaking Canadian writers shared this concept.

For English-Canadian authors, a character in whom French and British heritage were combined was symbolic of the hoped-for future racial and cultural unity of Canada. These characters carried the weight of the nation on their fictional shoulders. They were seen as both a metaphor for Canada and its potential salvation. If these two linguistic groups could be combined in a single person, surely they could be combined into a single nation. This possibility was exemplified in one fictional family in which a French-Canadian man married a Protestant Irishwoman. Their son, Edward, felt that his family was emblematic of potential harmony between English- and French-speakers in Canada.

The cursed stripe about race . . . always vexed him. He would say to the Englishman, “we do not want to Frenchify you,” and to the French Canadian, “we do not want to Anglify you,” but he would say to both, “we do want to Canadianize you.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, 22-23. Also see Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity*, 160-161.

<sup>78</sup>Richard Lanigan, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada Fifty Years Ago* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1888; CIHM 28408), 123. Although I know nothing about this author, it is safe to assume that he is an English-speaking Protestant, as were at least 90% of those who published fiction in English in Canada in the late nineteenth century. Other characters who exemplified this hoped-for racial unification of Canada were depicted in: Charles Nelson Johnson, *The Hermit of the Nonquon* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1893; CIHM 07617), 6-7; Margaret Marshall Saunders, *The House of Armour* (Philadelphia: A. J.

Richard Lanigan, the author of this novel, showed a greater sympathy for the position of French Canadians who feared losing their own heritage and religion than did many of his colleagues. Most late-nineteenth-century Canadians writing in English did want to Anglify the French by assimilating them into a British-dominated Canadian identity. Yet Lanigan shared the hope that these two disparate “races” could be culturally unified. Authors of fiction in English worried that British and French might never combine into one cultural nationality. By writing characters in whom this process was completed, writers reassured themselves and their readers that Canada could become a culturally united nation.

In the late nineteenth century, Canadians writing fiction in English envisioned the creation of a uniquely Canadian identity through the combination of the inherited racial traits of a limited number of groups. In the years before 1900, these authors were confident that the amalgamation of the Scottish, English, Irish, French, and Indian would give Canada its own unique national character. This attitude was exemplified in the description of Joseph Lindon, a fictional Ottawa merchant in an 1890 novel:

He, or his family, might have come from the north of Ireland or south of Scotland, or middle of England, or anywhere else, as far as any one could judge by his face; and, as likely as not, his lineage was a mixture of Scotch, Irish, English, or Dutch, which implanted in his physiognomy that conglomeration of nationalities which now defies classification, but seems to be evolving a type to be known as distinctively Canadian. His accent was not Irish, Scotch, English, nor Yankee. It was a collection of all four, which appeared separately at odd times, and it was, in this way, Canadian.<sup>79</sup>

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Rowland, 1897; CIHM 13298), 10; Gilbert Parker, *An Adventurer of the North* (1896; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 177.

<sup>79</sup>Thomas Stinson Jarvis, *Geoffrey Hampstead* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1890; CIHM 07420), 23-24.

Once again, the British nationalities figured most strongly in the creation of a Canadian identity. Instead of figuring as a unified group, as they so often did in discussions of the necessity to integrate British and French, the British groups were here depicted as still needing to be synthesized into a coherent group through their contact with Canadian realities.

For Canadians writing fiction in English, the two greatest racial questions of their new nation were the combination of English, Scots, and Irish into a solidly British cultural group and the amalgamation of this British group with the French Canadians. In the late nineteenth century, these authors envisioned a future in which the blending of Scots, English, Irish, and Loyal American with French and Indian would produce a greater race and nation than the world had ever known. The writers believed that Canadian uniqueness would be ensured by the combination of the cultural and racial heritages of France and Great Britain within a single national group.

## Chapter 7

### THE IMAGINED FRENCH: HISTORY, RACE, AND RELIGION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A UNITED CANADIAN IDENTITY

In their attempt to create an imagined community within their new nation, English-Canadian nationalists were compelled to take some notice of their French-speaking compatriots, even if doing so complicated their attempts to define Canada. From its beginnings to the present day, one of the most pressing political issues in the Canadian nation has been the necessity of combining two different peoples within a single nation-state. In the twentieth century, the divisions between English and French Canadians have been chiefly defined as a problem of language. Commentators frequently speak of divisions or reconciliations between Canada's two language groups. In the late nineteenth century, the division was seen as one of race.<sup>1</sup> Language was believed to be an important indicator of racial identity, but was seen as a less important component of that identity than religion, culture, and history. Thus the divide between French and English was understood to be a racially based issue that was marked by differences in religion and culture as well as language.

In the nineteenth century, race was also considered to be equivalent to nationality, as discussed in the previous chapter. This posed a particular difficulty for those attempting to create a unified Canadian nation. English-Canadian nationalists were faced with the problem of creating an imagined community that somehow included a group whose identifying

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Levitt, "Race and Nation in Canadian Anglophone Historiography," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 8 (Spring 1981): 5; André Siegfried, *The Race Question in Canada* (London, 1907; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966).

characteristics were very different from themselves. This type of inclusion was difficult in the late nineteenth century, primarily because of the negative Protestant beliefs about Catholics and Catholicism which were prevalent in English-speaking cultures at the time.<sup>2</sup> These tensions flared in a variety of political crises within nineteenth-century Canada, most notably over questions of religiously separate or unified public school systems.

In order to create an imagined community within the Canadian nation, English-Canadian authors attempted to write against or avoid these stereotypes and political difficulties in their fiction. They used various strategies to minimize religious differences and emphasize similarities between French and English within Canada. Some of these have been discussed above, such as the tendency to portray typical Canadians descended from parentage that included both French and English stock. Authors also attempted to argue that English and French were both northern races and thereby shared a heritage that was particularly suited to the settlement of Canada, as discussed in Chapter Two.

Other strategies were more specifically aimed at avoiding conflict over religion and culture and at including the idea of the French within the imagined community of the Canadian nation. One such tactic was to write positively about Catholics and Catholicism and to emphasize the common Christianity of Catholics and Protestants. Other authors attempted to downplay religious and political conflict by not writing about them. Instead, they portrayed French Canada as an admirable aspect of Canada's past, part

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<sup>2</sup>See D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); E. R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968).

of a heritage of which all Canadians could be proud. This approach integrated the French into the idea of Canada while it avoided the issue of how they would be part of Canada's present and future.

Canadian politicians did not have the luxury of avoiding this question in the late nineteenth century. From the 1870s through the turn of the century, a variety of political crises arose out of a continuing tension between English-speaking Protestants and French-speaking Catholics. Crises such as the controversies over the Jesuits' Estates Act and the Manitoba Schools Act of 1890 were largely based upon debates over the future of Confederation and French Catholics within it.

The Jesuits' Estates Act aroused Protestant fears that French Catholics were not committed to the nation because their highest loyalty lay with the Pope. This legislation was enacted in 1888 by Quebec Premier Honoré Mercier as a means of settling an ongoing dispute over the fate of formerly Jesuit-owned lands within the Province of Quebec. These lands had reverted to the crown when the Pope disbanded the Jesuit order in 1773. However, when the Jesuit order was revived by another Pope in 1814, Jesuits and other Catholics began to agitate for the return of these lands to the order. Mercier attempted to settle the question by declaring the Jesuits' estates worth four hundred thousand dollars. In the act, seventy thousand dollars of this money was settled upon the Protestant school system within Quebec, while the remainder was given to the Catholic Church, to be divided at the discretion of the Pope. It was this final provision that roused the fears of English-speaking Protestants, for it seemed a reflection of a

Catholic tendency to prefer the authority of the Pope to that of the Canadian government.<sup>3</sup>

Many Canadians of both races and religions saw the Manitoba Schools Act of 1890 as even more important in determining the future of Canada. This act created a single public school system for Manitoba, abolished denominational schools, and forbade instruction in the French language. The issue became a national question when Manitoba Catholics appealed to the federal government for a reversal of the act. The Manitoba Schools Question was an important issue in the 1896 election and was finally put to rest soon after Wilfrid Laurier took office. The compromise solution allowed instruction in languages other than English when the majority of students in a particular school spoke that other language. This allowed for some instruction in French, but had the effect of identifying French Canadians as just one of Manitoba's many immigrant groups.<sup>4</sup>

For English-Canadian Protestants unified, non-denominational school systems, particularly in western Canada, were critical to the creation of a national community with common goals and desires. During the late nineteenth century, according to historian J. R. Miller, Canadian Protestants were becoming increasingly concerned about Catholicism as a threat to

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<sup>3</sup>For detailed descriptions of the controversy aroused by the Jesuits' Estates Act, see J. R. Miller, "The Jesuits' Estates Act Crisis: 'An Incident in a Conspiracy of Several Years' Standing,'" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 9 (1974): 36-50; Ramsay Cook, *Canada and the French-Canadian Question* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967), 36; J. R. Miller, *Equal Rights: The Jesuits' Estates Act Controversy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979). Also see James T. Watt, "Anti-Catholic Nativism in Canada: The Protestant Protective Association," *Canadian Historical Review* 48 (March 1967): 48.

<sup>4</sup>See W. L. Morton, "Manitoba Schools and Canadian Nationality, 1890-1923," in *Minorities, Schools, and Politics*, ed. Ramsay Cook, Craig Brown, and Carl Berger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 10-18; Lovell Clark, ed., *The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1968); Cook, *Canada and the French Canadian Question*, 50, 149; Kenneth McNaught, *The Penguin History of Canada* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 184-188.

Canadian unity.<sup>5</sup> They believed that separate schools would prolong existing differences of creed and culture between English and French, thereby delaying the creation of a cohesive national identity based on a common language and religion.

Yet these contentious political issues made little appearance in Canadian fiction. Only one novel among this work's source base considers the issue of separate schools at all and that was within an Ontario context.<sup>6</sup> This lack of discussion may have been a reaction to the divisive politics of the late nineteenth century. It is possible—even probable—that English-Canadian authors deliberately avoided discussing these political and religious conflicts in order to minimize the sense of discord between French and English and thereby enhance the possibility of building a sense of national identity that could encompass both.

English-Canadian authors were by no means immune to the anti-Catholicism that was prevalent throughout the English-speaking Protestant world.<sup>7</sup> One reason for this was that, with few exceptions, authors writing fiction in English in nineteenth century Canada were Protestants. Methodists and Presbyterians were especially prominent among those writing novels.<sup>8</sup> In novels anti-Catholic feeling was expressed mostly in

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<sup>5</sup>J. R. Miller, "Anti-Catholicism in Canada: From the British Conquest to the Great War," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930*, ed. Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 42.

<sup>6</sup>Paul Tsyg, *G. Dwyer, K. W.* (Montreal: Lovell, 1895; CIHM 24978). On the issue of separate schools in Ontario, see Marilyn Barber, "The Ontario Bilingual Schools Issue: Sources of Conflict," in *Minorities, Schools, and Politics*, 63-84.

<sup>7</sup>For a detailed description of anti-Catholicism, see J. R. Miller, "Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 66 (1985): 474-494.

<sup>8</sup>The Catholic exceptions included Mary Ann Sadlier, Rosanna Leprohon, and Cornelius O'Brien.



relationship to the clerical and monastic arms of the Church, not toward lay Catholics. Authors were particularly likely to write unfavorably about nunneries. One early instance of this tendency was in the 1868 novel *Violet Keith*, in which a young Protestant girl was imprisoned in the underground stone crypt of an ancient Canadian convent.<sup>9</sup> This attitude was reinforced by a variety of very popular books that purported to expose the immorality of convent life.<sup>10</sup> Protestant authors were also likely to condemn the priesthood, an institution that they believed corrupted lay Catholics by keeping them from the direct word of God.<sup>11</sup>

Conciliatory statements about Catholics and Catholicism in English-Canadian fiction were particularly remarkable against this background of anti-Catholicism. In order to reduce the religious tension that hindered the creation of a unified national identity, some English-Canadian authors wrote about situations in which Protestants and Catholics lived harmoniously. This strategy was most evident in the Delisle family, the central characters in an 1888 novel, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada, Fifty Years Ago*. The character Edmund Delisle, in explaining his

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<sup>9</sup>Ellen Ross, *Violet Keith: An Autobiography* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1868; CIHM 12959), 411-421. Also see Agnes Maule Machar, *Katie Johnstone's Cross: A Canadian Tale* (Toronto: James Campbell and Sons, 1870; CIHM 09599), 62-63; F. Clifford Smith, "A Daughter of the Church," *Canadian Magazine* 5 (August 1895): 378-385.

<sup>10</sup>These exposés included Julia Catherine Hart, *St. Ursula's Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* (Kingston: Hugh C. Thomson, 1824); George Bourne, *Awful Disclosures, by Maria Monk, of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal* (New York: Howe and Bates, 1836). For a discussion of these books, see Jeffrey L. Wollock, "Violet Keith and All That Sort of Thing," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 3 (1974): 80-88; Dennis Castillo, "The Enduring Legacy of Maria Monk," *American Catholic Studies* 112 (2001): 49-59.

<sup>11</sup>J. E., *The Old and the New Home: A Canadian Tale*, Canadian Prize Sunday School Books (Toronto: James Campbell and Son, 1870; CIHM 06368), 4; Margaret Murray Robertson, *The Perils of Orphanhood; or, Frederica and Her Guardians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875), 210-211.

family situation to a friend, explicitly linked their internal harmony to the possibility of religious toleration in Canadian society. He said:

My father was a Roman Catholic and my mother a Protestant. I am a Roman Catholic and my sister is a Protestant; our home has been a happy one, and we all love each other very dearly. . . . Heaven bless the good old times, and send them back soon, when, as in the days of the good Recollets in the city of Montreal, the Fathers offered mass in the morning, the Anglicans had service in the afternoon, and Presbyterians in the evening; all in the same church.<sup>12</sup>

By urging that an equal respect be paid to both faiths, Lanigan and other authors hoped to minimize religious differences by emphasizing the essential Christianity of all Canadians. Such portrayals of the equal sincerity and Christian righteousness of Protestants and Catholics seem to have been part of a deliberate attempt to overcome religious divisions in order to promote the possibility of national unity.

Another aspect of this attempt to create a unified national identity emerged in English-Canadian fiction that portrayed French Canada as part of Canada's history. This approach allowed English-Canadian authors to include French Canadians in the imagined community of Canada, while avoiding the problematic question of their present and future place in the nation. The embrace of the history of French settlement in the North American continent as part of Canadian heritage, and the adoption of picturesque aspects of French-Canadian culture as indicative of Canadian

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<sup>12</sup>Richard Lanigan, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada, Fifty Years Ago* (Montreal: Lovell, 1888; CIHM 28408), 123. Also see A. C. Laut, *Lords of the North* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 433; William H. Withrow, *Barbara Heck: A Tale of Early Methodism* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895; CIHM 48461), 81-82; Tsyrr, G. Dwyer, K. W., 224-225; Cyrus Thomas, *The Frontier Schoolmaster: The Autobiography of a Teacher* (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1880), 72.

culture, allowed English-Canadians to imagine that they had integrated French Canadians into a unified national identity.

French Canadians were associated with Canada's past both in historical romances about the period of New France and in local color novels, a genre that focused upon ordinary characters in quaint rural settings. This linkage of the French with the past was compatible with anti-Catholic thought, in that many Protestants believed that Catholic societies were less advanced in education, commerce, and moral development.<sup>13</sup> As anti-modernist ideas began to be adopted by the educated classes in Britain, Canada, and the United States in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, English-Canadian intellectuals began to believe that this association with a rural past was a positive feature of French-Canadian society.

Many English-Canadian authors believed that the presence of the French, with their rustic, stable, conservative society, gave their nation a desirable connection to an older, simpler world.<sup>14</sup> In the late nineteenth century, many urbanized members of the middle and upper classes throughout the English-speaking world were beginning to regard the rural past with nostalgia and longing. They perceived the past, both their own relatively recent rural childhoods and the more distant, primitive past of the middle ages, as a source of virtues that their own industrialized society had lost.<sup>15</sup> While the British searched for a vigorous and virtuous past in

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<sup>13</sup>Miller, "Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada," 479.

<sup>14</sup>See Berger, *Sense of Power*, 140-142. As an example, see William McLennan's description of the French Canadians as preserving "the characteristic of an age which has passed away," in the Preface to his collection of stories, *In Old France and New* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1900; CIHM 09697), xiv.

<sup>15</sup>On the nostalgic desire for the simple life of the past, see David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 154-156; David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xxi, 97; Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-*

their own medieval history and the Americans turned toward the idea of their colonial beginnings as represented in tourist destinations like Nantucket, English Canadians embraced the idea of French Canada as a living embodiment of the nation's past.<sup>16</sup>

By including this rural idyll as part of Canadian national identity, English-Canadian novelists hoped both to solve the problem of the French in Canada and to add a picturesque element to their national identity. The adoption of traditional French culture as part of the uniqueness of Canada was apparent in fictional treatments of French-Canadian folksongs as national music. The use of French culture as a national identifier appeared in an 1894 novel about a trip down the St. Lawrence River. The author, Agnes Maule Machar, was a nationalist who was particularly concerned about the inclusion of the French in Canadian identity.<sup>17</sup> She often expressed her own nationalist sentiments in her novels, especially in passages such as this one from *Down the River to the Sea*:

"But haven't you any Canadian songs to give me?" asked Hugh [a visiting Englishman], as the girls were about leaving the piano.

"There's the old 'Canadian Boat-song,'" said Nellie, doubtfully.

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*Century America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989). On the cult of the medieval in Great Britain and America see: T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), especially 141-183.

<sup>16</sup>On the British embrace of the medieval past as part of their national identity, see Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), and Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26-28. On Americans and the colonial past, see Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth-Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), especially 107-108, 117-121, and 188-189.

<sup>17</sup>Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Moral Nationalism in Victorian Canada: The Case of Agnes Machar," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (Spring 1985): 91.

"No, no," said Kate, "that's all very well for singing on the river. We'll have it *there*, by and by. Give Hugh something that has more of a native flavor about it. Sing him one or two of those French Canadian songs you used to be so fond of— '*La Claire Fontaine*,' you know, or '*En Roulant Ma Boule*.'"<sup>18</sup>

The appropriation of French-Canadian folksongs as "Canadian music" allowed English-speaking Canadians to create an imagined community in which French and British joined to form a unique national culture.

This embrace of some aspects of French culture as characteristically Canadian allowed English Canadians to set themselves apart from the Americans. Historian Daniel Francis describes this as the "decorative argument for Confederation, . . . an argument which holds that we [Canadians] need the quaint, exotic presence of Quebec to keep us different from the United States."<sup>19</sup> As discussed in Chapter Five, this ability to differentiate themselves from the United States was an important component of Canadian identity. Many English Canadians convinced themselves that they had a heritage and a present that combined English and French, which neither the Americans nor the British shared, and that their nation was therefore unique.

As Francis suggests, English-Canadian authors embraced a particular vision of the French within Canada. Their imagined French were a rural,

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<sup>18</sup>Agnes Maule Machar, *Down the River to the Sea* (New York: Home Book Co., 1894; CIHM 09603), 91-92. See also Maud Ogilvy, *The Keeper of Bic Light House: A Canadian Story of To-Day* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1891; CIHM 11501), 127. Ian McKay addresses the embrace of folk songs as national music in *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 17.

<sup>19</sup>Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 97. See also Mackey, *House of Difference*, 31; Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 144; Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 18.

agricultural people who had a naive faith in their God and their priests. This view of the French was typical of that shared by contemporary English-Canadian imperialists, intellectuals, and artists.<sup>20</sup> English Canadians were comfortable with a vision of the French that included *habitants, coureurs-de-bois, seigneurs*, and priests, but not factory workers, lawyers, or politicians. These French Canadians made use of their close relationship to the Canadian land to support themselves and their families. English Canadian authors consistently portrayed the French as more intimately connected to the landscape than English Canadians, as discussed in Chapter Three, on the depiction of Canada as a wilderness nation. Such views of the French-Canadians were reinforced by the portrayal of French Canadians as lumbermen in the novels of Ralph Connor and William Withrow.<sup>21</sup>

English-Canadian authors commonly depicted this connection to the land as a positive aspect of French culture by explicitly contrasting rural virtue with urban vice. In S. Frances Harrison's 1898 novel, *The Forest of Bourg-Marie*, the contrast was made plain in the conflict between Murray Carson and Nicholas Laurière. Murray Carson was once Magloire Caron, a boy of the village of Bourg-Marie, until he went to Milwaukee and renounced the glory of his heritage. Harrison explicitly connected his loss of virtue with his time in an American metropolis:

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<sup>20</sup>Berger, *Sense of Power*, 140-144; Donald A. Wright, "W. D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English-Canadian Imperialism, 1880s-1918," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32 (Summer 1997): 138; Francis, *National Dreams*, 96-98.

<sup>21</sup>Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (Toronto: The Westminster Co., 1898; CIHM 11872); and *The Man From Glengarry* (Toronto: Westminster, 1901; reprint, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960). Also see Rev. W. H. Withrow, *The King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation. A Story of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, Methodist Book Room, 1879; CIHM 34392), 30-33, 133-135.

From the tainted, gas-it, poisoned atmosphere of the great Western town to the pure solitudes of Bourg-Marie, set under the cold and sparkling stars of a true though frigid north, is a long step. But it was short compared to the distance between the unsullied soul and the childlike heart of a man like Nicolas Laurière, and the utter selfishness, the intriguing iniquities of the hybrid product of three civilizations—Magloire le Caron or Mr. Murray Carson.<sup>22</sup>

Murray Carson's corruption was perceived to be the result of his renunciation of his rural heritage, symbolized by his change in name. The passage also echoes Canadian ideas about the purity of their northern landscape in contrast to the more southern United States, as discussed in Chapter Two.

However, English-Canadian authors believed that such renunciations of heritage and culture were extremely rare among French Canadians. Instead, they felt that the French retained their connections to rural landscapes even when they were forced to take work in urban settings. Again, S. Frances Harrison's writings prove illustrative, especially "The Story of Etienne Chezy d'Alencourt." The story was narrated by a young English visitor, who described the results of his search for "a genuine, unadulterated French-Canadian of the class known as the *habitans*." His search was complicated by the fact that he searched only within the city of Quebec. Finally, however, he met Etienne Chezy d'Alencourt, who called himself Netty and worked in "de mill; de larges mill in the Chaudière." Though this seemed to disprove the myth of the strictly rural habitant, the English narrator quickly learned that Netty was still connected to his rural

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<sup>22</sup>S. Frances Harrison, *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* (Toronto: George M. Morang, 1898; CIHM 05388), 105, also see 18-19, 164-165. Another novel which includes this contrast of French rural virtue and English-speaking urban vice is Maud Ogilvy, *The Keeper of Bic Light House: A Canadian Story of To-Day* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1891; CIHM 11501).

roots because he worked to support his mother who still lived in a small village. That summer, the Englishman visited Netty and his mother in their rural idyll, confirming his, and perhaps Harrison's readers', beliefs in the rural nature of French Canadians.<sup>23</sup>

Such portrayals of the French as a rural people who belonged to the past rather than the future of Canada were particularly compatible with the genre of local color writing that was popular at the end of the nineteenth century. This genre, about "simple decent country and village people, kindly but shrewd, unlearned but with plenty of common sense and homely, humorous philosophies of life," was perfectly suited to English-Canadian views of their French fellow countrymen.<sup>24</sup> One example of these local color portraits of French Canadian life was Duncan Campbell Scott's short story collection, *In the Village of Viger*, published in 1896.<sup>25</sup> In these stories, the picturesque residents of Viger lived changeless rural lives. The French Canadians portrayed in local color literature had no interest in current political disputes or the future of the nation.

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<sup>23</sup>S. Frances Harrison, "The Story of Etienne Chezy D'Alencourt," in *Crowded Out! and Other Sketches* (Ottawa: Evening Journal Office, 1886; CIHM 06401), esp. 62, 65-66, 71-73. Also see F. Clifford Smith, "A Lover in Homespun," in *A Lover in Homespun and Other Stories*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1896; CIHM 13698).

<sup>24</sup>Mary Vipond, "Best Sellers in English Canada, 1899-1918: An Overview," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 24 (1979): 102. On the American local color tradition, see Josephine Donovan, *New England Local Color Literature: A Woman's Tradition* (New York: F. Ungar, 1983).

<sup>25</sup>Duncan Campbell Scott, *In the Village of Viger* (Boston: Copeland and Day, 1896; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996). Other instances of this genre in Canadian writing about the French include: Margaret Marshall Saunders, *Rose à Charlitte: An Acadian Romance* (Boston: L. C. Page and Co., 1898; CIHM 13089); selected stories in Smith, *A Lover in Homespun*; Harrison, *Crowded Out!*; William McLennan, *In Old France and New* (Toronto: Copp, Clark 1900; CIHM 09697). Also see Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 126.



English-Canadian authors frequently emphasized the unchanging nature of French-Canadian society and linked it to the past by describing it as medieval or feudal. Writers insisted that French society in Canada continued to be characterized by a feudal relationship between *habitants* and *seigneurs*, both of whom “maintain [in Quebec] the habits and customs which they brought from France generations ago.”<sup>26</sup> English-Canadian writers believed that a feudal heritage of obedience to an aristocracy continued to be an operative element in French-Canadian social and political life. This belief may have ameliorated some of the tensions caused by political strife between English and French within Canada, because English Canadians could assure themselves that their French fellow citizens were not actually angry about political issues like the Manitoba Schools Question. Instead, political strife was the fault only of an elite within French Canada, not of the general population.

English-Canadian authors also linked the medievalism of French Canada to the Catholic Church. In one novel, the author established French Canadian society as medieval during an opening scene at Notre Dame Cathedral in Montreal on Christmas Eve, 1896.

The multitude of faces peering at this scene from the densely packed galleries, the quaint clothing in which many of the habitants were clad, the chanting voices of the priests, mingled with the feeling of strangeness at witnessing such a scene in the early watches of the morning, transported the imagination back to mediæval times.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>L. S. Huntington, *Professor Conant: A Story of English and American Social and Political Life* (Toronto: Rose, 1884; CIHM 07309), 145. Also see the description of the relationship between the Seigneur and his tenants in W. D. Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur; or, Nation-Making* (Montreal: William Drysdale, 1888; CIHM 24305), 6, 54-55, 61.

<sup>27</sup>F. Clifford Smith, *A Daughter of Patricians* (Toronto: The Publisher's Syndicate Ltd., 1901; CIHM 76667), 5. Other examples of emphasis on French Canada's medieval character include: Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur*, 7; J. MacDonald Oxley, *The Boy Tramps; or, Across*

Thus even Montreal, the largest city in Canada at the time, was transformed into a medieval world in the imagination of English Canadians. This allowed English Canadians to take part in the anglophone nostalgia for the Middle Ages in a nationalistic way. Instead of looking outside their own history for a medieval heritage, as American antimodernists were forced to do, English-Canadian writers could describe a medieval world that continued to be part of their own nation.<sup>28</sup>

These authors connected the French past to the present lives of the *habitants* by creating French-Canadian characters who had descended from the colonial aristocracy of New France. Although the characters in question were humble lumbermen, mill workers, and farmers, they claimed descent, for example, from the Chevalier de la Tour, Governor of Acadie; from "Guy Chézy D'Alencourt, the handsome and reckless lieutenant of La Nouvelle France;" and from the former seigneur.<sup>29</sup> Such characters reflected the English-Canadian wish to believe in the continuation of the romantic past of French Canada in their present society.

English-Canadian authors also embraced the French past by writing historical romances about this aspect of their heroic national past. Historical romances written about French Canada by English-speaking Canadians included Gilbert Parker's *Seats of the Mighty*, William Kirby's *The Golden*

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*Canada* (Toronto: Musson, 1896; CIHM 13728), 32, 66-67; M. Amelia Fytche, *The Rival Forts: or, The Velvet Siege of Beauséjour* (Halifax: Alex Neil, 1907; CIHM 73437), 61-62, 342. Also see McKay, *Quest of the Folk*, 261.

<sup>28</sup>Wright, "W. D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord," 137. See also Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 140-144; R. G. Moyles and Doug O'ram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), "'Quaint Quebec': British Views of French Canada," 87-115.

<sup>29</sup>Withrow, *King's Messenger*, 33-34; Harrison, "Story of Etienne Chezy D'Alencourt," 74; Harrison, *Forest of Bourg-Marie*, 194-195.

*Dog*, Charles G. D. Roberts's *Forge in the Forest* and *Sister to Evangeline*, James DeMille's *The Lady of the Ice*, W. D. Lighthall's *The Young Seigneur* and *The False Chevalier*, Susie Frances Harrison's *The Forest of Bourg-Marie*, and Blanche Macdonell's *Diane of Ville Marie*.<sup>30</sup> Such romances were very popular with English-speaking readers in Canada and throughout the world during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>31</sup>

English-Canadian authors welcomed the French past of their nation both as an antidote to modern machine culture and as a means of adding interest and antiquity to their national past. English Canadians liked to write about the French aspect of their nation's past because they saw it as more picturesque and exciting and therefore more appropriate material for historical romances. As one scholar of nineteenth-century Canadian fiction pointed out, "By playing up Quebec's colorful history and idealizing both early and contemporary French-Canadian life, Victorian Canada sought to fulfill its yearning for national romance."<sup>32</sup> As the most interesting part of

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<sup>30</sup>Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty: A Romance of Old Quebec* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1896); William Kirby, *The Golden Dog: A Romance of Old Quebec* (1878; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969); Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Forge in the Forest* 2nd. ed. (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe and Company, 1896); Charles G. D. Roberts, *A Sister to Evangeline* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe and Company, 1898); James DeMille, *The Lady of the Ice* (New York: D. Appleton, 1870; reprint, Toronto: Toronto Reprint Library of Canadian Prose and Poetry, 1973); Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur*; W. D. Lighthall, *The False Chevalier; or, The Lifeguard of Marie Antoinette* (Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons, 1898; CIHM 26273); S. Frances Harrison, *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* (Toronto: George M. Morang, 1898; CIHM 05388); Blanche Lucile MacDonell, *Diane of Ville Marie: A Romance of French Canada*. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898; CIHM 09409).

<sup>31</sup>Vipond, "Best Sellers," 100-102; Elizabeth Waterston, "Books and Notions: The Canadian Popular Novel in the Nineteenth-Century," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 9 (September 1982): 439-440, 443-444; Elizabeth Waterston, "Roberts, Parker, and the Uses of History," in *The Sir Charles G. D. Roberts Symposium*, ed. Glenn Clever (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1983), 109; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 103-107.

<sup>32</sup>Gerson, *Purer Taste*, 111.

their national past, they saw the romance of French Canada as being most likely to attract English-speaking Canadians to read about Canadian history.

English-Canadian authors believed that they had to emphasize heroism and romance in their portrayal of New France in order to create a shared sense of a national past. In the literary conventions of the period, these elements were deemed essential to the success of a historical novel. Because of this trend, many English Canadians turned to writing about New France, Quebec, and Acadia as they attempted to express Canadian history in their novels. While some authors were primarily interested in New France as a source of exotic settings and characters, others were meticulous in their historical accuracy. Many writers of fiction were inspired by the work of Francis Parkman, a American historian of New France, and of James Le Moine, a Canadian who wrote factual accounts of Quebec's history based on documents and eyewitness accounts. William Kirby's famous novel, *The Golden Dog*, was based upon Le Moine's work.<sup>33</sup> With few exceptions, English-speaking authors apparently did not read the works of French-Canadian historians such as François-Xavier Garneau.<sup>34</sup> English-Canadians who wrote about the history of Acadia were greatly influenced by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, *Evangeline*, and by the response of Nova Scotian historians to this poem.<sup>35</sup> Some novelists, including Charles G. D.

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<sup>33</sup>See Gerson, *Purer Taste*, "The Old World of America," 110-131; Waterston, "Roberts, Parker, and the Uses of History," 107; John Robert Sorfleet, "French Canada in Nineteenth Century English-Canadian Historical Fiction" (Ph. D. diss., University of New Brunswick, 1974).

<sup>34</sup>Rosanna Leprohon seems to have been the sole exception, and she had married into a French Canadian family. See John C. Stockdale, "Editor's Introduction," in *Antoinette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864; reprint, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989), xxxiv.

<sup>35</sup>M. Brook Taylor, "The Poetry and Prose of History: *Evangeline* and the Historians of Nova Scotia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 23, nos. 1&2 (Spring & Summer 1988): 46-67; William

Roberts, Agnes Laut, and Agnes Maule Machar, also wrote works of history.<sup>36</sup> Others were careful to describe their novels as being based on independent research into historical documents.<sup>37</sup>

As a result of these connections between historians and novelists, English-Canadian novels of the French past were an important component in the adoption of the history of New France as part of Canada's national history. In order to produce the imagined community of the modern nation, these authors believed it was necessary to create a history that allowed the nation to be seen as more than just a political construct. As one English-Canadian author of fiction said in 1880, "The first requisite of an intelligent patriotism is an acquaintance with the more striking events in the history of one's country."<sup>38</sup> Or, as the modern scholar Benedict Anderson stated, "If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past."<sup>39</sup> To incorporate the history of the French

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Owen, "Vision and Revision in Roberts' Acadian Romances," in *The Sir Charles G. D. Roberts Symposium*, ed. Glenn Clever (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1983), 117-125.

<sup>36</sup>Patricia Morley, "Charles G. D. Roberts," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 92, Canadian Writers 1890-1920*, ed. W. H. New (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), 301-308; Carole Gerson, "Agnes Christina Laut," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 92*, 181-183; Dianne M. Hallman, "Cultivating a Love of Canada Through History: Agnes Maule Machar, 1837-1927," in *Creating Historical Memory: English-Canadian Women and the Work of History*, ed. Beverly Boutilier and Alison Prentice (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 25-50.

<sup>37</sup>See author prefaces in Maud Ogilvy, *Marie Gourdon: A Romance of the Lower St. Lawrence* (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1890; CIHM 11502); Blanche Lucile MacDonell, *Diane of Ville Marie: A Romance of French Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898; CIHM 09409); Lighthall, *The False Chevalier*; William McLennan and J. N. McIlwraith, *The Span O'Life: A Tale of Louisbourg and Quebec* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899; CIHM 53209).

<sup>38</sup>Review of Neville Trueman, *the Pioneer Preacher*, by William Withrow, in *Canadian Methodist Magazine* 12 (September 1880): 287.

<sup>39</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 19. Also see Eric Hobsbawm, "Inventing Tradition," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge

colonial project as part of Canadian history served several purposes. It allowed a more ancient past for the Canadian nation and it created a sense that this past was shared by both French and English Canadians.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian authors attempted to unify the nation by presenting the history of New France as a heritage that united English and French Canadians. Through novels, speeches, and events such as the Tercentenary Celebrations at Quebec City, English-speaking Canadians presented the history of New France as a national history.<sup>40</sup> In many novels, when fictional characters or narrators discussed Canadian history, they spoke of the heritage of New France.<sup>41</sup>

One instance of this adoption of the history of New France to represent Canadian history appeared in a novel written by the Reverend William Withrow, a Methodist minister from Ontario. The novel's main character, Lawrence Temple, was the impoverished son of a deceased Methodist minister. In order to earn money to go to college, Lawrence decided to spend a winter working in the lumberwoods on the Ottawa River. Lawrence was a refined and educated youth and was at first

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University Press, 1983), 14; Raymond Chapman, *The Sense of the Past in Victorian Literature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 17; Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity*, 46-48, 106-108; Lowenthal, *Past is a Foreign Country*, xvi, 44, 104-105; Francis, *National Dreams*, 11.

<sup>40</sup>Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 44, 82; Gerson, *Purer Taste*, 109; Brouwer, "Moral Nationalism," 93; Dennis Duffy, "Nouvelles(s) France: An Impression," *Queen's Quarterly* 88 (Spring 1981): 46, 61; Dennis Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalty in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 43; H. V. Nelles, "Historical Pageantry and the 'Fusion of the Races' at the Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 26 (November 1996): 392-394, 400, 414.

<sup>41</sup>Examples of this appeared in Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur*, 132; Lanigan, *They Two*, 89; Thad W. H. Leavitt, *The Witch of Plum Hollow* (Toronto: Wells Publishing Co., 1892; CIHM 08682), 212-213, 218-219, 243-244; Alice Jones, *Marcus Holbeach's Daughter* (New York: D. Appleton, 1912), 236.

intimidated by the uncouthness of his fellow loggers. He despaired and almost decided to turn back, but then encouraged himself to stay on and do his duty by contemplating the sufferings of some of the heroes of New France:

He thought of the brave explorer Champlain, who, first of white men, had . . . penetrated the far recesses of the Canadian wilderness; and of Brebeuf, and Lalemant, and Davost, and Daniel, the intrepid Jesuit missionaries who, two hundred years before, for the love of souls, had toiled up the tortuous stream, sleeping on the bare rock, carrying their burdens over the frequent and rugged portages, till they reached their far off Indian missions on the shores of . . . Lake Huron. . . . The memory of the faith and patience of these early Canadian martyrs, although of an alien race and creed, enbraved the heart of this Canadian youth, two centuries after their death, to pursue the path of duty in the face of whatever obstacles might rise.<sup>42</sup>

Lawrence, a Canadian youth, was sustained by the notion of Canadian martyrs, Canadian heroes. The facts that all these men were Catholic, while he was an ardent Methodist, that they were French while he was of British descent, were of less importance than the idea that he could see these men as part of his Canadian heritage. Thus the fictional youth from Ontario and the French explorer Champlain were imagined as part of the same national community. They were both Canadian. Withrow imaginatively embraced Champlain and the Jesuits as part of the Canadian heritage, part of the immemorial past that all Canadians shared.

The historical novel about New France and Acadia was a particularly effective tool in the creation of the idea of a franco-inclusive Canadian heritage. Through this means, all of the early French explorations and

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<sup>42</sup>Withrow, *King's Messenger*, 21-22. Additional examples of this adoption of the French past appear in Lighthall, *The Young Seigneur*, 132; Lanigan, *They Two*, 89.

settlements in North America could be re-imagined as Canadian history and heritage. The most popular topics for these historical novels were New France before the Conquest, the Conquest itself, and Acadia before and during the Expulsion. The most popular of the first type was William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*.<sup>43</sup> This novel told the story of a citizen of Quebec, Philibert, who angered the corrupt Intendant Bigot and was punished for it. This novel resonated through English-Canadian culture and was mentioned in numerous other novels.<sup>44</sup> The most famous novel of the fall of Quebec was Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty*, which presented the story of the fall of Quebec City to General Wolfe's troops through the narration of an Englishman held captive within the city.<sup>45</sup> Due to the popularity of Longfellow's poem about the expulsion of the Acadians, English Canadians were also interested in the Acadian aspect of their French heritage. Charles G. D. Roberts was particularly prolific on this theme.<sup>46</sup>

The prevalence of the Conquest and Expulsion in Canadian historical novels was the result of both internal and external intellectual currents. English Canadians writing historical romances knew that they were participating in an internationally popular genre. Therefore, they were careful to write historical novels that included common themes from

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<sup>43</sup>William Kirby, *The Golden Dog: A Romance of Old Quebec* (New York: Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Co., 1877; reprint, McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

<sup>44</sup>Including Saunders, *House of Armour*, 185; Lighthall, *The False Chevalier*, 123, 162; Mabel Clint, [Harold Saxon, pseud.], *Under the King's Bastion: A Romance of Quebec* (n. p.: Frank Carrel, 1902), 13-14, 55-58, 71, 75-77.

<sup>45</sup>Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty: A Romance of Old Quebec* (New York: D. Appleton, 1896).

<sup>46</sup>Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Raid from Beauséjour and How the Carter Boys Lifted the Mortgage: Two Stories of Acadie* (Toronto: Musson, 1894; CIHM 12229); Roberts, *The Forge in the Forest*; Roberts, *A Sister to Evangeline*; Charles G. D. Roberts, *By the Marshes of Minas* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900; CIHM 50970).



within that genre. In the international literary marketplace of the late nineteenth century, Sir Walter Scott's novels romanticizing the defeated Jacobites remained extremely popular, especially in British settler colonies such as Canada and Australia. The popularity of Scott's novels made stories of such romantic, defeated minorities both intellectually possible and economically profitable.<sup>47</sup> English-Canadian authors sometimes explicitly linked the defeated Jacobites and the defeated French in their stories of the Fall of New France.<sup>48</sup>

These historical romances also reflected uniquely Canadian cultural elements. Some authors attempted to alleviate the contemporary social and political tension between French and English Canadians by presenting the transition from French to English power in ways that minimized English culpability, at least in their own eyes. English-Canadian authors shared the nineteenth-century historians' belief that the Conquest was a liberation or a salvation for French Canadians. Based on the works of Francis Parkman and others, English-Canadians of the late nineteenth century frequently believed that New France was stifled by the bureaucracy imposed by the French Crown and the Catholic church; they also thought that the colonists were lucky to be liberated from this despotic rule by the British Conquest.<sup>49</sup> English-Canadian historians and authors were encouraged in this view by

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<sup>47</sup>Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants*, 21, 27; Duffy, "Nouvelle(s) France," 50; Gerson, *Purer Taste*, "The Long Shadow of Sir Walter Scott," 67-79.

<sup>48</sup>McLennan and McIlwraith, *Span O'Life*; Ogilvy, *Marie Gourdon*.

<sup>49</sup>M. Brook Taylor, *Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans: Historiography in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 257-259; Francis, *National Dreams*, 95. An early novelistic instance of this view appeared in Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (London: T. Dodsley, 1769; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961), 198. For a sample of the historical debate on the effects of the Conquest, see Cameron Nish, ed., *The French Canadians, 1759-1766; Conquered? Half-Conquered? Liberated?* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1966).

the writings of French Canadian clerical historians, who described the Conquest as a providential fall that allowed the French in Quebec to avoid the religious catastrophe that resulted from the French Revolution.<sup>50</sup>

English-Canadian authors were also eager to present their own historical catastrophe, the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755, in a manner that minimized the guilt of their British counterparts without placing blame on their Acadian fellow citizens. English-Canadian novels about the expulsion, especially those written by Charles G. D. Roberts, were part of an ongoing Canadian response to Longfellow's poem, *Evangeline*, which portrayed the British as the villains. Congenial as this idea of British guilt was for New Englanders such as Longfellow, it was difficult for Nova Scotians and other Canadians to accept. Instead of accepting their role as descendants of villains, they worked to re-establish their traditional view of the Expulsion as a result of military necessity. In this view, the Acadians were a peaceful people who were forced to arms against the British by the machinations of power hungry priests and an uncaring French government.<sup>51</sup>

By shifting the blame to the French government and the Catholic Church, English-Canadian novelists and historians produced a view of the Expulsion that was tailor-made for the reconciliation of Acadian and English descendants within Canada. Novelists and historians insisted that the British in Acadia had been benevolent rulers welcomed by the Acadians

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<sup>50</sup>See Serge Gagnon, *Quebec and Its Historians, 1840 to 1920*, trans. Yves Brunelle (Montreal: Harvets House, 1982), 44-66, on the clerical historian Abbé Ferland.

<sup>51</sup>Taylor, "Poetry and Prose of History," 46-67; Owen, "Vision and Revision," 118, 121-123. For the evolving Canadian historical assessment of the Expulsion, see N. E. S. Griffiths, ed. *The Acadian Deportation: Deliberate Perfidy or Cruel Necessity?* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1969).

because they offered relief from a corrupt French government. Charles G. D. Roberts was particularly fond of this theme. In novel after novel, his Acadian characters voiced approval of the British empire and its rule over them. Even when he wrote directly about the Expulsion, Roberts included Acadian characters who spoke approvingly of British rule. One such character had “many good words” about the British:

[T]hey were pitiful, he said, in the act of carrying out cruel orders. And they neither robbed nor terrorized. Not they, he said, but a wicked priest and the intriguers of a rotten government at Québec, were the scourge of Acadie.<sup>52</sup>

Roberts’s Acadian characters had nothing against British rule; in fact, they appreciated the way its tolerance and forbearance allowed them to prosper. In Roberts’s novels, the Acadian characters voiced the verdict of nineteenth-century historians of Nova Scotia on the necessity of the Expulsion and the lack of British guilt.<sup>53</sup>

In Roberts’s view, the fault for the cruelty that was the expulsion of the Acadians rested not on the generous and forbearing British Empire, but on the activities of Abbé le Loutre, whom he called the Black Abbé. The Abbé was a Jesuit missionary to the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia, based at Shubenacadie. Le Loutre was involved in encouraging Mi’kmaq resistance to English rule on behalf of the French crown and apparently led or encouraged Mi’kmaq raiding parties that burned the Acadian village of Beaubassin.<sup>54</sup> In Roberts’s stories of Acadia the Abbé was an entirely evil

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<sup>52</sup>Roberts, *Sister to Evangeline*, 167. Also see Roberts, *Forge in the Forest*, 19.

<sup>53</sup>Literary scholars have commented upon this aspect of Roberts’s novels. See Gerson, *Purer Taste*, 123; Elizabeth Waterston, “Roberts, Parker, and the Uses of History,” 113; Owen, “Vision and Revision in Roberts’ Acadian Romances,” 119.

<sup>54</sup>For details of Le Loutre’s career in Acadia, see Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 99, 111, 125, 136; Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-*

man who delighted in inciting his faithful Indian converts to atrocities against the English. Roberts explained the occasional participation of young Acadian men in these raiding parties through scenes in which the Abbé forced them to join by threatening to unleash “his” Mi’kmaqs on their own homes and villages.<sup>55</sup> The character of the Black Abbé was consistent with many contemporary Protestant ideas about Catholic priests. The use of these anti-Catholic stereotypes also aided in the attempt to diffuse the tensions created by the Expulsion by creating a villain that was neither British nor an Acadian. Because the Black Abbé was so recognizably evil, his character served to acquit both sides of guilt for an event whose memory otherwise created a divide between two groups of Canadian citizens.

While Roberts focused on a clerical scapegoat, other authors focused their blame upon the French royal government for the loss of both Acadia and New France. To nineteenth-century English-Canadian authors, the fatal weakness of New France was that it was ruled and defended by corrupt noblemen from France.<sup>56</sup> This type of French officer weakened New France militarily, by not knowing or caring enough to defend it, and monetarily, by embezzlement and other means. The French officers portrayed in nineteenth-century English-Canadian fiction cared more about exploiting the colony and the colonists for their own gain than they did about the

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1784 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 82-83; L. F. S. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979), 36, 49-53; Norman McL. Rogers, “The Abbé Le Loutre,” *Canadian Historical Review* 11 (1930): 105-128.

<sup>55</sup>Roberts, *Raid from Beauséjour*; Roberts, *By the Marshes of Minas*, 53.

<sup>56</sup>For more balanced views of the causes of the fall of New France, see George F. G. Stanley, *New France: The Last Phase, 1744-1760* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968); Guy Frégault, *Canada: The War of the Conquest* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969); I. K. Steele, *Guerrillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969).

present welfare or future good of the colony.<sup>57</sup> This depiction of the French allowed for a positive portrait of the British as the saviors of New France.

In English-Canadian fiction about the Conquest of New France, the French colonists welcomed English rule out of disgust with their previous rulers. In many novels, a French-Canadian character lent credence to this flattering view by telling another character how much he or she appreciated English rule.<sup>58</sup> English-Canadian authors felt that French-Canadian appreciation for British control was the result of their dislike of the French colonial government. As one English-speaking character expressed it, "though they love France, yet they feel less oppressed under English rule. Can there be a worse commentary on French rule than that?"<sup>59</sup> This was a fairly scathing indictment of French rule of New France and was probably profoundly consoling for English-Canadian readers. Instead of being reviled as conquerors, they could regard themselves as the benevolent liberators of French Canada.

At the same time, English-Canadian authors attempted to portray the Conquest as a unifying event by arguing that it provided a proud heritage for all Canadians, whatever their race.<sup>60</sup> These depictions of the Conquest as

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<sup>57</sup>For example, the Intendent Bigot and his court in Kirby, *Golden Dog*; and the villain Doltaire in Parker, *Seats of the Mighty*. Also see M. Ameila Fytche, *The Rival Forts; or, The Velvet Siege of Beauséjour* (Halifax: Alex Neil, 1907; CIHM 73437), 354-355; McLennan and McIlwraith, *Span O'Life*, 144, 185-186; Rosanna Leprohon, *The Manor House of De Villeraï: A Tale of Canada Under the French Domination*, in *The [Montreal] Family Herald*, 1859-1860; reprint, *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 34 (1986): 42-43.

<sup>58</sup>L. G., *Jessie Grey*, 32; Saunders, *Rose a Charlitte*, 112.

<sup>59</sup>James DeMille, *The Lily and the Cross: A Tale of Acadia* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1874; CIHM 02632), 179. Also see Margaret Marshall Saunders, *The House of Armour* (Philadelphia: A. J. Rowland, 1897; CIHM 13298), 391; Jean N. McIlwraith, *A Diana of Quebec* (Toronto: Bell and Cockburn, 1912), 10, 13, 56, 314. The idea is also discussed in Francis, *National Dreams*, 95.

<sup>60</sup>See Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History*, 44; Francis, *National Dreams*, 94.

a nation-building event often focused on the architecture and monuments of Quebec City. In Quebec, according to one novelist, "This union of two peoples who warred against each other of old, and whose descendants, whether of French or English race, are proudly content to call themselves Canadians in this day, is in evidence everywhere."<sup>61</sup> The narrator explicitly equated the monuments of Quebec City as an indication of unity rather than conflict, especially the monument shared by Montcalm and Wolfe. Nor was she alone in this. The organizers of the Tercentenary Celebrations of the Founding of Quebec, held in Quebec City in 1908, were careful to minimize the indications of conflict when they presented the Fall of Quebec. Instead of a mock battle, the final scene of the pageants consisted of the two armies maneuvering side by side, while the rival generals "stood before the audience as comrades."<sup>62</sup>

These presentations of the Conquest as a unifying event were part of the ongoing English-Canadian attempt to imagine a national community that would embrace both English and French. By emphasizing the heroism on both sides of that pivotal battlefield, English-Canadian writers attempted to create a unified national heritage in which everyone could be inspired by both Wolfe and Montcalm and in which a Methodist youth could look to the heroism of Champlain and the Jesuits for inspiration. In their attempt to define Canadian national identity, English-Canadian authors of fiction

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<sup>61</sup>Mabel Clint, [Harold Saxon, pseud.], *Under the King's Bastion: A Romance of Quebec* (n. p.: Frank Carrel, 1902), 39. Also see Huntington, *Professor Conant*, 76.

<sup>62</sup>Ronald Rudin, "Contested Terrain: Commemorative Celebrations and National Identity in Ireland and Quebec," in *La Nation dans tous ses États: Le Québec en comparaison*, ed. Yvon Lamonde and Gérard Bouchard (Montreal: Harmattan Inc., 1997), 199; Nelles, "Historical Pageantry," 404. Also see H. V. Nelles' book-length study of the Tercentenary, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

explicitly included the history, manners, language, and other attributes of the French as part of a pan-Canadian identity.<sup>63</sup>

In imagining a national community, however, English-Canadian authors included only a certain vision of the French within the Canadian identity. The imagined French that they wanted to include in their national identity were representatives of the past, not of the future. They were quaint, picturesque examples of a simpler life that English-Canadian intellectuals feared was vanishing from their world. The French in Canada could function both as representatives of the heroic French colonial past that was so necessary in providing English Canada with a sense of its own history and as preservers of distinctive folk beliefs and practices that would provide an identity for Canada on the world stage.<sup>64</sup>

This vision of the place of French Canadians within Confederation deliberately avoided the contentious political debates illustrated by the controversies over the Jesuits' Estates Act and the Manitoba Schools Act. These, and similar political debates, were about the future fate of Catholicism and French Canadians within the Canadian nation. As a group, the largely Protestant authors of fiction in English in late nineteenth century Canada responded to these issues indirectly. They avoided mentioning contemporary political disputes and wrote about Catholicism in conciliatory terms. Instead, they attempted to settle the question of Canada's future by limiting French Canadians to an identity that was part of Canada's past.

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<sup>63</sup>Instances of this inclusion of French manners, language, and characteristics as part of Canadian identity include: Kirby, *Golden Dog*, 16; Thomas, *Frontier Schoolmaster*, 70; Saunders, *House of Armour*, 10-12; Charles William Gordon, [Ralph Connor, pseud.], *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (1899; facsimile reprint, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 48-49; A. C. Laut, *Lords of the North* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 45.

<sup>64</sup>In this, their role was similar to that of the "folk" in Nova Scotia, described by McKay in *Quest of the Folk*.

This characterization of the French as an essential part of Canadian history allowed English-Canadians to embrace French heritage and culture as part of Canadian identity. On these terms, they imagined, Canada's racial divisions could be healed as these picturesque French were assimilated into an amalgamated Canadian race. The French, as imagined by English-Canadian writers, were included in Canadian nationality on the basis that their continuing rural identity would provide contrast to modern machine culture and a unique and picturesque element to the international idea of Canada.



## Chapter 8

### CONCLUSION: NOVELS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CANADA

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian nationalists were concerned with encouraging their fellow countrymen and women to identify themselves as Canadians. Simultaneously, they attempted to specify what it meant to be Canadian. As discussed in the Introduction, educated middle- and upper-class English Canadians were engrossed by attempts to define Canadian national identity in the late nineteenth century. They were searching for what it meant to be Canadian. Although they would not have used the term identity, English-Canadian nationalists were searching for the sense of self- and other-definition that the term implies. To possess an identity is to be clear about who you are in comparison with those around you. An identity can be formed primarily around nation, ethnic group, gender, region, race, or all of these together. National identity encompasses self-definition as part of the nation as well as beliefs about the defining characteristics of the nation and fellow nationals.<sup>1</sup>

In the period after 1867, English-Canadian intellectuals felt a need to create a Canadian identity that would go beyond political citizenship. They were motivated by the international ideology of nationalism, which held that members of a national group had to share a heritage and a destiny as

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<sup>1</sup>On concepts of identity, see Richard Handler, "Is 'Identity' a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?" in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 28; Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 3, 21; Nancy M. Theriot, *Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth-Century America: The Biosocial Construction of Femininity*, rev. ed. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 4-7; Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 12-13, 44-82.

well as a government.<sup>2</sup> The activities of the group known as Canada First were an important example of this desire. This group of college-educated professional men articulated their sense that Canada needed a “new nationality” and a high-minded destiny in speeches, monographs, and in the public press. Although they disintegrated as a political group after 1876, they and their ideas continued to be influential in Canadian society.<sup>3</sup> Many nationalists, including members of Canada First, emphasized the need for a distinctively Canadian literature as an expression of national character.<sup>4</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, the novel was a principal format for the creation of the community of the imagination that was at the heart of national identity. At this time, the novel had become the most important vehicle for storytelling in western societies, including Canada. Novels were important in the creation of identity because it is by the stories we tell about ourselves that we discover who we are and how we relate to others. The particular stories that a culture tells about its past, present, and future create what one historian calls the “structures of meaning” within which people

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<sup>2</sup>See Robert H. Wiebe, *Who We Are: A History of Popular Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5; Claude T. Bissell, “Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Canadian Historical Review* 31 (September 1950): 237-251.

<sup>3</sup>Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 49-77; Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 153.

<sup>4</sup>See John A. Cooper, “Should Our Literature Be Canadian?” *Canadian Magazine* 8 (April 1897); reprinted in Carl Ballstadt, ed., *The Search for English-Canadian Literature: An Anthology of Critical Articles from the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 108; “Introductory Statement” *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 1 (January 1872): 1; John A. Cooper, “The Strength and Weakness of Current Books,” *Canadian Magazine* 13 (May 1899): 13; S. E. Dawson, *The Prose Writers of Canada: An Address Delivered Before the Teachers of the City and District of Montreal* (Montreal: E. M. Renouf, 1901; CIHM 12531), 32-33, 37-39; Thomas Guthrie Marquis, “English Canadian Literature,” in *Canada and Its Provinces*, ed. Adam Shortt and A. B. Doughty (1913; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); 493.

live their lives. People interpret their experiences through these structures. Thus the examination of novels and stories is important for the historian who hopes to examine the thoughts and feelings of past generations.<sup>5</sup>

At a national level, such meaning structures are often perceived and discussed as myths. As such, they have frequently been dismissed by historians as untrue. Yet myths, as the stories a nation tells about itself, are particularly important to the creation of national identity. *Pretty Pierre*, a character created by the famous nineteenth-century novelist Gilbert Parker, expressed the difference between history and myth in the following way:

If you hear a thing like that from Indians, you call it legend; if you hear it from the Company's papers, you call it history. Well, in this there is not much difference. The papers tell precise the facts; the legend gives the feeling, is more true. How can you judge the facts if you don't know the feeling?<sup>6</sup>

In the novels examined for this project, English-Canadian writers expressed the feelings that animated nationalists in their educated social group. These ideas about Canada and Canadians had an impact upon the political, social, and cultural climate of late-nineteenth-century Canada. The novels formed and expressed the ideas of Canada's political and social elite in the late nineteenth century and revealed the core myths that structured social and political development. In stories about Canadian settings and characters,

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<sup>5</sup>On novels in the nineteenth century and their role in nation building, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 30. On stories and the creation of meaning, see Athena Vrettos, *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 2; Theriot, *Mothers and Daughters*, 7-11.

<sup>6</sup>Gilbert Parker, *An Adventurer of the North* (1896; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 103. On history versus myth see Edward D. Ives, *George Magoon and the Down East Game War: History, Folklore, and the Law* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 3-6; Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 6; Francis, *National Dreams*, 10-11, 14.

English-Canadian writers expressed and created the core myths that were central to Canadian national identity.

For a historian, one of the most striking characteristics of fiction written in English by Canadians in the late nineteenth century is its lack of comment upon current events. English-Canadian authors rarely discussed the current political crises or social problems of their nation. With the exception of a single remark about the National Policy, these novels are silent on the political development of Canada.<sup>7</sup> Authors seldom commented about social issues such as labor unrest or urban squalor, but when they did they displaced these problems onto the United States or Great Britain.<sup>8</sup> Current events, other than the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 and the Boer War, were noticeably absent from English-Canadian fiction.<sup>9</sup> This lack of commentary on current events indicates that these incidents may not have been of central importance to English-Canadian ideas about their national identity in the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>7</sup>The comment on John A. Macdonald's National Policy appeared in a novel by a New Brunswick woman, Rebecca Agatha Armour, *Marguerite Verne; or, Scenes from Canadian Life* (St. John, New Brunswick: Daily Telegraph, 1886; CIHM 06085), 311.

<sup>8</sup>See Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), esp. Chapter Nine, "Soulager le Bourgeois," 132-151.

<sup>9</sup>Considered statistically, even these events were rarely mentioned in the over 240 novels read for this dissertation. The Northwest Rebellion was mentioned five times, while the Boer War appeared in two novels. The Northwest Rebellion made appearances in Armour, *Marguerite Verne*, 311; S. Frances Harrison, "The Prisoner Dubois," in *Crowded Out! and Other Sketches* (Ottawa: Evening Journal Office, 1886; CIHM 06401), 90-97; Christopher Oakes, *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* (Toronto: National Publishing Company, 1890; CIHM 30422), 33; Helen Boggs, *When the Shadows Flee Away: A Story of Canadian Society* (Montreal: Lovell, 1891; CIHM 06251), 244-266; is the subject of Edmund Collins, *Annette, The Metis Spy: A Heroine of the N. W. Rebellion* (Toronto: Rose, 1886; CIHM 12152). Canadian participation in the Boer war was mentioned in Julia W. Henshaw, *Why Not Sweetheart?* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901), 237-246; George Washington Smith, *The Smileys: A Tale of Hardwoodlands* (Windsor, Nova Scotia: J. J. Anslow, 1901), 38-39, 55-62.

As evidenced by even a casual glance at the chapter headings of this study, Canadian national identity was made up of many ideas in the late nineteenth century. Some of these concepts appear contradictory to the modern analyst, but that did not prevent their coexistence in English-Canadian ideas about their nation. Thus English-Canadian intellectuals believed that their nation was characterized both by a uniquely close relationship to the wilderness and by the transformation of that wilderness through the settlement process. They defined themselves as a British people who nevertheless had a French heritage. These contradictions were all part of the complex set of ideas that gave meaning to the adjective "Canadian."

There is no simple definition of what English-Canadian authors meant when they used the term Canadian to describe a person, idea, or landscape in the late nineteenth century. Instead, many ideas about Canada and Canadians interacted with each other in the formation of Canadian identity. In their novels, English-Canadian nationalists consistently linked Canadian identity to a shared experience of a unique landscape and heritage. This focus on land and heritage as interacting sources of national identity was not unique to Canadians. In the late nineteenth century, these two concepts were central to nationalist ideology throughout the world.<sup>10</sup> Intellectuals believed that each nation had a different character because of the uniqueness of its land and heritage.

Thus the important question for the historian of Canadian national development is about the specific content of English-Canadian ideas about

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<sup>10</sup>Eric Kaufmann, "Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (October 1998): 666-695; David Lowenthal, "Identity, Heritage, and History," in *Commemorations*, 41-57.

the way their land and their heritage interacted to form Canadian identity. In novels set in Canada and about Canadians, English-Canadian nationalists most fully expressed the full range of their beliefs about land, heritage, and identity. Although the format of the dissertation divides the concepts of land and heritage in order fully to describe the content of these ideas, English-Canadian novelists frequently addressed the concepts simultaneously.

In the late nineteenth century, English-Canadian writers portrayed Canada's unique character as a result of the effect of a wild, northern landscape upon settlers whose racial heritage was French and British. Neither old blood nor new land would by itself be sufficient, but together they would combine into something better than either. This opinion appeared most clearly in a novel published only ten years after Confederation. In a discussion of the future of Canada, one character explicitly discussed the combination of land and heritage in Canadian identity:

If then the physical beauties and wealth of a country are the determining elements to make the people happy, advanced, refined and powerful, this "Canada of ours" should become a great nation. Springing from untouched virgin wilds into active life; under the ardent powers of a people sprung from Earth's two greatest of races; with their vivifying culture and high civilization—the slow growth of centuries—transplanted ready-made to the new, fresh soil; surely the wide land of the maple and the beaver has all the elements for a future—great and powerful.<sup>11</sup>

The national pride on display in this passage was typical of English Canadians who wrote novels about Canada and Canadians. Their novels

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<sup>11</sup>W. H. Brown, *She Might Have Done Better* (St. Johns, Quebec: News Steam Printing House, 1877; CIHM 03748), 1: 9.

often asserted that Canada had a great future ahead of it.<sup>12</sup> As seen in novels, this future was the result of the interaction of the Canadian land with its settlers. In this formulation, the land was improved by European settlers, who unleashed the potential of the Canadian landscape. These European-descended Canadians transformed and improved the Canadian land by revealing its treasures of furs, valuable metals, and precious stones and through the settlement process that made the land agriculturally fruitful.<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously, novelists believed, the Canadian land changed and enhanced the European racial groups that encountered it. Contact with the Canadian landscape was believed to improve Europeans by bringing out their ability to triumph over physical hardships.

English-Canadian novelists depicted the Canadian land as a place where physical hardship combined with opportunity. As described in the first three chapters, novelists characterized the Canadian landscape as a northern wilderness that presented a variety of difficulties for agricultural settlers. Yet those who could overcome these hardships were assured a reward by the inherent fruitfulness of the land. Novelists continually emphasized that Canadian identity was dependent upon the ability to overcome the rigors imposed by the Canadian land and reap the benefits of its natural resources.

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<sup>12</sup>See, for instance, utopian novels about Canada's future, including: Ralph Centennius, *The Dominion in 1983* (Peterborough, Ontario: Toker & Co., 1883; CIHM 00529); W. H. C. Lawrence, *The Storm of '92: A Grandfather's Tale told in 1932* (Toronto: Sheppard, 1889; CIHM 08947); John Galbraith, *In the New Capital; or, The City of Ottawa in 1999* (Toronto: Toronto News Company, 1897; CIHM 03283); Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward: The Strange Experiment of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913).

<sup>13</sup>An excellent novelistic treatment of the search for precious stones and metals in Canada is: Alice Jones, *Flame of Frost* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1914). See Chapter Four for further discussion of the view of the transformative powers of the settlement process.

English-Canadian writers also portrayed the climate and other physical hardships of the Canadian land as determining factors in the creation of Canada's racial and ethnic profile. They believed that certain European groups were better suited to the Canadian climate than others. The authors felt that only those whose heritage was from northern nations would be able to adapt successfully to the Canadian landscape. The limitation of Canada's ethnic heritage to the British, French, and Indians, described in Chapter Six, was both a reflection of Canada's actual ethnic makeup at the time and an ideological statement about which peoples were best suited to the Canadian climate. Characters of Scottish or mixed British background were most often shown as successful Canadians. The opinion about English emigrants was not uniformly positive and English characters failed to adapt to Canadian circumstances at least as often as they succeeded.

English-speaking Canadian authors conceptualized these varying responses to the Canadian land as the result of racial differences between Scottish, English, and other Canadian groups. This view of racial divisions between European peoples was in keeping with the nineteenth-century habit of speaking of all types of differences between peoples as results of race. Race was a term used to distinguish between European peoples as well as to assert differences between Europeans and other groups of people.<sup>14</sup> In nineteenth-century Canadian novels, the concept of race was used as a way to consider the reasons for different relationships to the Canadian land. English-Canadian nationalists believed that the so-called "northern races"

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<sup>14</sup>See Chapter Six for a full discussion of the nineteenth-century use of the term "race." Also see Wiebe, *Who We Are*, 56-57; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).



had a better chance of adapting to Canada than other groups. This concept of northern racial identity was an important concept in the creation of a sense of common racial identity within the Canadian nation.<sup>15</sup>

In their novels, English-speaking Canadians emphasized that people from these northern racial groups were favorably transformed by their contact with the Canadian land. This was explicitly discussed in one novel published in 1888. An English character visiting Canada was astonished at the physical strength demonstrated by the French-Canadian voyageurs, especially in view of a recent set of tests that had ranked Irishmen first in terms of strength, followed by the Scots, the English, and the Belgians, making the French a poor fifth. Edmund, a Canadian lumber merchant and land surveyor, responded:

“Look at the effect of our dry and bracing climate! Recent trials shew [*sic*] that in Canada, the Irish, Scotch, English, and their descendants still occupy their old relative positions; while the French Canadians have attained to the place of the Englishman making a good third.” All agreed that the climate of Canada was destined to develop and build up one of the most hardy and finest races of men which had ever appeared in any part of the world.<sup>16</sup>

The French Canadians were portrayed as a group who were able to benefit from their contact with the rigors of Canada's climate. Their Canadian identity was thus assured. In addition, English-Canadian nationalists of the educated classes believed that the French who settled in Canada were a northern race who shared a Norman heritage with the British.<sup>17</sup> The idea

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<sup>15</sup>Carl Berger, “The True North Strong and Free,” in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 3-36.

<sup>16</sup>Richard Lanigan, *They Two; or, Phases of Life in Eastern Canada Fifty Years Ago* (Montreal: Lovell, 1888; CIHM 28408), 97.

<sup>17</sup>The idea of the French as a northern race was discussed in Chapter Two. Also see Berger, “True North,” 12-14; Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines and History*:

of the French as a northern race allowed English-Canadian nationalists to argue that they and the French shared a common racial heritage, which many at the time believed to be essential to the creation of nationhood.

This embrace of the French as a northern race who were thereby perfectly suited to the Canadian landscape and climate was important in creating the sense of a Canadian heritage. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the French colonial past was an important factor in the creation of the idea of the antiquity of the Canadian nation. Without the idea of the Canadian French as a northern race, the incorporation of French colonial history in North America into Canadian history would have been much more difficult. This use of French heritage was important in the creation of an idea of Canadian identity because it allowed English Canadians to feel that their nation had a picturesque and ancient past.

English-Canadian novelists also used the idea of Canada's northern identity to differentiate Canadians from Americans. In this view, the United States was a southern nation. This fundamental difference was important to the English-Canadian sense of self as it appeared in novels. To this day, English Canadians frequently define themselves as not American. This tendency had its roots in characterizations of the land and in English-Canadian ideas about their British heritage. As discussed in Chapter Five, English-Canadian novelists created a Canadian identity by identifying with their British imperial heritage. They also portrayed themselves as a nation that had been created by the migration of those who had rejected the American Revolution. National pride was also enhanced by novelists'

depictions of the War of 1812 as a successful defense of Canadian sovereignty against American aggression.

In tandem with their rejection of the United States, English-Canadian authors embraced the imperial connection as part of their national identity. This British imperial connection was based on ideas of both land and heritage. English Canadians who wrote novels emphasized Canada's racial and historical relationship to Great Britain. They emphasized Scottish and English immigrants as important elements in the Canadian racial mixture. In addition, these novelists believed that Canada shared the cultural and historical legacy of Great Britain. British history was their history; British culture their culture.

English Canadian identification of themselves as a northern nation gave them a sense of connection to Great Britain, which was also believed to be a northern nation. In this shared characteristic, English-Canadian nationalists found a unique identity for themselves within the British empire, as the only colony that shared Britain's northern location. This sense of a shared northern identity was evident in English-Canadian novels that predicted that Canada was destined to inherit Great Britain's imperial pre-eminence, as described in Chapter Five. English-speaking authors' faith in Canada's northern character combined with their belief in an imperial heritage led English-Canadian nationalists to imagine a future in which a failing Great Britain would be reinvigorated by its northern Dominion. They believed that contact with and adaptation to the harsh Canadian landscape improved the British racial stock who had settled there, while those who remained in Britain were losing vitality to an over-industrialized civilization. English Canadians believed that their nation's remaining wilderness gave them a hardiness that was vanishing in Great Britain as a

result of a growing lack of contact with wild landscapes. This retention of racial vitality on the part of the Canadians was explicitly believed to be a result of Canada's land.<sup>18</sup> The combination of this land and their imperial heritage, English-Canadian nationalist authors felt, meant that they were perfectly suited to a future in which their nation would become the new center of the British empire.

While this vision of Canada as the future of the British Empire seems somewhat absurd today, many aspects of the Canadian identity created in English-Canadian novels of the late nineteenth century continue to be relevant in Canadian culture. English-Canadians continue to define their identity in relationship to their land and their heritage. As Canada and the world changed throughout the twentieth century, some of the specific manifestations of these themes changed. Yet definitions of Canadian identity continue to reflect the influence of the ideas contained in nineteenth-century novels written in English about Canada and Canadians.

Current Canadian identity is most specifically tied to the idea of the land.<sup>19</sup> As we enter the twenty-first century, English Canadians continue to associate their national identity with their northern location and with the wilderness that still takes up much of their nation's land mass. One important change in Canadian ideas about their northern identity has been the increasing identification with the sport of hockey as an exemplifier of

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<sup>18</sup>See Berger, "True North," 17-19; and Chapter Five.

<sup>19</sup>See Gregory Millard, Sarah Riegel, and John Wright, "Here's Where We Get Canadian: English-Canadian Nationalism and Popular Culture," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (Spring 2002): 16-20.

that heritage. In the late nineteenth century, hockey had not yet strongly emerged as an integral element of Canadian self-definition.<sup>20</sup>

English-speaking Canadians have maintained a dualistic vision of their relationship to their wilderness landscape. In late nineteenth century novels, the wilderness was seen as both a source of desirable strength and moral purity and as something that had to be overcome in order to create Canadian civilization.<sup>21</sup> In the twentieth century, Canadians continued to celebrate their wilderness heritage.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, English-Canadian writers began to discuss the Canadian wilderness landscape as a source of unease and fear within Canadian literature.<sup>23</sup> Throughout, the relationship to the wilderness remained an essential part of Canadian identity, only the ideas about the relationship changed. Whether embracing or overcoming the wilderness, the Canadian wilderness landscape became and remains essential to the English-Canadian idea of their national identity.

English-Canadians also continue to connect their national identity to their shared heritage. Over time, however, ideas about the Canadian historical experience and Canada's racial heritage have changed. Especially noticeable is the gradual withdrawal from the idea of Canada's imperial

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<sup>20</sup>See Chapter Two for a full discussion of the history of hockey in Canada and its absence from nineteenth-century Canadian fiction.

<sup>21</sup>These concepts are discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

<sup>22</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, Chapter Six, "The Ideology of the Canoe: The Myth of the Wilderness," 128-151.

<sup>23</sup>Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," in *The Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972); Margot Northey, *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Margaret Atwood, *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

identity. In late-nineteenth-century novels, imperial loyalty was an important aspect of Canadian national identity.<sup>24</sup> This concept of an imperial identity enhanced Canadian identity by providing English Canadians with a clear reason for their continued difference from the United States. In the years after the First World War, however, this sentiment began to wane in English-speaking Canada.<sup>25</sup>

In the early twenty-first century, English-Canadians define their racial and ethnic heritage through the idea of themselves as a tolerant and multicultural nation. The description of Canada as a mosaic of various ethnic groups first surfaced in the 1920s as a means of encouraging tourism along the Canadian Pacific Railroad and continues to be seen as a description of ideal Canadian life.<sup>26</sup> The idea of Canadian society as a multicultural mosaic also differentiates Canada from the United States. The contrast of the mosaic to the American melting pot ideal became explicit in the later twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

Yet the view of Canada as a multicultural society was not simply a result of railway propaganda or a need to differentiate Canada from the United States. The Canadian ideal of multiculturalism was evident, albeit in a limited way, in late-nineteenth-century fiction. As described in Chapters Six and Seven, English-Canadian authors depicted Canada as a nation that consisted of a variety of ethnic groups. The chief difference

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<sup>24</sup>This concept is discussed in depth in Chapter Five. Also see Berger, *Sense of Power*.

<sup>25</sup>Robert Stamp, "Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: The Training of Young Imperialists," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8 (August 1973): 39-42; Francis, *National Dreams*, 84-86.

<sup>26</sup>Francis, *National Dreams*, 80-83.

<sup>27</sup>Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 13, 23.

between this definition and the twenty-first-century concept of the mosaic is that the latter includes a larger variety of ethnic groups. Despite this more inclusive stance, English-Canadian ideas of their own identity continue to place significant emphasis on the role of the Scots in Canadian history and the creation of Canadian identity. From their fondness for curling to the existence of kilted regiments within the Canadian army, Canadians continue to embrace Scottish symbols as elements of their national character.<sup>28</sup>

Thus English-Canadian ideas about their national identity incorporate many concepts invoked in late-nineteenth-century novels. This similarity in ideas about Canadian identity argues that these novels were a factor in the creation of ideas about what it meant to be Canadian. Despite the difficulty of discerning a direct line of cultural influence, the persistence of specific concepts of land and heritage as part of English-Canadian constructions of national identity indicate that the novels may have had an impact upon Canadian thought. At the least, the novelists were influenced by prevailing nineteenth-century ideas about Canadian identity. As such, these stories offer an important source for the study of English-Canadian ideas about their nation in the late nineteenth century.

In the late nineteenth century, novels about Canadian places and people were an important aspect of the creation of a national identity. English-Canadian nationalists attempted to turn a newly-created political entity into a fully imagined nation. In their novels, they created a set of ideas about characteristics shared by all Canadians. These concepts allowed

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<sup>28</sup>J. M. Bumsted, "Scottishness and Britishness in Canada, 1790-1914," in *Myth, Migration, and the Making of Memory: Scotia and Nova Scotia, c. 1700-1990*, ed. Marjory Harper and Michael E. Vance (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999), 89-104; Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," *Acadiensis* 21 (Spring 1992): 5-47.

educated middle- and upper-class English Canadians to imagine their national community. The national community as imagined in English-language novels was based upon ideas about Canadians' relationships to their land and heritage. Authors shaped a view of Canada's climate, geography, and landscape as unifying elements in Canadian culture by emphasizing its northern location, the role of wilderness, and the triumph over wilderness in Canadian culture. English-Canadian writers also attempted to create the idea of a shared heritage as an essential ingredient in Canadian nationality. By incorporating French history and culture into Canadian history, by describing the nation as the result of the mixture of British, French, and Indian heritage and by embracing an imperial identity, English-Canadian authors attempted to construct an historical and racial inheritance for a new nation.

These ideas, as expressed in novels, became a basis for English-Canadian ideas about themselves and their nation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The investigation into the specific elements of Canadian national creation as reflected in English-Canadian fiction illuminates an important aspect of Canadian cultural history. Through a detailed description of English-Canadian ideas of national identity in the late nineteenth century we can gain greater understanding of Canadian national development in that period and in the century following. The consideration of English-Canadian ideas about their nation is necessary for a deeper understanding of Canadian development. As these ideas defined Canadian policies, both internally and externally, so did they shape Canadian lives. When Canadians ask themselves about their identity, some portion of the answer depends upon these late-nineteenth-century novels.



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