TRUE (PATRIOT) LOVE?:
GENDER AND CULTURE
IN THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL ROMANCE

by

Sunnie Rothenburger

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for Mark,

and for Megan,

because you are both

much more important

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers how nineteenth-century and late twentieth-century Canadian historical fictions, in their inclusion of the love-story plot and character stereotypes of romance, reify the subordination of women and minority cultures. Because historical novels explore Canada's moments of origin, they often engage with what exactly the nation is or set out to be. In considering nation, the narratives in this study draw upon a gendered hierarchy to allegorize social and political relationships between cultures and races: the French-Canadian woman's subordination to her husband in marriage signifies the subordination of her culture; the Native woman's unrequited love for the white man signals her culture's similar subordination.

Crucially, the racial/cultural and gendered stereotypes such narratives employ are often contradictory: women have less power than men, and yet they have enough power to *choose* this lack of agency; the Native man's proximity to the "wilderness" makes him both a "noble savage" and a violent rapist. Drawing on a variety of theorists, I detail the ways in which such contradictions circumscribe women and minority cultures/races, and help justify white colonial and patriarchal power.

After setting out my methodology in Chapter One, I explore, in Chapter Two, English-Canadians' erotic relationships with French-Canadians, focusing on what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "triangles of homosocial desire." In Chapter Three I consider Native women in the novels in relation to the non-Native heroines, employing Terry Goldie's observations on Native sexuality in Fear and Temptation, as well as theories about the "Green Indian." In Chapter Four, I compare Native men as rapists with non-Natives as both romantic heroes and rapists, using essays by Jenny Sharpe and Alan Lawson. The fifth chapter, through Judith Butler's theories about performative gender, explores the subversion of the love story by three protagonists who, as both violent and "fallen" women, find agency in ambiguous (rather than ambivalent) gendered identities. Chapter Six considers these violent women and others in relation to specific national conflicts. My seventh chapter uses Steven Bruhm's consideration of Narcissus to analyze how representations of homosexuality can challenge or confirm conventional notions of history, nation, and erotic love.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty (1896), a novel set in New France during the Seven Years' War, the French villain, Doltaire, outlines the distinction between his countrymen and the English: "You English are the true lovers, we French the true poets [. . .] you love a woman best when she is near, we when she is away; you make a romance of marriage, we of intrigue" (232). Through Doltaire, Parker voices distinctions that eventually help him justify British rule in Canada: the English are loyal and moral, the French corrupt (if exciting). The narrative asserts the superiority of the English when Parker's French-Canadian heroine chooses to marry an anglophone rather than Doltaire. Alixe Duvarney, constructed in the novel as a symbol of her nation, brings to her union with Robert Moray all of the spirit of the French, without their corruption or power; she is thus a suitable "partner" for the English in Canada, and will love her new rulers.

This dissertation will examine such constructions of nation and eroticism in Canadian historical fictions, focusing on the way these fictions often employ the love story, a plot often affiliated with the romance, to outline a hierarchy of cultural relationships in Canada, or what is termed a "national allegory": as women are subordinated to men, so are minority cultures and races subordinated to British-Canadians. Such novels often employ stereotypes, which are also associated with the romance and its love story, in their representations

of racial, cultural, gendered, and sexual Others in Canadian society, but, crucially, these portrayals are usually ambivalent – Doltaire-as-francophone is threatening in a way that Alixe-as-francophone is not; Native women might be stereotyped as both "naturally" attractive and "naturally" repulsive. I will explore and detail the ways in which these contradictory stereotypes help reify the status quo, carefully circumscribing the Other as colonial/patriarchal subordinate and enemy. Subversion of such structures in the love-story plot is rare, but when it is to be found at all, it is located in a forceful *ambiguity*, where individual characters actively strive to avoid categorization.

It is my purpose to examine the love-story plot and its stereotyped characterizations in historical novels in both the nineteenth century and the late-twentieth century, two periods in which the genre has particularly flourished. Some of the criticism on these periods (as I will demonstrate later) has assumed the earlier to be conventional, and the later more subversive, a distinction I plan to trouble. The primary earlier texts will include John Richardson's Wacousta (1832) and The Canadian Brothers (1840), James Russell's Matilda, or The Indian's Captive (1833), Douglas Huyghue's Argimou: A Legend of the Micmac (1847), Philippe Aubert de Gaspé's Canadians of Old (1863, trans. 1890), Rosanna Leprohon's Antoinette De Mirecourt (1864), John Lesperance's The Bastonnais (1877), Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald's An Algonquin Maiden (1887), William Kirby's The Golden Dog (1877), and Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty. The contemporary novels I have chosen include Anne Hebert's Kamouraska (1970), Robert E. Wall's Blackrobe (1981)

and its sequel Bloodbrothers (1981), Dennis Adair and Janet Rosenstock's Kanata (1981) and its sequel Bitter Shield (1982), George Bowering's Burning Water (1983), Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic (1988), John Steffler's The Afterlife of George Cartwright (1992), Rudy Wiebe's A Discovery of Strangers (1994), and Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace (1996). I plan to demonstrate through this selection of texts how many contemporary novels continue, through their employment of the love story, to perpetuate stereotypes and thus support, intentionally or not, a ruling order of white, anglophone, heterosexual males.

The historical novel is a pervasive genre in Canada and has received much critical attention: Carole Gerson devotes two chapters to the vast quantity of historical fiction in the nineteenth century in A Purer Taste (1989); Dennis Duffy surveys the genre from 1832-1983 in Sounding the Iceberg (1986), indicating the persistence of the genre across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Herb Wyile examines contemporary Canadian historical novels in Speculative Fictions (2002), and Linda Hutcheon's well-known chapter "Historiographic Metafiction"[1] in The Canadian Postmodern (1988) explores Canadian innovations in the historical novel.

One of the reasons for the genre's popularity may be that critics, writers, and readers have often been interested in defining or, especially more recently, questioning notions of the national ethos. Margaret Atwood, in an essay on the contemporary Canadian historical novel, argues that the genre is especially appealing for contemporary Canadians because "by taking a long hard look backwards, we place ourselves" ("In Search" 1512). She compares the current

state of Canadians to that of Americans after the Revolution, when historical fiction could help the country examine its current state (1512). In setting their stories in the past, historical authors often engage with what are perceived to be key moments in Canada's formation as a nation, such as the "fall" of New France, the colonization of Native peoples, the settling of the west, or the War of 1812. The authors do not simply present these events, however, but attempt to convey their meaning and their continuing effects on the Canadian nation state. Gerson stresses that nineteenth-century writers believed that "To claim a distinct national identity [. . .] their country had to know and cherish its past" (94), and Hutcheon argues that, for contemporary novelists, the writing of history is often about the interrogation of nation, about telling the stories of, for example, women and minority cultures, who have been left out of narratives of national history (103). In fictionalizing Canadian history, then, authors are often interested in examining the kind of nation Canada was in the particular historical moments of their texts, and how it differs or not from the Canada of the authors' own time, whether they are setting up or interrogating "national" values.

What has received little critical attention, however, is the fact that historical novels so often include a love-story plot. Often in such novels, the hero and heroine combat impediments to their love in the context of major social and/or political events in Canadian history. The use of the love story affects the kind of history and nation the authors present. Carl Murphy, in an essay on early Canadian novels, provides numerous examples, such as Antoinette De Mirecourt and The Bastonnais, of novels that contain what he calls "the marriage

metaphor" (1). This "metaphor,"[2] where a British man courts and eventually marries a French-Canadian woman, is "the archetypal resolution of English-French relations" (Murphy 6); the marriage symbolizes a peaceful social union of the two cultures. Unfortunately, Murphy does little more than point out the pattern, only hinting at its historical and continuing social and political ramifications. The meeting of different cultures in Canada – be they French, Native, English, American, Spanish, Métis, or any other – is also displayed by erotic encounters in contemporary fiction. In Wiebe's A Discovery of Strangers, for example, contact between the old and new worlds is explored in part through erotic relationships between Native and British characters.

This employment of the love-story plot in the novels inevitably raises issues of gender identity and power. As critics such as Rosalind Coward, Nancy Armstrong, and Tania Modleski have noticed, fictional portrayals of romantic relationships usually create a hierarchy in which women are subordinated to men. The female protagonist is promised power only through gaining the love of a man; in exchange for gaining his love, he will provide and care for her. His love, however, can be gained only through her passivity; the heroine must never be seen to actively pursue the hero, for this would not be "lady like" (see Modleski 48). While some critics have argued that the love story can have subversive potential, [3] my own feeling is that any kind of subversion offered by the love-story plot is usually limited. The love-story plot, constructed in the context of a heterosexual, patriarchal society (nineteenth- or twentieth-century),

seems inevitably linked to the authors' responses to, and often their support of, that society's ideologies about gender.

Gendered identities in historical novels are intertwined with and contextualized by attitudes towards nation and culture. Anne McClintock explores the history of gender, alongside issues of class, race, and nation, in Imperial Leather. Although McClintock's subject is not explicitly Canadian, her conclusions provide some insight into Canadian historical fiction, given that all of the novels under study here were written and/or set during the British colonization of Canada and British imperialism generally. McClintock describes how, in nineteenth-century Britain, women, along with colonized races, were considered to be closer to nature and the body, and thus less worldly and intellectual than white men. The fact that women's domain was the family, which was also represented as a natural category, made them inferior to white males, the heads of the families. At the same time, however, their biological role as creators of new citizens made them crucial to the national future. As McClintock states, "Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to national agency" (354).

The hierarchy of women and men can be transposed onto a cultural hierarchy. McClintock explains further:

> Since the subordination of woman to man and child to adult was deemed a natural fact, hierarchies within the nation could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature. The metaphoric depiction of social hierarchy as

> natural and familial – the 'national family,' the global 'family of nations,' the colony as a 'family of black children ruled over by a white father' – depended in this way on the prior naturalizing of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere. (357-58)

The nation presents itself as organic, natural, and eternal through politics of gender, which are also historically conditioned, but also presented as natural and eternal. The British nation, as a "naturally" superior state, is therefore, in its own rhetoric, justified in enslaving other nations.

Murphy's "marriage metaphor," then, often provides allegories for the oppression of particular cultures in Canada. As the French-Canadian woman marries the British soldier, she becomes subordinated to him because of her gender, and this gender hierarchy also acts as an allegory for what some anglophone readers would see as the necessary subordination of French-Canadians generally. The love story, by its nature, celebrates an idealized gender hierarchy and, especially when this is combined with a narrative of national history, the love story can be an allegory for a vision of social oppression of groups other than (but also including) women.

This national allegory in Canadian historical novels, especially nineteenth-century ones, derives partly from a generic motif employed in British literature by Sir Walter Scott, among other authors. In Waverley (1814), for example, the eventual marriage of Rose Bradwardine and Edward Waverley brings together a Scottish female and English male, their union representing a peaceful future

between the two nations, and the subordination of the former to the latter, in the wake of the Scottish rebellions.

While Scott's novels were more popular in Canada, the national allegory was initially employed by writers such as Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) and Maria Edgeworth, who formulated the national allegory as a response to English/Irish relations. Owenson's The Wild Irish Girl (1806) features a courtship and marriage between an absentee English landlord and the daughter of an Irish prince/chieftain, the plot involving a reformation of the English male, who comes to possess respect and affection for the Irish, while still maintaining power over them. He is an obvious symbol for what the author views as England's correct course of action. Indeed, Robert Tracy, in a 1985 essay on Edgeworth and Owenson, terms the national allegory "the Glorvina solution" after Owenson's Irish heroine (10).

The national allegory has been well-documented by critics in relation to eighteenth and nineteenth British literature. Mary Jane Corbett, in Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790-1870, notices how often the gender hierarchy of the family is used to justify English rule of Ireland: "in the English-Irish contest, gender provides perhaps the most fundamental and enduring discursive means for signifying Irish political incapacity, as in the English typing of Ireland as an alternately dependent or unruly daughter, sister, or wife" (16). Through allegories that link nation with gender and family, Ireland is subordinated. Corbett is not the only one to notice the pattern in British and imperial literature, and the topic has also been discussed, in varying ways and

contexts, by Ina Ferris, Ian Dennis, Mary Louise Pratt, and Katie Trumpener.

It is not the goal of my project to provide detailed comparisons of British novels and Canadian ones, but given the influence of Sir Walter Scott in nineteenth-century Canadian literary circles (such as they were), I will at times in Chapter Two, and occasionally throughout the rest of the thesis, make note of similarities between the two bodies of literature. Generally speaking, there are two main issues that both literatures explore, although the Canadian novels often explore these in a somewhat different manner.

In Bardic Nationalism, Trumpener notices that the idea of nation put forth in the national allegory is one that often asserts a national identity only *within* empire. In a chapter that considers early Canadian writing, Trumpener views Scott's popularity throughout many areas of the British empire as deriving from his ability to set up a model for colonial identity. In their representations of Scottish and British history, the Waverley novels emphasize "national identity as a central component of imperial identity," an idea that "lastingly influence[s] the literatures and the self-understanding of the British Empire" (247). Thus, as Gerson notices, Scott becomes the model for literary endeavour in nineteenth-century Canada, where there is a call for a Canadian Sir Walter Scott who will help define the nation (70). Trumpener goes on to notice a few select colonial texts that were, nevertheless, able to critique empire. Similarly, I will demonstrate throughout this thesis the various ways in which the idea of nation is put forth. Especially in nineteenth-century texts, this idea is often one of a Canada closely affiliated with Britain; that is, Canadian national identity is formulated in terms of

partnership with and a sense of belonging to empire, even alongside attempts to distinguish Canada's uniqueness in this empire. Importantly, however, in some of the novels, the idea of nation departs from this model, and instead authors critique Britain's violent and oppressive colonial history. Sometimes this is formulated as a distinction between the English and the Scottish presence in Canada (with the latter being less oppressive and more adaptive), and at other times it is formulated as a new "Canadian" identity that evokes the authority of both the British empire and the Native sense of belonging in Canada, without repeating the oppression of the one or the "savagery" of the other. (See my discussion of Alan Lawson's essay below).

The second main motif that the Canadian novels in this study share with many British novels is that of reconciliation and concession rather than conquest. That is, subordinate cultures are portrayed as desiring and giving permission for their own oppression, and receiving benefits from it. Corbett, drawing on writing by Edmund Burke, notices this motif at work in representations of Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "As part of that [imperial] family, Ireland was entitled to a limited autonomy, but subject ultimately to its superior's sovereignty, both for its own benefit and Great Britain's" (31). The love-story plot plays a key role in shaping this view of Ireland. For example, Corbett describes The Wild Irish Girl as "narratively figuring the resolution to the Rebellion of 1798 as passionate and willing consent on the part of an Irish bride to an English embrace" (69). Mary Louise Pratt, in an essay on eroticism in imperial narratives about slavery, notices a similar motif, where the white male asserts his

(supposedly loving) authority over the black female. Pratt views such narratives as responses to challenges to imperial authority, and asserts, "The allegory of romantic love mystifies exploitation out of the picture" (97).

Often in the Canadian novels there is a similar desire to portray Britain's conquest of French-Canada and Native peoples as done with a kind of consent. In the love story, women and men each bring their unique, stereotyped qualities to a balanced union. In the Canadian historical novel, with its interest in nationhood, this exchange between genders is translated into an exchange between cultures, with each contributing something unique to Canada: Natives understand the environment, French-Canadians have a well-established culture and folklore, and so on. The ruling order is interested in subordinating, rather than annihilating the other, so it allows some measure of "exchange." This exchange, as I am suggesting, is not really exchange, or it is at least not in equal measure in each side: the Native woman is allowed some temporary place in the new white society by suggesting the white male might connect with the land, but this place is only temporary.

This motif of exchange is particularly notable in the texts I will examine in Chapter Two, where French and English romantic relationships in Canada are employed to "resolve" the conquest of Quebec, and the continued presence, in the nineteenth century, of a large French-Canadian minority that might pose challenges to British authority. If anything, the anglophilia in these novels is even more intense than those in some British ones, perhaps because the colonial situation is different in Canada than it would have been for English visitors or

residents in Scotland or Ireland. The much greater physical, as well as psychological distance from the "home" country in Canada at times appears to create an even more anxious need to affiliate with Britain, and subsume non-English others. The Canadian writers also differ, though, in that, with respect to Native peoples, anglophone authors face racial as well as cultural difference. In this case, anxieties about miscegenation force the national allegory to be configured differently (I examine the authors' "solutions" to such an issue in Chapters Three and Four). The anglophone Canadian's position "between" the imperial centre and the Native other, when the imperial centre cannot easily be accessed and the Native must be subordinated sexually, and otherwise, without actual sexual union, creates particular problems of identity. Such problems, I will argue, are often partially "resolved" through the employment of gendered and colonial stereotypes, depicted and asserted through the historical novel's love story.

The love-story plot that Canadian historical novels employ is the kind that has often been associated with the romance, in that such a plot often involves a gender hierarchy, an idealization of erotic love, and character stereotypes. Northrop Frye views the love story as the most significant characteristic of the romance genre (Secular 83). Crucially, he also views the romance as contributing to the maintenance of the status quo. In his "Conclusion" to the Literary History of Canada, Frye associates the romance with the popular literature created by the "garrison mentality" (236), in which communities stay

inward-looking, preferring safety and familiarity over experimentation and discovery, in order to protect themselves from a frightening external world. In the garrison, "moral and social values are unquestionable" (226). In Anatomy of Criticism, Frye notes as well that the romance tends to make use of stereotypes, because it views the world in strict binaries of good and evil. Characters are either "idealized as simply gallant or pure" or "caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly" (195).

Whether or not all the novels in my own study might be defined as "romances" in other ways, Frye's comments on stereotypes hold true in Canadian historical novels that employ the love-story plot. In using the conventional love story, which I view as derived from romances,[4] Canadian historical novelists often revert to or draw upon stereotypes of identity, often binaried into those who impede and those who encourage national/erotic union. I read these as cultural and gendered stereotypes – the emotional woman who values her erotic relationship above all else, the primitive Indian who attacks or assists the protagonist, the superstitious French-Canadian – rather than typological ones. Regardless of authorial intent, these stereotypes support the superiority of the white, anglophone, heterosexual male, and this is often as true in the late-twentieth century as it is in the nineteenth.

In "The Other Question," Homi Bhabha argues that the stereotype "is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated . . . as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual license of the African

that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved" (66). He describes this process as ambivalent, and argues that this "gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures" (66). He goes on to describe the stereotype in light of Freud's analysis of the fetish (76-84), reading in the stereotype the colonizer's desire for a universal origin among all peoples (a fear of difference) and a need to acknowledge and control difference. Near the end of the chapter, Bhabha stresses that "the chain of stereotypical signification is curiously mixed and split": the Black man is both savage and servant, sexual and innocent, simple-minded and manipulative (82). These contradictions justify colonial social and political authority, because the stereotypes demonstrate that "under certain conditions of colonial domination and control the native is progressively reformable", while the contrasting stereotypes "deny the colonized the capacities of self-government, independence, Western modes of civility" (83). The contradictory stereotypes authorize the colonial mission of "reforming" the Native, while insisting that the Native can never really be "reformed."

Alan Lawson, in his discussion of the "settler-subject" also sees a kind of ambivalence in the settler who must enact imperial authority: "This is mimicry in Bhabha's special sense[5] since the authority is enunciated on behalf of, but never quite as, the imperium: that authority is always incomplete" (26). At the same time, the settler also imposes authority on Native peoples. Because of his/her feeling of incompleteness, "the settler mimics, appropriates, and desires the authority of the Indigene: the menacing 'not quite' is here more dangerous" (26).

Yet the settler cannot, must not go completely native: "'He' must stand just in front of, but not exactly in the place of, the Indigene. The need, then, is to *dis*place the other rather than *re*place him; but the other must remain to signify the boundary of the self, to confirm the subjectivity of the invader-settler" (27-28).

Similarly, throughout many of the Canadian historical novels under study here, the Other must be controlled but not eradicated, so that the power and selfhood of the colonizer can be maintained. Thus, the love-story plot in such novels depicts the kind of "exchange" I referred to earlier, where the special qualities of the Other can be appropriated and subordinated to colonial/patriarchal rule. There is also as much fear of cultural and gender difference in the novels as there is desire for it. For some authors, the French might revitalize English culture in Canada, but there is also something threatening about their alien culture and language; women's difference is necessary for sexual reproduction, but female sexuality is deemed fearsome. This mix of fear and desire is exemplified in the love-story plot, which involves uncertainty and difficulties, even antagonism, on behalf of both parties before marriage can occur. White anglophone Canadians perhaps exhibit a similar contradiction in their feelings about minority cultures, although with far less happy results: the concept of a rich multiculturalism has its appeal for many Canadians, even as racism and fear of cultural difference continue to be issues in many communities across the country. The love-story plot, acting as a cultural allegory in the historical novel, presents a "resolution" of these fears by

formulating and supporting a clear cultural hierarchy, and presenting it as embraced by all parties for their own good.

Bhabha elsewhere describes possibilities for the colonized to resist through the ambivalence of "colonial desire,"[6] but the power of the colonizers/settlers through their ambivalence is what I plan to focus on, given that the narrative perspectives of the novels in this study are generally those of the colonizers. By ambivalence, I refer to the blend of desire for the Other and fear of the Other's power, and also contradictions in the kinds of characteristics attributed to a particular people. Ultimately, through the contradictory fixing of the Other, the white male arises triumphant. Whatever resistance and instability is allowed into the narrative is usually contained and/or eradicated by the novels' ends. Many of these authors, even those whose narratives might be read as expressing sympathy for the plight of women and minority cultures/races, ultimately establish a peaceful vision of a Canada with a clear and stable hierarchy which supposedly benefits everyone.

I feel it is important to study texts that make use of convention so that I (with a nod to Michel Foucault) can demonstrate how these novels create resistance to the status quo in order for them to contain such resistance. In Speculative Fictions, Wyile points out the continuing popularity of historical novels among writers and readers; this popularity is troubling given how often the genre employs the love story, and how the love story usually justifies and romanticizes the ruling order. It is not that the white heterosexual anglophone male is depicted as containing a unified self in relation to the Other. In fact, he is

often portrayed as giving up something in order to make the relationship/nation work. Rather, whatever he "gives up" he gives up only to serve his purpose, which is not to eradicate but to subordinate the Other(s). The white anglophone male might "give up" his authority in domestic affairs in order to gain political authority over his French-Canadian wife; he might resist overt genocide against Native peoples so that he can learn to understand the landscape he sees them as knowing so well.

Although it is not *impossible* to depict eroticism in subversive ways in historical novels, doing so often requires avoiding the "happily-ever-after" ending and the stereotypes of the love-story plot. In Chapter Five I examine texts which escape the "fixity" of characterization typical of the romance; in these cases the authors construct characters who are consciously aware of stereotypes and manipulate them for their own advantages. Richardson's Matilda Montgomerie, for example, "camps" the role of the romantic heroine and demonstrates that such a role is a construction rather than an essentialized identity. Atwood's Grace Marks, on the other hand, avoids being fixed in stereotypes through *ambiguity*; she does not allow those around her ever to know for sure what her motives or actions are or have been. In each of the other chapters in this dissertation, I give at least one example of a text that I view as struggling in some way to combat negative perceptions of women and minority cultures/races/sexualities, but even these texts, in their recourse to the love story, often end up repeating rather than interrogating stereotypes, or enclosing subversive moments in a conventional ending. For example, in Ana Historic,

Marlatt subverts the love story to some extent by adapting it to a homosexual context, while reinscribing some of that plot's essentialized notions of women – their affiliation with nature, their valuing their romantic relationship above all else. I have included in my study the more subversive texts of Chapter Five (which I take up again in the second half of Chapter Six), as well as the potentially subversive texts of the other chapters, in order to demonstrate the way the love-story plot might be dismantled, but is often not. This recourse to romance's stereotypes and love story in the majority of texts studied here indicates, I believe, persistently limited notions about gender, sexuality, culture, race, and nation in Canada.

My choice of texts in this study requires some explanation. I have chosen to analyse a variety of texts, some of which have received much critical attention and might be found on a syllabus for a Canadian literature course, such as Wacousta and A Discovery of Strangers, and others which are less well-known, such as Huyghue's Argimou and Adair and Rosenstock's Kanata. My selection is designed to stress the shared conventional aspects of what elsewhere might be termed "literary" and "popular." In her "In Search of Alias Grace," Atwood stresses the distinction when she notes that the historical novels that form her topic were published in the 1970s and later, and "weren't historical romances of the bodice-ripping kind; instead, they were what we should probably term 'novels set in the historic past,' to distinguish them from the kind of thing you find in drugstores that have cloaks and raised silver scrollwork titles on them" (1509-10). My point in including a range of texts that might be considered to straddle

such a definition is to emphasize the shared qualities of both kinds of novels. Texts which in some ways might intend to challenge traditional beliefs about gender and race, in the love story end up reifying them. For example, Wiebe's Native heroine, Greenstockings, is a complex and sympathetic character, but she nevertheless perpetuates stereotypes about Native women's connection to a primitive, pre-linguistic space.

My decision to examine books published in the nineteenth and late-twentieth centuries also requires elaboration. As I suggested at the beginning of this introduction, the historical novel has been a common form among writers throughout Canadian literary history, and this includes the period from 1900-1969. The reason for my omission of this period is partly that all projects need limits, and I do not feel I could survey the historical novel throughout every period without sacrificing the amount of close analysis I want to perform. Moreover, the comparison between the nineteenth and late-twentieth centuries is a fascinating and potentially fruitful one for me. On the surface, they appear so different – especially under the later's reception of postcolonial, postmodern, and feminist influences – and yet the historical romance, or at least aspects of that genre, have thrived in both periods. Gerson briefly observes the functioning of the national allegory in relation to some of the nineteenth-century novels in her study, and Wyile's analysis of contemporary Canadian historical novels outlines some of the conventionality of the form, but I have yet to see the two eras compared. Additionally, it is the specific interaction of eroticism, nation, and

history in Canadian novels that I wish to observe at length, an interaction which is not the focus of either Gerson's or Wyile's studies.

The other, more weighty, reason for this choice in time periods, however, is that I want to challenge some of the critical assumptions I have encountered in regard to Canadian historical fiction of the nineteenth and late-twentieth centuries. I noted earlier that Frye associates the romance with the garrison mentality, a mentality he views as dominating literature in the nineteenth century, but waning in the twentieth (235-37). Gerson concurs with Frye's analysis: "By choosing romance as their fictional mode, most nineteenth-century Canadian novelists deliberately removed themselves from the frontiers of serious literary advancement" (66). She adds, "In a colonial society that equated literary merit with popular success and the broadest acceptability, the highest praise was reserved for those whose work presented the least challenge to conventional mores" (66).

Linda Hutcheon explicitly contrasts late-nineteenth and late-twentieth century attitudes towards history, viewing the latter as more interrogative. She views irony as rescuing contemporary historical novels from an anaesthetizing nostalgia present in earlier examples of the genre:

> Nostalgia was an obvious consequence of the nineteenth-century fin-de-siècle panic [. . .]. If the urge at that time was to turn nostalgically to the historical novels of Walter Scott and to Gothic Revival architecture, the cultural tendency at the end of the twentieth century also seemed to be to look back – but this time

> with irony – as in the historiographic metafictions of Timothy Findley or Salman Rushdie, or in the provocative architecture of Bruce Kuwabara or Frank Gehry. ("Afterthoughts" 9)

For Hutcheon, late-twentieth century views of history are ironic, more critical of historiography and more self-aware of fiction's own conventions.

However, contemporary historical novels in this study at times present less resistance to stereotypes than some of their earlier counterparts. Parker's The Seats of the Mighty, despite its conventional ending, contains two incidents of cross-dressing which threaten the perceived distinctions between English and French, man and woman. It also portrays several instances of homoerotic tension between the anglophone protagonist and various francophone males. Parker allows for the *possibility* of resistance, while the contemporary author, Robert E. Wall, associates homoerotic feeling only with corrupt, narcissistic, francophone priests. Moreover, despite the amount of criticism that has been written in recent years on "historiographic metafiction"[7] many contemporary historical novels demonstrate a real *lack* of self-reflexivity that is surprising given the critical context available to them, and retain a reliance on convention in their employment of the love-story plot. Steffler's The Afterlife of George Cartwright, for example, repeats many of the same stereotypes of Native women present in several nineteenth-century texts in making the Native woman Caubvick an object of both fear and desire.

As Wyile notes, "it would not be out of order to say that Canadian historical novels have become less experimental rather than more" (162). In fact,

it may be that the genre of the historical novel, aside from its affiliations with romance, helps limit the texts' subversion. In the present study I include only those novels that have pre-twentieth century historical settings, in order to examine similarities and differences between the novels of the two eras that deal with similar subject matter. This approach, however, excludes novels that deal with history and historiography but are set in the present day (such as Jacques Poulin's Volkswagen Blues, Thomas King's Green Grass, Running Water, and most of Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers). To set a novel in the past, it seems, no matter how ironically one does so, is to adhere to a certain trust in realism. Wyile writes, "As much as Canadian novelists make use of various devices to question the place of historiography and historical consciousness in a postmodern era, they also exploit realist conventions to cultivate an acquaintance with that historical arena in the first place" (253). He adds that many of the novels in his study are "rooted in historical verisimilitude and an engagement with (rather than abandonment or disruption of) the historical record" (263). The historical novel itself, as a genre, requires a certain trust in at least some aspects of the historical record, and a confidence in the ability to re-create for readers history as it was experienced by those who were present at the time.

What is also of interest in regard to the conventional tendencies of the historical novel as a form is that, while white, anglophone authors do not hesitate to write about Natives or French-Canadians, Natives and French-Canadians do not appear to write about their cultures in novels that are set historically. As well,

while there are writers from other minority cultures who are publishing novels set in the past (Michael Ondaatje, Dionne Brand, Joy Kogawa), these novels' events often take place in twentieth-century Canada, or partly outside of Canada, making comparisons with nineteenth-century literature more difficult. However, although writers from minority cultures and races are not foregrounded in this study, I will, in Chapters Two and Four, consider briefly why they are not writing historical novels set in early Canada (some of the reasons might be obvious, and others more complex). As well, I feel an affinity with the stance of Terry Goldie in Fear and Temptation and Daniel Francis in The Imaginary Indian that there is something useful in critically examining the mainstream culture's images of marginal cultures, in order to deconstruct stereotypes and open up new spaces for understanding and possibilities for different kinds of cultural interaction.

In reading the texts in this study, then, I will be examining stereotypes and other contradictory characterizations in historical novels which feature elements of the love-story plot, and the result of these characterizations on power relationships in Canada. In doing so, I will employ a wide variety of critics and theorists. Some of these, such as Tania Modleski, Nancy Armstrong, and Terry Goldie, I use primarily to identify these stereotypes of the love story. The second set of critics and theorists, such as Homi Bhabha, Anne McClintock, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler, help me place these stereotypes more specifically in colonial and patriarchal ideologies. Such a variety of theorists is crucial because it will help me examine the love story in a number of different contexts, each of which requires a slight shift in critical lens. The French-English

romances, for example, call for a different perspective than those that portray British encounters with Natives; my examination of female violence as an element of eroticism in the love story requires a different set of critics than my study of the homoerotic romance. This is because, while there is much continuity in the representation of gender in the love-story plot, the stereotypes employed also differ depending on the race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation of the characters. The passive French-Canadian woman shares much with the Native romantic heroine, but her stereotypes are about morality and emotionality, while the Native woman is often depicted as ultimately too sexually wild to win over the white male.

Let me offer an explanation of my key terms: I have decided what is a stereotype based on the particular traits I have identified in my own readings, and other critics have identified in theirs, as repeatedly associated with Native peoples, French-Canadians, white women, and homosexuals. A stereotyped character is not necessarily a "flat" one; it is that s/he exhibits characteristics typical of a particular literary construction of identity. By "love story" I refer to particular plot motifs and character relationships and, again, these are based on my own readings as well as those of others. I identify these throughout the thesis, but some particular ones are the love triangle, the role of the male lover as an idealized father figure, the moral authority of white women, the lovers overcoming challenges to be married, and so on. Moreover, I deal with stereotypes that are not *always* affiliated with the love story. For example, there are plenty of historical love stories in Canadian literature that do not feature

superstitious French-Canadian *habitants*, but when French-Canadian *habitants* are represented in Canadian historical love stories, they are often presented in this particular way. The "national allegory" refers to the use of the love story or some of its motifs to portray a political and/or social situation or relationship in Canada, especially one between peoples of different cultures or races.

When I use the term "romance", I am referring to a genre whose primary feature is the love story (although I recognize that not all love stories are romances). I view many of the historical novels in this study as drawing upon the romance in their employment of both essentialized identities and the love-story plot, although they may not be classified as romances in other ways.[8] The "historical romance" tends to replace the supernatural elements of the romance with historical socio-political forces, and a sense of a people's destiny. Moreover, the nineteenth-century "romance" differs somewhat from the contemporary Harlequin-type "romances" to which I occasionally refer. To differentiate these two, while foregrounding their common roots and shared emphasis on eroticism, I term the later genre the "contemporary popular romance."

Including this Introduction and my Conclusion, I have organized my dissertation into eight chapters. Chapters Two through Four deal with the love-story plot specifically in relation to two non-British cultures, French-Canadian and Native. The following three chapters demonstrate variations on love-story characterizations in representations of female sexuality and violence, and homoeroticism.

Chapter Two examines the essentialized identities of French-Canadian women in the love story, and the ways that the texts set up a notion of female "choice" in marriage partner, even as, in their support of an anglophone patriarchal society, the authors reveal how little choice women/French-Canadians actually have. I use Sedgwick to read the love triangles in texts such as Antoinette De Mirecourt and The Bastonnais, demonstrating the way that female choice is limited in women's roles as currency in an exchange between men. I also employ Modleski, Armstrong, and McClintock to examine how women in the love-story plot have often been stereotyped, especially in the context of nineteenth-century British colonialism, in ways that suggest female power even as the narratives remove any such possibility. This section describes many of the stereotyped characteristics – such as women's morality and vulnerability – that will be re-visited and adapted by the authors under study in subsequent chapters. In the last section, I employ Judith Butler, in relation to The Seats of the Mighty, to examine how essentialized theories of identity might have occasionally been challenged in the nineteenth century with performative notions.

In Chapter Three I explore the portrayals of Native women as romantic heroines in comparison to their non-Native counterparts, in light of how both are situated as closer to nature than white men. I draw here on Terry Goldie's discussion of Native sexuality in Fear and Temptation, as well as theories by Shepard Krech and Diana Relke about the "Ecological Indian."[9] The Native women in novels such as Adam and Wetherald's An Algonquin Maiden and

Steffler's The Afterlife of George Cartwright are stuck in imprisoning contradictions. The Native heroine is attractive to the white male because she exhibits many of the characteristics of the white heroine (beauty, spirit), while being even *more* attractive because she has not been tainted by the physical and sexual inhibitions of European civilization. At the same time, she is rejected for this lack of inhibition; she can never be "white", and thus can never be permitted to marry the white male.

Chapter Four examines the portrayals of Native men as rapists. Native men are, like their female counterparts, trapped in a contradiction: both their nobility and their violence is explained by a lack of civilization, a lack that manifests itself in the rape of white women. I read the Native rapist in relation to Jenny Sharpe's article "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency," and her comments on how the portrayal of colonized men as rapists has historically helped justify the colonial project. In novels such as Argimou, Matilda, or, The Indian's Captive, and Bitter Shield, Native men are feared for their savage power, even as this association with savagery renders them powerless; they can have no place in the new "civilized" nation. These representations are somewhat complicated by the fact that the novels also feature non-Native men who rape non-Native women. I read both kinds of rapists in relation to Alan Lawson's article "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject." The romantic Canadian hero is defined against both a savage Native male and a corrupt British male; through discounting both Native and Imperial centre, the Canadian asserts his own authority in the new world.

The violent, fallen women in the love-story plot is the subject of Chapter Five. I read Richardson's Matilda Montgomerie (The Canadian Brothers), Anne Hébert's Elisabeth Rolland (Kamouraska), and Atwood's Grace Marks (Alias Grace), in light of both Amanda Anderson's theorizing of the fallen woman as having lost her selfhood and agency, and Judith Butler's theory of gendered performativity. I view these female characters as claiming agency for themselves through, rather than in spite of, their status as fallen women: freed from the gendered ideal of woman as moral, these women assert themselves through acts of violence against members of the patriarchal society that has tried to confine them to stereotypes of either sinner or saint. All three also evince an awareness, and sometimes even a manipulation, of female roles, gesturing toward a gendered identity that is more performative than essentialized.

In Chapter Six I consider how the violent woman can potentially destabilize the national allegory. In my analysis of representations of La Pompadour in The Golden Dog, The Seats of the Mighty, Kanata, and Blackrobe, I explore the relationship between women and politics, one that is especially fraught for the nineteenth-century authors who exist in a time when the British empire is ruled by a woman, and the struggle for women's suffrage has begun. The moral women in the above texts mark the boundaries of women's power, while the violent women transgress them and are thus condemned by the narratives for their immorality. In the second half of this chapter, I re-visit my analysis of The Canadian Brothers, Kamouraska, and Alias Grace in relation to the representations of the 1837-38 Rebellions, and the way

these novels' troubling of gender identity also interferes with stable ideas of nation and politics.

Chapter Seven draws on Steven Bruhm's consideration of queer narcissism in order to explore the homosexual love story in Canadian historical novels. Narcissus both asserts and splits his own identity in his encounter with the Other (who is really himself); and the novels in this chapter demonstrate that homoeroticism is an aspect of the British-Canadian self as well as the cultural Other. In novels such as Blackrobe, the homosexual narcissus must be exorcized from Canadian society, so that an anglophone heterosexuality can be stabilized. In Ana Historic and Burning Water, however, homosexuality destabilizes notions of a *national* self for the English Canadian, providing a critique of British colonial/imperial authority, even as this same homosexuality is presented as a means to an originary and very stable sense of *personal* self. That is, while these novels trouble nation, they reify emotional and sexual identities.

Through the various contradictions and ambivalences outlined above, I examine the tendencies of the historical novel to support the ruling order in Canada, even under postmodernism's ironic influence, and the genre's interactions with feminist, postcolonial, and queer theories. Another of my goals, as I have already hinted, is to stress the importance of studying nineteenth-century Canadian literature, because to dismiss it because it might be, at times, conventional is to overlook its use of important motifs that are still being employed by more "serious" writers today. If Canadians have a sense of

the limited manner in which national and gendered identities have been constructed, they can have a better sense, perhaps, of how these can be reconstructed in ways that open up ideas about identity and nation. Women, in various spheres, still struggle for equality, Quebec separatism is far from dead, demands for Native rights recur across the country, and controversy over gay marriage divides parts of the country. Rather than "fixing" an idea of nation, I hope this study provokes the exploration of realistic possibilities for cultural and sexual relationships that avoid subjugation and interfere with rigid constructions of nation. That is, if, as Atwood states, the historical novel “place[s] ourselves” (“In Search” 1512), this study points out the dangers of any fixed “placing”, and notices who is subsumed in that construction of “ourselves.”

Notes

[1] Hutcheon defines this kind of writing as "fiction that is intensely, self-reflexively art, but is also grounded in historical, social, and political realities" (13).

[2] Although Murphy uses the word "metaphor" in his title, he more precisely defines the motif he is analysing as an "extended metaphor" and a "political allegory" (1). Thus, I use the term allegory, rather than metaphor, throughout this dissertation, as it more appropriately describes the detailed correlations between the individual erotics and the national political and social situations in the novels under study.

[3] See Modleski's argument for the contemporary popular romance as female revenge fantasy (45-58).

[4] For more on my use of the terms "love story" and "romance," see p.25-26.

[5] See Bhabha 85-92.

[6] See, for example, "Of mimicry and men" in The Location of Culture, p.85-92.

[7] This includes an anthology of essays devoted to the topic: Historiographic Metafiction in Modern American and Canadian Literature (1994), eds. Bernd Engler and Kurt Müller.

[8] Frye names such romance motifs as "mysterious birth, oracular prophecies about the future contortions of the plot, foster parents, adventures

which involve capture by pirates, narrow escapes from death, recognition of the true identity of the hero and his eventual marriage with the heroine" (Secular 4). The absence of many of these kinds of motifs in some of the novels I am studying might make the title of my dissertation slightly imprecise for some readers, and since my defence I have been considering altering the title to refer to "historical fictions" rather than the "historical romance."

[9] The term refers to the non-Native envisioning of Native peoples as possessing a greater understanding of the natural world.

CHAPTER TWO

Triangles of Erotic Desire and Other Motifs of the Early Canadian Romance

While, in the nineteenth century, the genre "romance" could encompass a wide variety of topics and motifs, it is the plot and characterizations of the love story – from which contemporary romance novels derive their name – and the resolution of social conflict in marriage, that I want to examine here. In early Canadian novels, through the use of the love story, the British are often portrayed as "rescuing" a fallen New France from its troubles, becoming husbands to distressed French-Canadian women, and thereby figuring the nations in terms of a gendered hierarchy. The tumults of the nations are "worked out" in a kind of national allegory of the family, reiterating the supremacy of the English patriarchy in Canada by feminizing French-Canadians. The authors often use essentialized notions of feminine identity to set up this hierarchy: women are submissive because it is in their nature, and because men are better suited to politics than they are. This essentialized identity is extended to French-Canadians, who are presented as recognizing the "natural" superiority of the English as rulers. What is crucial in each case is that women and French-Canadians are depicted as *choosing* their own submission to their husbands/rulers, as something that is for their own good. Anglophone novelists in early Canada reify the rule of the English over the French by presenting the English as benign lovers-fathers, chosen over some other man/nation, to

submissive French-Canadian women. These motifs are clearly at work in Rosanna Leprohon's Antoinette De Mirecourt (1864), John Lesperance's The Bastonnais (1877), Philippe Aubert de Gaspé's Canadians of Old (1863), and William Kirby's The Golden Dog (1877).

In the first section of this chapter, I draw on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's writing about triangles of homosocial desire in order to facilitate a demonstration of the way early novelists present women/Quebec as possessing freedom of choice, opting for subordination rather than independence, even as the novelists' positive representations of an anglophone patriarchal society demonstrate how little choice women/Quebec actually have. In the second section, I consider particular stereotypes of female identities in relation to this same lack of choice and its consequences for the national allegory; women are confined to acting as their husbands' moral authority, suffering as weak and ill, or condemned as fallen. In the third section, through my analysis of Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty (1896) in relation to Judith Butler's notions of performative identity, I consider ways that these stereotypes can be resisted by authors through a more ambiguous figuring of identity.

In Desire and Domestic Fiction, Nancy Armstrong analyzes the "sexual contract" portrayed in nineteenth-century British fiction: "According to the middle-class ideal of love, [. . .] the female relinquishes political control to the male in order to acquire exclusive authority over domestic life, emotions, taste, and morality" (41). Men and women are relegated to different spheres, and thus

each brings different qualities to a loving union. Armstrong notices that many novels of the time conclude with a marriage, which was important for solidifying the politics of gender:

> Particularly when brought about through the efforts of a female protagonist, a successful conclusion could be none other than a life free of physical labour and secured by the patronage of a benevolent man. The idea that one could gain authority through such dependency undoubtedly served manifold interests in justifying the exclusion of women from business and politics. (42)

While the fictional construction of different gendered identities creates a "sexual exchange" which brings "male and female together" (40), the construction of these differences also serves to enforce a hierarchy within the union of man and woman. And while women "choose" to relinquish political power, this choice, Armstrong suggests, was tied to ideas about woman's "natural" passivity (39-40). It was in women's nature to choose submission over independence.

Anne McClintock, in a different context, also explores the use of gendered hierarchies alongside ideals of unity. Such an issue is crucial in her book, Imperial Leather, an analysis of the intersection of race and sexuality in colonial history. She describes how European cultures figured their oppression of other nations in the metaphor of the family. The British, for example, established a "family of man," with the white races as patriarchal protectors of feminized or infantilized dark races. Notions about the weakness of women, who were in need of protection, allowed for the justification of the "protective" control of other races.

McClintock explains, “Because the subordination of woman to man and child to adult were deemed natural facts, other forms of social hierarchy could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature" (45). She adds, "Imperial intervention could thus be figured as a linear, nonrevolutionary progression that naturally contained hierarchy within unity: paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children" (45). She cites, for example, the World Exhibition in London in 1851. On the one hand, the exhibition was about world unity, displaying “the Industry of All Nations” and the history of world progress, while on the other hand it was also clear that “only the west had the technical skill and innovative spirit to render the historical pedigree of the Family of Man in such perfect, technical form” (58). In McClintock's analysis, differences between cultures, like differences between the sexes, are used to create a ladder of power, with the white male as the legitimate ruler of all "beneath" him. His authority requires the rhetoric of gendered and cultural difference, while at the same time the imperial project demands a kind of unity in conglomerating various nations as part of the British empire.

McClintock also notices that in literature, advertising, and nationalist rhetoric "Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to national agency" (354). Thus, McClintock emphasizes that constructions of nation are indistinguishable from constructions of gender. Drawing on the work of Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, McClintock explains that women are tied to nation in a variety ways: as symbols of the nation itself, as sexual reproducers of a nation's population, and as

asserting figurative national boundaries through the restrictions placed upon their sexual and marital relations (355). The latter idea suggests that alliances between genders can also represent alliances between different peoples; a nation that fears military invasion may also resist exogamy. Marital union can represent national interests.

I mentioned in my Introduction that manifestations of this equation between gendered and cultural power are apparent in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature that features love stories between English heroes and Scottish or Irish heroines. Early Canadian novels also figure social and political circumstances via representations of marriage, and the intersection of colonial history and the love story in a specifically Canadian context is crucial for understanding the country's fraught relationship with cultural diversity generally, and especially French-English relations currently and historically. Canada is often cited (by Canadians) as a country made stronger by the uniting of cultural differences. While this idea of unity through differences is clearly articulated in the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, and in earlier discussions about Canada's "two solitudes," its Canadian manifestation is actually much older. Many nineteenth-century Canadian historical novels depict relations between the French and the English in Canada through what Carl Murphy terms "the marriage metaphor" (1). Frequently, these novels present the courtship between an anglophone male and a francophone female as a symbol for the necessary "marrying" of Canadians and *Canadiens* to form a strong, united nation.

The love stories are usually contextualized by political historical conflict,

which contributes to the authors' project of exploring Canadian identity and history. As Carole Gerson argues, in the nineteenth century, representations of French-Canadian history were crucial in helping English-Canadians find Canada's "cultural distinctiveness from Great Britain on the one hand and the United States on the other" (111). Not just French-Canadian culture, but particularly French-English conflict in Canada, I would argue, became a popular theme. Writing about this historical conflict became aligned with finding Canada's identity; many authors of the time appear invested in presenting a happy resolution to this conflict in order to construct a happy present for Canada as a united country and a distinct culture. Interest in such themes was perhaps particularly important during and after Confederation, as Canadians struggled to define their new country. As Hayden White, drawing on Northrop Frye, argues, historians sometimes use the mode of "explanation by emplotment" in constructing history; that is, they provide "the 'meaning' of a story by identifying the *kind of story* that has been told" (7). English-Canadian authors of the nineteenth-century construct history as a comedy, which White views as a qualification of the romance (10). The hero and heroine unite to form a new social order and reconcile with the opposing social forces (see Frye, Anatomy 163-5). Through this genre, which envisions a stable social order, the authors in this chapter enforce the Canadian ideal of "peace, order, and good government," while subordinating French-Canadians and women.

The fact that early Canadians employed a literary form widely used in Britain to establish their national identity points to Katie Trumpener's assertion

that colonial nationalism often developed in relation to, and as a part of, imperialism (xiii). The image of the Canadian nation as merging different nations, an image still prevalent today, may, in fact, derive from a similar model of unified differences employed by the British empire. Trumpener argues that England defined Ireland and Scotland as possessing unique and antique cultures in order to subsume their distinctiveness to England which, as a centre of the empire, felt uncertain about its lack of national identity (xi, 15-16). Similarly, English-Canadians in the nineteenth-century sought to establish their own identity, one especially uncertain and unstable as a colony a long way from the "motherland,' via an appropriation of French-Canadian culture. In British literature, rebellions and battles in Ireland and Scotland created dramatic opportunities for historical novelists to depict both sympathy for an ancient culture, as well as the necessary subsumption of that culture to England. Similarly, the "fall" of Quebec provided an opportunity for English-Canadian historical novelists to appropriate French-Canadian culture while subordinating it to English-Canada.[1] For many nineteenth-century English-Canadians, seeking an identity as an independent nation did not mean severing ties with or even rejecting the authority of Britain; rather, Canada was configured as both a unique nation, and a strong and important part of the British empire. Many of the novels I read in this chapter, then, often ultimately end up supporting a Canada ruled by white anglophones and strongly affiliated with Britain.

The novels here rely upon stereotypes of gender and culture in putting forth this vision of nation: the French-Canadian women are moral and vulnerable,

for example, while the British men are logical and physically strong. The use of such stereotypes is a crucial aspect of the way these novels support the status quo. Homi K. Bhabha argues that "The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify the conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (70). The British in Canada, however, faced a special problem, in that they could not clearly establish the difference between English and French based on racial origins; difference between the cultures was not clearly inscribed upon the skin, and although it was manifested in language, the English also faced the fact that they shared a common history with the French, the two countries produced from similar European origins. The "solution" of British-Canadian authors to this lack of difference, (like the solution of their British counterparts), was to draw upon gendered stereotypes to characterize French-Canadians as inferior. Thus, French-Canada in early novels is consistently represented by a young woman, who submits to anglophone rule by marrying (most often) a British soldier. As McClintock points out, colonized peoples were often feminized in colonial discourse, but I am suggesting that this strategy became particularly important in Canada after the "Conquest" of Quebec because of the lack of visible racial difference between English- and French-Canadians, and because, unlike the situation with Native peoples, the shared European origin made it more difficult to depict the conquered peoples as "savages." Nineteenth-century British discourse often configures the Irish and Highland Scottish as "savage," in their closer affiliation with nature or their proud

violence,[2] but the marriage metaphor is still employed in such situations (and not avoided as it is with Native peoples in Canadian literature). French males in Canada, however, are more likely to be viewed as corrupted by civilization, too caught up in the intrigues of the court and lusts for power and money. This places British-Canadian males, in many cases, on a "happy medium" between the savage Indian on the one hand and the decadent Frenchman on the other.

The interest in French-English marriages, rather than the annihilation of French-Canadian culture, has another important purpose. Like the Scottish and Irish for England, French -Canada may have been too large a minority group in the nineteenth century to simply "write out" of Canadian history, so the authors emphasized a "partnership" between English and French Canada that subordinated the latter's large population. English-Canadian writers usually figure French Canada as a female who *chooses* her subordination to English Canada for her own well-being and happiness (whether or not someone whose power in society is greatly limited actually has the ability to choose will be a theme of inquiry in this chapter). Again, the Canadian writers share this motif with many British novels. Corbett notes the recurring theme of Ireland represented in fiction by a subordinate female, "whose dependence would be tempered by its treatment at the hands of a just, manly, but not tyrranical father/husband/brother" (31). French-Canadians and women are not merely oppressed by anglophone males, but they are presented as being better off for and willing participants in their own oppression.

It is this aspect of the novels which makes them deserving of closer

readings than some of them have previously received. While I find Carole Gerson's survey of the values and reading practices of nineteenth-century Canadians, A Purer Taste, particularly useful, her study does not focus specifically on the love-story plot in the historical novel, although she touches on it several times. The sometimes subtle ways in which early novels work to support the status quo by figuring minorities and women as benefiting from oppression, is something that deserves more attention in order for one to understand some of the ways that a particular kind of literature in Canada might have helped impede (and, I will argue in later chapters, continues to impede) struggles for cultural and gendered equality. Many of the novels in this study might have had the aim of not only supporting those in power (non-Native anglophone males), but also of helping convince female readers, and, in the cases of translations[3] or bilingual readers, French-Canadians, that their lack of power was beneficial to them.

I. Erotic Triangles, Gender Hierarchy, and the Incest Taboo

While critics such as John Moss, Peter Dickinson, and L. Chris Fox have applied Sedgwick's theories to Richardson's Wacousta, I have yet to see them applied to other Canadian novels of the nineteenth century. This is a bit odd, since so many early Canadian historical novels, and the romance genre generally, employ a love triangle as a key part of the narrative structure. There may be a critical perception that other, less-canonical texts than Wacousta would not provide anything fruitful from such a reading, but an application of Sedgwick's

theories about "triangles of homosocial desire"[4] is useful for understanding the way early texts so often present a French-Canadian woman as choosing between two men, one of whom will provide her with safety rather than unhappiness in her gendered subordination. The two men also often represent two political directions for the fate of New France. Again, the fact that the texts present the woman as *choosing* is a key part of their attempts to persuade the reader to empathize with their conservative social view.

Sedgwick links the concept of male homosociality to the erotic triangle as it appears in western literature. She cites the work of René Girard, who insists that "in any erotic rivalry, the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved" (21). Because of the imbalance of power between men and women in western society, however, a triangle featuring two men and a woman is different from that featuring two women and a man (although the latter also contains an imbalance of power in favour of the man). Sedgwick argues that the first kind of triangle confirms bonds between men and encourages heterosexual union as a key part of the patriarchy. Sedgwick connects the triangle to the Oedipus complex, in which the male child's heterosexuality is established by giving up his mother as a love object, and identifying, homosocially, with his father, in the expectation that this recognition of his father's power will eventually help bring the boy his own power, and his own female partner (22-23).

Sedgwick also draws on Rubin's "The Traffic in Women" and Rubin's employment of the work of Lévi-Strauss in analyzing the incest taboo and the

concept of women as gifts in patriarchal exchange. The motivation for the incest taboo, Rubin explains, is not merely a fear of genetically-close matings, but rather to encourage alliances between families of men: "Specifically, by forbidding unions within a group it enjoins marital exchange between groups" (Rubin 173). Because men maintain the most power in many societies, the incest taboo helps men maintain that power, and gain more through relationships with other men. Women become a kind of currency; the exchange of women (often as mates) between families of males cements bonds between those males. This "bond" between men is not necessarily entirely amicable, or equal; gift exchange can confirm or develop a friendly relationship, or take part in "the idiom of competition and rivalry" (Rubin 172).

The consequences for women are severe limits on their erotic choices. Rubin quotes Levi-Strauss, who argues that, in marriages arranged for women by male kin,

> the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners.... This remains true even when the girl's feelings are taken into consideration, as, moreover, is usually the case. In acquiescing to the proposed union, she precipitates or allows the exchange to take place, she cannot alter its nature. (qtd. in Rubin 174-5)

These limits are apparent in the novels under study here. Even though the authors stress female agency, their support of a patriarchal social structure contradicts this agency and reveals, in fact, the obstacles to women's freedom of

choice.

The erotic triangle, its emphasis on male power over women, and the matter of the incest taboo, provide revealing means of examining early Canadian constructions of fictional marriages to represent the nation. Through the erotic triangles in the novels, the authors not only consider and strengthen the hierarchy between the genders, but they also often translate the three points of this triangle into the interests of nations, usually with French Canada as a woman caught between two "male" powers. Similarly, the incest taboo, as enforcing the uniting of differences, serves as a symbol for English-Canadian resistance to cultural homogamy for French-Canada.

Rosanna Leprohon's Antoinette De Mirecourt is probably the text most cited by critics as an example of the national represented by the personal in nineteenth-century texts, and it makes use of a clear love triangle in order to do so. The novel is set shortly after the British conquest of New France. Antoinette, a young French-Canadian woman, marries Audley Sternfield, an English soldier who horribly mistreats her. When he is killed in a duel, she marries a kinder English soldier, Colonel Evelyn. Leprohon uses the marriages of Antoinette to put forth her vision of the Canadian nation, of French and English eventually creating a union involving mutual respect and love. As Misao Dean has noticed, Sternfield's mistreatment of Antoinette is a reflection of Britain's initial treatment of Quebec after the Conquest (52). The Québécois, "who had confidently counted on the peaceful protection of a legal government, were doomed instead

to see their tribunals abolished, their judges ignored, and their entire social system overthrown, to make way for that most insupportable of all tyrannies, martial law" (Leprohon 28). On the other hand, Evelyn demonstrates that the British have the potential to be protective, rather than oppressive rulers. Murphy writes, "The marriage of Antoinette to Colonel Evelyn symbolizes the coming together of the very best of New France with the very best of the victorious English" (3). Antoinette is young, moral, and emotional, while Evelyn represents nobility and bravery; Antoinette's qualities are associated with the feminine domestic sphere, and Evelyn's with the masculine political sphere, but the qualities of each also seem to figure specific qualities of each nation – New France as Catholic[5] and rich in folklore, England as militarily efficient and heroic.

It is key that the text situates Antoinette in such a way as to emphasize her "female" helplessness and passivity, while at the same time framing her marriages as "choices"; this has dire consequences for Quebec in the cultural allegory. Both Murphy (4) and Cuder-Domínguez (117) argue that an important part of the novel is that Antoinette and Evelyn's union is supposedly chosen by each of them. I would argue, however, that, despite Leprohon's attempts to portray Antoinette as having choice, the narrative supports an anglophone, patriarchal society that severely limits female and Québécois freedom. Antoinette's marriages are primarily orchestrated by a number of homosocial pairs that surround her, including Evelyn and Sternfield, and Evelyn and M. De Mirecourt.[6] While Antoinette's choice to marry Sternfield might actually be a choice, she is punished for exercising this ability to choose, and her marriage to

Evelyn, in the depths of her social disgrace, hardly appears like a choice at all. The result of this contradiction for the cultural allegory is that Quebec is presented as a nation that can only choose to embrace its oppression at the hands of the English.

Antoinette attempts to take herself out of the patriarchal exchange by choosing (with the strong persuasion of her female cousin) her own husband, Sternfield, rather than marrying Louis, the man her father has chosen for her. However, even in this choice, she finds herself at the mercy of male rivalry, because she is a woman in a patriarchy that depends upon male-male exchange. While Sternfield eventually admits that one of his motives in proposing to Antoinette was a hope that her inheritance would pay off his gambling debts, I would also suggest that he has in mind achieving a certain comeuppance over another male, Colonel Evelyn. Sternfield demonstrates an intense dislike of Evelyn from the beginning, most likely, given Sternfield's petty character, because Evelyn is an officer of superior rank, wealth, intelligence, and morality. At the first ball Lucille holds for the officers, upon Antoinette's inquires about the officer speaking with her cousin, Sternfield replies by pronouncing Evelyn's name with "an expression of mingled dislike and impatience," breaking for a moment his otherwise charming surface demeanor (24). He goes on to smear Evelyn's character by denouncing him to Antoinette as a woman-hater (24).

After Antoinette and Sternfield are married, it becomes clear that Sternfield views Antoinette as a means of asserting his own power to Colonel Evelyn. At another ball one evening, Sternfield goes out of his way to prove his

possession of Antoinette to Evelyn: "Sternfield [. . .] no sooner saw Antoinette with Colonel Evelyn than his good humor vanished, and he commenced inwardly taxing his brains for some means of separating them" (167). He is happy to ignore the woman he has married in secret until he sees her conversing with Evelyn, which suggests Antoinette's significance for Audley is, at least in part, as currency in his relationships with other men. Later, Sternfield isolates Antoinette from the rest of the party, and uses threats to convince Antoinette to allow him to kiss her. When Evelyn discovers them, Sternfield's response suggests the whole display was purely for Evelyn's benefit. Antoinette "saw a triumphant sneer replacing already the tenderness his features had discarded as rapidly as they had assumed" (171). Sternfield then gloats, "Methinks the dainty Colonel Evelyn will be effectually cured of his love-fit by this wholesome lesson" (171). The terms "dainty" and "love-fit" are part of Sternfield's attempt to feminize the Colonel, and demonstrate how Sternfield's display of violent sexuality is intended to emasculate his rival. Antoinette has little power of choice now; she is Sternfield's pawn in his rivalry with Evelyn.

If Leprohon's novel is a cautionary tale (an interpretation encouraged by the subtitle, "Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing," which suggests a causal relationship between the two activities), then Antoinette's suffering at the hands of Sternfield is a punishment for her lack of filial obedience and her attempt to take herself out of the patriarchal exchange by exercising choice:

> She had erred, but how speedy had been her retribution; she had violated the dictates of conscience and religion – trampled on a

> daughter's most sacred duties, and what had it brought her? That which guilt and wrong-doing will ever bring to those who are not utterly hardened in evil, – remorse and wretchedness. (212)

Eventually, Antoinette's trials make her see the importance of obedience, and of behaving morally.

This lesson is important, for it primes her to obey her father's choice for her second marriage. After Sternfield's death, M. De Mirecourt consents to Evelyn's request to marry Antoinette, partially because Louis Beauchesne has fled Canada, and partially because he has been earlier impressed by Evelyn's defense of a *habitant*. However, a key part of this acquiescence is that M. De Mirecourt's power has decreased. Antoinette's behaviour makes her the subject of scandal in the community, and Lucille tells Antoinette that after the secret marriage to Sternfield, M. De Mirecourt knew "he might find it very difficult to get a suitable husband for you" (236-7). Colonel Evelyn presses his suit when Antoinette's "poor father" is "bowed to the very dust with humiliation and grief" (237). In her father's degradation, and her own, Antoinette accepts her father's choice of husband for her in Colonel Evelyn. It is the men who must ultimately decide upon and approve the match, and Evelyn obtains M. De Mirecourt's consent before Antoinette has convalesced from illness enough to be conscious, although the marriage in this case coincides with Antoinette's desires. As Rubin argues, "From the standpoint of the system, the preferred female sexuality would be one which responded to the desire of others, rather than one which actively desired and sought a response" (182). Seen in such a light, Antoinette's "choice"

of Evelyn at the end of the novel seems hardly like a choice at all. She has disgraced her family, and must either marry quickly or retire to a convent; she must enter into the exchange, or exit from it permanently and entirely, but she cannot seize control and destabilize the patriarchy. As Tania Modleski notices, the double bind placed upon romantic heroines "is a simple reflection of the double bind imposed upon women in real life: their most important achievement is supposed to be finding a husband; their greatest fault is attempting to do so" (48). Antoinette is in precisely this situation. In a society that demands her powerlessness as part of patriarchal eroticism, her "ability" to "choose freely" merely makes her a willing rather than unwilling participant in her own oppression as a female.

If we read the love-story plot as political allegory – with Sternfield/Evelyn as England, Louis/M. De Mirecourt as the old order in New France, and Antoinette as Quebec – the fate of Antoinette has frightening consequences. As Cuder-Domínguez notes, "Leprohon sings the praises of Antoinette's self-sacrifice and of wifely duties and proper humility to an extent that does not bode well for French Canadians, let alone women" (127-8). Antoinette's marriage suggests that the Québécois should embrace their own oppression. Though some of Leprohon's language paints Evelyn as putting himself beneath her, there is no doubt who has the most agency, who has the ability to choose to relinquish power. Readers are informed at the end of the novel of the nature of Antoinette and Evelyn's relationship: "To her devoted, idolizing husband she brought that unclouded domestic felicity he had for so many weary years of his life despaired

of ever knowing, and in assuring his happiness, she assured her own" (238). Although he is "devoted, idolizing," Antoinette's happiness and survival depends upon aligning herself with the right man, as her experiences with Sternfield proved – her first marriage almost physically killed her. Similarly, the survival of the francophones depends on the anglophones' just treatment of them, but they appear to have even less choice than Antoinette. In this novel, the Québécois cannot even "choose" between two sets of rulers; they can only hope that, with their patience, the British will be more protective than oppressive.

Cuder-Domínguez states, "the happy resolution that Leprohon contrives with the marriage of Antoinette and Evelyn is still one where the male, English, principle has the upper hand" (128). Not only that, but Leprohon uses the frame of the national allegory to assert that French Canada should willingly submit to British authority, as the best thing for its future well-being; thus, Leprohon ultimately confirms the status quo. While other critics have read this novel as emphasizing female choice, we need to be aware of the fact that this novel is even more conservative, despite Leprohon's apparent sympathy for French-Canadians, than some think, because it masquerades oppression *as* choice, and might intend to persuade women and French-Canadians that the status quo serves instead of limits their freedom.

The convention of the (national) erotic triangle, and politics of unity with hierarchy, are also present in The Bastonnais (1877) by John Lesperance, although technically here the configuration is a quadrangle, or two intermingling

triangles. In this novel, which is set during the 1776 American invasion of Quebec, two anglophone males are romantically entangled with two francophone females. Initially, Roderick Hardinge, a Scotsman, is in love with Pauline Belmont, a French-Canadian. Pauline's friend, Zulma Sarpy, believes the Americans will bring about Quebec's freedom, and she falls in love with Cary Singleton, an American soldier. However, when Pauline nurses a wounded, imprisoned Cary back to health, the two develop feelings for each other and, after a series of trials, marry. Years later, Roderick and Zulma also marry each other.

As in Antoinette De Mirecourt, Quebec's political situation is figured through a tale of courtship, the girls' movements between the men signifying *Canadien* uncertainty about whether to support the English or the Americans. The marriages at the end of the novel resolve this uncertainty and allegorize, as Gerson argues, "the union of English and French, and Canadian and American interests in North America" (119). When, in the final chapter, the narrator meets a young woman who is a descendant of both couples, "the resolution of sexual strife signals the assurance of continental peace" (Gerson 119).

This vision of peace has more to do with Lesperance's own society than his historical commentary. After all, the American invasion of Quebec did not actually mark an end to conflicts between the nations, as evidenced by the War of 1812. The novel was published only ten years after Confederation, so Lesperance's vision of North American relationships suggests that, for him, the new country should maintain some connection to both the US and Britain.

However, it is the latter that is, for Lesperance, the primary source of Canadian identity and strength. The homosocial triangles in the novel are configured in such a way that rather than a "union" where each culture's interests are represented equally, Lesperance's novel ultimately supports the domination of the British male. The women in the novel, while they are presented as selecting their own mates, clearly move within a patriarchal structure that limits the power of women and the Québécois.

The most obvious homosocial relationship in the novel is that between Cary and Roderick. While they are concerned with the actions of Pauline and Zulma, the young men are often much more concerned with each other, emphasizing Sedgwick's ideas about the bonds between rivals in a love triangle. While watching Cary perform military exercises, Roderick muses, "This rebel was as good as himself, perhaps better. They might have met and enjoyed life together. Now their duty was to do each to death, or entail as much loss as possible upon one another" (233). Their military performances strengthen their mutual admiration, suggesting the former ties of Britain and the US, and the author's vision of mended ties between them in future. The closeness that Roderick and Cary could have felt for each other implies that, for the author, the conflict between Britain and the US is unnatural, a kind of fratricide. It might also suggest that the nations' battle for Quebec is, like the battle between two men for the same woman, more about Britain and the US proving themselves to each other than it is about Quebec. For example, the narrator informs readers, "on the fate of Quebec depended, in great measure, the fate of the continental

revolution" (243). The Americans are revolting against their former oppressors, and the involvement of the Québécois is crucial to their cause. On the other side of things, such a revolt threatens the security of the British Empire, so Britain is also fighting for its survival. Quebec, then, is important as a ground upon which the strength and power of each country will be proved or disproved; thus, their national relationship is figured homosocially.

The triangles between the fathers, lovers, and daughters emphasize the power of the anglophones over Quebec. In these configurations, it becomes clear, as in Antoinette De Mirecourt, that the daughters are significant as currency in the exchange of power between the lovers and the fathers, with the fathers at a disadvantage. Pauline becomes the battle ground for her father's and lover's conflicting politics when Roderick, as a British soldier, is caught up in a situation that implicates M. Belmont as a traitor. M. Belmont's response is to forbid Pauline to see Roderick ever again, employing Pauline as a political playing card. Although the two men are eventually reconciled, through their common love of Pauline, Pauline's movement, later on, from Roderick to Cary, reflects M. Belmont's political oscillation; he is uncertain throughout the novel whether he should remain loyal to the British or side with the Americans against them. In either case, though, the fact that Pauline marries an anglophone suggests who is at the top of the cultural hierarchy in the new society. Unlike Leprohon's novel, in Lesperance's the francophone women do not have any francophone suitors. Pauline's choice is only between two anglophones, a fact which indicates the lack of power among the francophone men. When M.

Belmont, tempted to side with the Americans, consults Bishop Briand, the latter reminds him, "The cardinal doctrine of our theology is obedience to legitimate authority. [...] In the present instance, its application is plain. The English are our masters" (268).

Anglophone domination becomes even clearer in a similar triangle between Zulma, Cary, and Batoche, M. Sarpy's friend, a French-born soldier with American sympathies. Batoche is the only unmarried French-Canadian male presented, who is not a relative of either woman, and though his age takes him out of the running as a suitor, he does develop some affection for Zulma. If we read Batoche as a kind of father figure to Zulma, he may be viewed as being in a triangular relationship with Zulma and Cary. He says of Zulma, "That proud white neck will never submit to the yoke of English tyranny" (207), and sets about bringing Zulma and Cary together, on several occasions, which reflects his role as someone who is attempting to ally French-Canada and the "bastonnais." Zulma's eventual marriage to Roderick, though, reflects Batoche's failure to set Quebec "free." In both triangles, the love lives of the daughters become the grounds over which political battles are fought and lost by their fathers. While the women have enough freedom to choose their own partners, the lack of eligible francophone males in the novel suggests that the women *must* "choose" anglophone men (although they can choose between them) because of the latter's cultural domination.[7]

Despite the wins and losses on both Cary's and Roderick's sides (each loses one potential wife, but gains another), the novel is ultimately more

supportive of British than American power in New France, using the conventions of the love-story plot in order to express this. While Cary, the American, wins Pauline over his British rival, Roderick, the rebellious instincts in both Cary and Zulma are eventually subdued, and they each end up residing in a Canada dominated by Britain. Pauline's love for Cary seems to arise out of respect for his general qualities of nobility and honour, rather than for his specific political affiliations (which appeared to be a factor for Zulma). At the end of the novel, instead of staying in his newly-freed US, Cary moves back to Quebec with Pauline. As well, his movement away from Zulma, towards a far less radical Pauline, represents the American loss in Quebec; there will be no present or future alliance between *Canadiens* and Americans against British-Canadians.

Roderick, perhaps, is the character who arrives at the most powerful resolution at the end of the novel. While the blood of the four lovers is mixed in a common grandchild, it is significant that this child has Roderick's last name. While Gerson cites evidence to suggest that Roderick is a prime example of Canada's mixed heritage – born in Scotland, raised in Quebec, bilingual, spent time with the Hurons (Gerson 119) – we in fact have here an example of what John Porter calls the "vertical mosaic." Canada's heritage is multicultural, but those cultures possess disparate amounts of power. For in spite of all of the different facets of Roderick's cultural personality, he sees himself as "the representative and custodian of British power in Canada" (10). Peace comes, but the author would have it come under the continued rule of British-Canada.

One of the texts that should be discussed here, because it contradicts some of what has been said about nineteenth-century Canadian historical novels and erotic triangles, is Philippe Aubert de Gaspé's Les Anciens Canadiens or, in its translated version, Canadians of Old.[8] Aubert de Gaspé contradicts the love-story plot in some ways, but the resistance does not make his novel any less conservative, for he ultimately supports the gendered hierarchy of the love story, and accepts anglophone dominance of Quebec.

The novel centres on the experiences of Jules D'Haberville of Quebec, and his schoolmate, a Scot named Archie Lochiel, who end up fighting on opposite sides during the Seven Years' War. At the end of the conflict, when it becomes clear that there are romantic feelings between Archie and Jules' sister Blanche, the reader might expect their nuptials. However, Blanche refuses Archie's offer of marriage. She supports Jules' decision to marry an Englishwoman, because he has fought for his country, and proved his love of Quebec, but she feels her own situation is different: "I, a weak woman, what have I done for this enslaved and now silent land?" (273). She adds, "Shall a daughter of the D'Haberville's be the first to set the example of a double yoke to the daughters of Canada?" (273).[9]

As Gerson argues, the marriages in nineteenth-century Canadian novels between French women and English men "signal English Canada's political supremacy" (120). She adds, "Such a union predicates the absorption of the female partner into the dominant culture of the male, the sexual submission of the individual symbolizing the political submission of the group" (120). Aubert de

Gaspé, she argues, as a French-Canadian himself, resists this; Jules may marry an English woman, but for Blanche to marry Archie would be for her to turn her back on her culture (Gerson 120). Importantly, Blanche envisions the union of cultures in Canada, and her resistance to personally embodying this, in terms of kinship and male gift exchange. If she marries Archie, she worries people would say "that the proud Briton, after having vanquished and ruined the father, had purchased with his gold the poor Canadian girl" (273). She resists allowing herself to be "purchased," and chooses abstinence instead.

I would stress, however, that despite Blanche's attempt to remove herself from the male exchange of women, Aubert de Gaspé's writing actually leaves both women and French-Canadians in an unenviable position. Blanche's resistance does not change the nature of the patriarchy or anglophone dominance. She does not, for example, shun Archie's attentions in favour of a francophone mate. She chooses, instead, abstinence and a platonic relationship with him; her emotional life, then, is still defined, to a great extent, by the anglophone male. She is also unable to alter the fact that her sexual choices have political significance for the males around her; such choices cannot ever be solely for herself. While Blanche is not punished for asserting her own choice, as Antoinette De Mirecourt is, there are still ample limits on the options available to her, and she cannot reverse the gender hierarchy. She may not be presented as choosing her own oppression, but she is not radically resisting it either.

Jules' son also stresses the dominance of the patriarchy. Murphy believes that, even though they do not marry, Blanche and Archie fulfill crucial roles as

godparents to Jules' son; they "represent the best of Celtic warrior virtue and the highest level of Gallic idealism" (7). The son of Jules and his English wife, watched over by Archie and Blanche, and bearing Archie's first name, represents, for Murphy, the new Canada. It is significant, though, that, as with The Bastonnais, the child at the end of the novel has a Scottish name. Jules' decision to name his son after Archie solidifies their homosocial bond. After Blanche refuses Archie's proposal, Jules' unnamed British wife becomes the woman through whom the relationship between Archie and Jules is articulated. She bears a son who, rather than really being her own, possesses Jule's last name and Archie's first name. As Rubin states, "Every relationship between male kin is defined by the woman between them. If power is a male prerogative, and must be passed on, it must go through the woman-in-between" (Rubin 192n). The joint power of Jules and Archie is passed through Jules' wife to the younger Archie. The patriarchy is ultimately reified in the novel's ending, and thus in the author's projected image of Canada's future.

As well, while there is sadness at the passing of the "old order" of New France, there is little resistance to this passing by the novel's end. Jules swears his loyalty to the British crown, and even claims "we live more tranquilly under the British Government than we did under the rule of France" (Aubert de Gaspé 270). And while Blanche herself will not marry an anglophone, she knows that other francophone women will: "It is natural and even desirable that the French and English in Canada, having now one country and the same laws, should forget their ancient hostility and enter into the most intimate relationships, but I am not

the one to set the example" (273). The subservience of French Canada to English Canada is only a matter of time, and Aubert de Gaspé, like Leprohon and Lesperance, does not challenge or criticize this.

As I have suggested, the erotic triangle is very much tied to the notion of the incest taboo. The exchange of women between different groups of men encourages bonds between those groups. Men and women from different families must marry, different genders must be combined, and, in the novels I am now examining, the authors repeatedly stress that different kinds of cultures must be united in Canada if the country is to produce art, literature, history, and unique identity. Robert Young, in Colonial Desire, cites the nineteenth-century idea that a combination of races is crucial to the development of culture; art and literature mix the intellect of the white, masculinized race with the sensuality and imagination of the dark, feminized races (113). Though both the French and English in Canada are "white," nineteenth-century historian Francis Parkman expresses a similar gendering of the two cultures: "The Germanic race, and especially the Anglo-Saxon branch of it, is peculiarly masculine [...]. It submits its action habitually to the guidance of reason" (qtd. in Kelly 37). The Frenchman, on the other hand, is ruled by "his own impulses and passions" (37). Canadian novelists were also interested in this gendering of cultures as a way of creating good literature. As Gerson notices, "Over the course of the nineteenth century, fascination with the otherness of French Canada muted into a sense of identification with Québécois and Acadian culture, folklore, and history which

helped enrich English Canada's own relatively barren national image" (110). Anglophones were seeking cultural fertility through interaction with francophones. In fact, this interaction was perhaps all the more allowable because both races of people were white and "civilized"; there was cultural difference without racial difference, so the fears traditionally associated with miscegenation in other imperial contexts were lessened.

One can see evidence and effects of the incest taboos in the novels I have analyzed thus far. In Antoinette De Mirecourt, the protagonist cannot marry her childhood friend. Cuder-Domínguez argues, "It is precisely the fact that Louis Beauchesne is French-Canadian that disqualifies him, for such a marriage of 'sameness' would amount to cultural incest" (125). In the same way that individual marriage demands different genders and sexes, Canada's "marriage" must concern different cultures in order to be procreative. Antoinette will provide Colonel Evelyn with spiritual guidance, just as Quebec will enrich English-Canadian culture with its folklore, history, and traditions; Evelyn will protect Antoinette and take care of her financially as the British will save Quebec from further invasion and make it stronger. In The Bastonnais and Canadians of Old, French suitors do not even come into the picture. The only young French-Canadian male presented in The Bastonnais is Zulma's younger brother, and he is only a minor character. Furthermore, while, at the end of the novel, Roderick and Cary have children and continue their family line, Batoche dies, and his grand-daughter Blanche enters a convent. In order to survive, it seems, the francophones must join with the anglophones – another assertion of

Canada's cultural incest taboo. The same is true of Blanche's situation in Aubert de Gaspé's novel. Though Blanche will not marry Archie, she clearly loves him, and would rather be abstinent, playing aunt to her brother's son, who is named Archie, than marry someone else. Even when the English are not acting as lovers, their very presence still ousts French-Canadian men from any possibilities for reproduction.

The Golden Dog, by William Kirby, set just previous to the conquest of New France, employs the incest taboo as it pertains to triangles of homosocial desire in an especially clear way. One of main female characters in this novel, Amélie de Repentigny, is in a triangle with her brother Le Gardeur and their childhood friend, Pierre Philibert. Amélie's love for Pierre is based on her gratefulness to Pierre for saving Le Gardeur from drowning when they were young, and in her continued hopes that Pierre will save Le Gardeur from the influence of the corrupt Intendant Bigot. The problem is that this triangle fails to be productive; it fails to cement male-male bonds and create a successful heterosexual union. Amélie should be the female who cements the brotherhood of Le Gardeur and Pierre, but when Le Gardeur kills the Bourgeois Philibert, Pierre's father, Amélie retires in shame to a convent with her cousin Héloise, and eventually dies there. Pierre later dies in battle; Le Gardeur survives, but never marries.

As Murphy notices, "Marriage, or rather its absence, is a key metaphor in Kirby's novel. It is the inability of the characters to marry and the subsequent collapse of their personal relationships which become the metaphors for the

collapse of New France" (144). We can read a political allegory in the failed love triangle because of its public importance for the characters. The cause of the destruction of Pierre and Amélie's engagement, the murder of Philibert, is brought about by Bigot for political reasons; he does not like the competition he receives from Philibert's trading house. The destruction of a loving relationship, connected in this way to the corrupt government in New France, points to the colony's weakness. It has been so spoiled by greed and debauchery, that it cannot continue to reproduce itself; just as in-breeding is thought to weaken the genetic line, so must New France incorporate new blood in order to survive. Because each of the participants in the love triangle is French-Canadian, any union between them would be culturally incestuous; this incestuousness is emphasized by the fact that the three have known each other since they were children; their relationship is too much like those of siblings. Just as Louis Beauchesne fails to marry Antoinette de Mirecourt, so must relationships among French-Canadians fail in The Golden Dog. New France cannot survive without the influence of a different culture.

This other culture is introduced at the end of the novel. After the conquest of Quebec,

> The noblesse and people of New France, all that was best and of most esteem in the land, gave their allegiance loyally and unreservedly to England, upon their final abandonment by the Court of France. They knew they had been coldly, deliberately, cruelly deserted by their King, and the colony utterly ruined by the

malversations of his Intendant. (672).

New France, brought down by corrupt European powers, needs the English now in order to survive and grow. To this end, Kirby constructs post-conquest history in his final chapter in order to further emphasize the superiority of the British over the French. While historians generally suggest that there was some division among the French-Canadians as to whom they owed loyalty during the American Revolution, Kirby describes with confidence their loyalty to the English after the conquest: "the Canadians had ever regarded the English colonists in America as their enemies, far more than the English themselves, and, therefore, when driven to a choice between the two, they remained true to England, and their wise choice has been justified to this day" (673). Kirby's version of history has the French-Canadians choosing their fate as oppressed subjects under the English, as part of his apparent project to create a unified Canada in fiction. One is reminded, though, of Levi-Strauss's words about the complicity of women under the rules of gift exchange – they can choose one beau over another, but they cannot change the nature of the exchange. In the context of the English-*Canadien*-American triangle Kirby suggests at the end of The Golden Dog, the *Canadiens* can only choose one anglophone ruler over another. Thus, while there is a sense of unity, a sense of the two cultures coming together in Canada, there is a distinct hierarchy maintained again.

Throughout the novels I have analyzed thus far – Antoinette De Mirecourt, The Bastonnais, Canadians of Old, and The Golden Dog – the authors use the

convention of the erotic triangle to present their visions of cultural interaction and unity in Canada. By identifying New France as female, the authors "naturalize" the submission of French-Canadians to English-Canadians by figuring this submission in that of women to men. As McClintock notes, "Projecting the family image onto national and imperial progress enabled what was often murderously violent change to be legitimized as the progressive unfolding of natural decree" (45). Through their use of gender and genre, the authors go so far as to romanticize this submission, representing it as a kind of inferiority without oppression, for the lack of power experienced by the *Canadiens* is made up for by the kind protection they will receive from the British. While the authors suggest that this British rule should be understanding and appreciative of French-Canadian differences, and that French-Canadians have important contributions to make to Canada as a nation, the authors do not challenge the established hierarchy of English-French in any radical way.

It is notable, in terms of the incest taboo in these novels, that not one of the authors presents an anglophone-anglophone pairing in order to show that such matings will not themselves hold. The only negative examples of cultural incest are among the francophones. Portrayed so often as military men, and thus in a position of power, the English seem to need the French less than the French need the English (although, as I suggested earlier, the proliferation of English novels about French-Canadians indicates the opposite). The absence of an anglophone pair who must be split up by a francophone points to how the

authors' selective employment of the incest taboo as a cultural allegory further counters any surface notions about a cultural "partnership" between the English and the French in Canada.

Furthermore, the use of erotic triangles in these novels figures Quebec as a woman between two masculinized nations. Her self is defined, and her future is dependent on, the relationships between these two "male" countries, rather than on her own agency. What is crucial here is the paradox. The authors often portray the female protagonists as making choices about whether or not to marry, and whom to marry. At the same time, the authors present and support a social system in which women's choice is severely limited, because they are always subordinated to men. In terms of the national allegory, this means that Quebec is portrayed as *choosing* its own oppression at the hands of the anglophones, as the only choice it is allowed to make. This gives anglophone, and in some cases francophone readers too, a version of history that thinly disguises hierarchy as partnership, that suggests whatever suffering the Québécois, and women, have endured, they have endured by their own free will. Such an attitude would help impede any struggles for the rights of Quebec and women in the nineteenth century, presenting oppression as benevolent, or as freely chosen. I have tried, in my re-readings of these novels, to point out the extent to which these novels' support the ruling order, despite their surface narratives. Homosocial relationships, the façade of women's choice, and the cultural allegory, are not only important issues in their own nineteenth-century context, but will also be pertinent to my discussions of contemporary novels in subsequent chapters.

II. Other Love-Story Motifs

Section One of this chapter explored the way that the novels strive to represent women's ability to choose their own partners, even while, in the way the authors support and represent a patriarchal society, the novels demonstrate how little choice women actually have. In this second section, I would like to focus in more detail on some of the other ways that female agency is constructed, examining the role of women as moral authority, women as ill, and women as fallen. Each of these motifs, common to the love-story plot, indicate that women's only "power" is in passivity and vulnerability. These essentialized notions of female identity may have helped condition nineteenth-century women to view struggles for any real political agency as "un-lady-like." In the national allegory, the passivity of women is transferred to Quebec, valourizing francophone subservience to the English as a virtue. Again, what is important here is the *way* these novels express their orthodoxy, masking it behind an apparent empathy for Quebecois/female agency while limiting the identities of both groups to stereotypes.

As I outlined at the beginning of this chapter in my discussion of Armstrong, in nineteenth-century Britain, women were widely perceived to bring to marriage a keener sense of morality than men's. Wendy Mitchinson, in The Nature of Their Bodies, notices a similar trend in Canada (37-8). Notions of morality and religion, as part of women's sphere of expertise, often get tied to representations of marriage in nineteenth-century literature.[10]

In The Golden Dog, for example, Amélie's love for Pierre springs, in the first place, from a promise to pray for Pierre every day of her life, as payment for his rescuing her brother from drowning. She swears, upon his marriage proposal, that she has loved him since that day, and even during her time in the convent school: "I prayed for you, then, – earnest prayers for your safety and happiness, never hoping for more; least of all anticipating such a moment of bliss as the present" (315). Her erotic love goes hand in hand with her belief in God.

Conversely, Amélie's friend, Angélique, is presented as an immoral influence, possessing "an ease and beauty of movement not suggestive of spiritual graces, like Amélie's, but of terrestrial witcheries like those great women of old who drew down the very gods from Olympus, and who in all ages have incited men to the noblest deeds, or tempted them to the greatest crimes" (23). Angélique's influence over men arises from sexuality, rather than morality, and she is associated with pagan forces rather than the Christian ones suggested by her name.

I have argued that one of the main reasons that Amélie's love triangle is unproductive, and that New France falls, is the need for cultural difference. The other major reason for this failure, though, is that the men do not allow themselves to be influenced by the "proper" type of woman. Le Gardeur does not leave himself open to being reformed by the graces of his sister and their charming cousin, Héloise, who is in love with him. Rather, spurned by Angélique, he allows himself to be drawn into the world of the debauched men of the Intendant's palace. Once he is drunk and dissolute, it takes little for Angélique,

renewing her charms over him, to incite him to murder.[11] Le Gardeur's actions leave his sister and Héloise, as the moral gatekeepers of the family and their society, to retire to a convent on his behalf, signalling the lack of continuity in the old order in New France. In a world run by the selfish Bigot, assisted by Angélique, the pure love of Amélie and Héloise for the men does not stand a chance of reproducing itself, just as Bigot's political corruption leads to the weakening, and therefore subsequent conquest, of New France.

The idea of women as moral authority is also present in Antoinette de Mirecourt. Dean argues that Sternfield's "refusal to submit to Antoinette's feminine authority in moderating his behaviour signals that Antoinette's first marriage does not conform to the 'sexual contract'; while it requires that she surrender herself to her husband, it confers no corresponding hold upon his heart and hence no moral authority over his behaviour" (Dean 50-51). Evelyn, on the other hand, allows Antoinette her proper influence. He is a former Catholic and, Dean notices (54), as Antoinette's husband Evelyn promises to allow Antoinette authority in spiritual matters too: "Thanks to that merciful God whom I so sinfully ignored in the dark days of life's adversity, and to whose love and service your counsels and examples will guide me back, the future lies happy and bright before us" (Leprohon 235). Dean links Antoinette's moral authority to the national allegory: just as Evelyn's behaviour indicates he will treat Antoinette with love and respect, so with the Quebec Act of 1774 the British attempted to restore some of the rights, including the right to practice Catholicism as they chose, they had taken away from the Québécois (Dean 55).

One of the implications of this motif of women's morality in the novels, though, is that, while it values women's experience and gives them a crucial role in society, it also refrains from making any suggestion that women can be politically effective outside their influence over their husbands. This point is underlined in the defusing of Zulma's rebellious nature in The Bastonnais. Initially, her political rebellion is figured alongside a moderate rebellion against her gender role. While Pauline is described as "little" (264) and a "lovely flower" (31), Zulma possesses "a great spirit, overpowering, irresistible, and withal delicious in its strength" (226). Upon hearing tales of Cary's experiences during the war, the two girls respond very differently: "Zulma, in eloquent language and passionate gestures, gave her view of the situation. Pauline was mostly silent. Her role was to receive the confidences of others, rather than to communicate her own" (261-2). While the pairing of dark/light, active/passive heroines is a frequent motif in historical romances, Zulma at times seems to be almost "masculine" in comparison to Pauline. In a letter to Cary, who is being nursed by Pauline, she writes, "Tell her that I am dreadfully jealous, and that unless she brings you to health within a very few days, I shall myself lead a storming party which will succeed in wreaking its vengeance" (310). Here, she figures herself in military terms. She would be the active one while her lover is weakened; she would be his rescuer, but it is Pauline who nurses and mothers him. Despite, or perhaps because of, its "delicious strength," Zulma's love for Cary does not keep him; he is too charmed by Pauline's graceful beauty, and "those intuitive glimpses of her real character made doubly attractive by its constant element of

sadness, and the suspicion of self-sacrifice" (316). Ultimately, it is Pauline's skill in a domestic setting and her passive strength, rather than Zulma's active and political character, which entices him.

Instead, Zulma's American sympathies and unconventional gender identity have to be "tamed" by Roderick. Early on, this transformation is foreshadowed when Roderick entreats her to "take part in [their] cause" (104). Zulma replies, "Before I take, I must be taken, you know" (104); this is an indication of her political sympathies, but perhaps also a playful erotic challenge to Roderick. Later in the novel, upon learning that Cary has been captured, but is under the supervision of Roderick, she thinks "that she would be disposed to bear a little captivity herself for the sake of such companionship" (293). Already, she begins to envision herself in a romanticized role as Roderick's conquered prisoner. In fact, it is Cary's defeat that seems to begin her attachment to Roderick; she wishes to align herself with the victorious male. "Love" begins to "take" Zulma.

This change is completed at the end of the novel, and suggests the author's desire to confine Zulma to traditional gender roles: "She was an altered woman, the fire of whose spirits had died out, and who carried the burden of her loneliness as bravely as she could" (358). Importantly, this is the state in which she can marry Roderick; her active strength has been greatly subdued, and she now exhibits the womanly strength of resignation. She is further feminized at Roderick's hands at the end of the novel, when they are married:

> Sometimes, when he was in a jolly mood, Roderick would say:–
> "You remember, dear, that I once predicted I would catch my

> beautiful rebel. I have caught her."
>
> And he would laugh outright. Zulma would only smile faintly, as if the reminiscence had not lost all its bitterness, but she would return her husband's caress with effusion. (358)

Zulma's earlier fantasy about being Roderick's "captive" has come true. Of course, his language here, in calling her his "beautiful rebel," also emphasizes the failure of the Americans to take Quebec, and reifies the power of the British male. While Lesperance might be mourning Zulma's/Quebec's lack of freedom, he ultimately reifies the gender/culture hierarchies by expressing Zulma's effusive return of Roderick's caress. She has willingly been domesticated, which suggests, too, that French-Canadians should submit to their English "masters" for their own good.

The issue of women's moral authority in the novels I have studied here is particularly important in the context of women's changing roles in the nineteenth century. For example, one of the arguments the early Canadian suffragists faced was the idea that women did not need to vote because their voice was present in their influence over their husband's vote. Other suffragists, though, exploited this essentializing of gender by arguing that women's moral authority was the very reason that they should get the vote; politics needed their consciences. The novels I have considered here, though, do not visualize any such subversion of the system. The authors value women and idealize the patriarchy by sketching it as respecting women's authority over the domestic sphere, but do not suggest women had rights to any authority outside of this sphere. The implication for

French-Canada, in the novels' national allegories, is that its people too must not demand too much political control, except what is kindly bestowed upon them by the English.

Notions of the value of women are also explored in nineteenth- century Canadian novels through the motif of illness. This is a crucial aspect of the love-story plot, as Rosalind Coward notices: "There's a common theme in fiction and films of women being attracted to cripples, or having fantasies about nursing men through illness during which the man suddenly realizes that 'what he's been feeling is love'" (195). Coward adds, "this momentary impotence allows the woman to acquire power, the power of a mother caring for a child" (196). For example, in The Bastonnais, American failure to win French-Canada is represented by Cary's illness, and the power reversal between besieger and besieged, man and woman, that occurs when Pauline nurses him back to health. And, in fact, it is during this time that Cary appears to realize his own feelings for Pauline, and vice versa.

Importantly, though, Pauline then falls ill herself, as a result of her tireless devotion in caring for the American. Here there is another love-story convention at work. Modleski, in an essay about popular romantic fiction, writes, "In most of the novels the hero finally becomes aware of the heroine's 'infinite preciousness' after she has run away, disappeared, fallen into a raging river, or otherwise shown by the threat of her annihilation how important her life really is" (45). Modleski sees this motif as representing a revenge fantasy for women; by

becoming victims, they make the men who have been inconsiderate or cruel or emotionally distant, suffer on behalf of and worry about the women they have mistreated. While Cary has not exactly mistreated Pauline, her illness finally brings about his confession of love for her, and their eventual marriage. Pauline, who has been passive and meek throughout the novel, now has some of her desires fulfilled because of her passivity.

A similar situation occurs at the end of Antoinette De Mirecourt. When Sternfield is mortally wounded in his duel with Louis, Antoinette, conscious of wifely duty, rushes to his bedside. Though initially he is as cruel to her as ever, eventually, under her care he apologizes for his unjust behaviour: "Your patient gentleness has touched me at last, and before I go hence, I would ask you to pardon me for all that I have made you suffer, for all my past cruelty and injustice?" (231). She does pardon him, of course; his illness, and the nearness of death, finally manages to give her some influence over him.

More importantly, though, after Sternfield's death, Antoinette herself is attacked with a brain fever. Her illness here, as with Pauline's, seems to help protect her from censure. Just as Zulma and Roderick cannot be mad at a dying Pauline for loving Cary, neither can Antoinette's father be angry with her for her secret marriage to Sternfield: "whatever may have been his first feelings of anger and humiliation on learning the sad tale of her secret marriage, her severe and dangerous attack of sickness, calling forth his deep parental tenderness, shielded her not only then, but even after recovery had set in, from rebuke or reproach" (233).

The motif of illness is by no means confined to these two novels. In John Richardson's Wacousta, when Clara and Sir Everard have been kidnapped by Wacousta and she throws herself against his chest in weakness and despair, he is filled with "tumultuous ecstasy" and "delight mingled with agony" (436); her suffering increases his passion. Similarly, Rose and Alan in G. Mercer Adam and A. Ethelwyn Wetherald's An Algonquin Maiden (1886) share their first embrace while Rose is convalescing at Alan's house from a fall from a horse, and Alexander Macrorie falls in love with Marion in James De Mille's The Lady of the Ice (1870) when he saves her life during a perilous journey across the St. Lawrence River.

Modleski sees a "revenge fantasy" inherent to the motif, and observes that if women require this revenge then they have not given in completely (58). However, I find the motif more condemning than hope-inspiring, because it enforces an insistence on women's quiet passivity that is still valorized, to some extent, today. The motif has similar ramifications for the national allegory. While the figuring of Quebec as an ill woman might suggest, through its near loss, the value of the colony, the motif resists any ideology that would give Quebec equal political agency with that of the anglophones. Through the motif of illness, women, and by extension French-Canadians, are told that they will be rewarded for being weak and vulnerable and self-sacrificing (Antoinette and Pauline both fall ill as a result of nursing a man) to the point of their own near-annihilation.

While nineteenth-century Canadian novelists are shy about actually

presenting sex, the Victorian notion of the "fallen woman" is often implied. I use this term here not to refer to female prostitutes, but to female characters who, whether or not they have actually had sex, are presented as possessing a sexuality that is somehow not quite "pure." The fallen woman is often rescued in some way by a British hero, his assistance furthering his heroics because he does not take advantage of her vulnerability as others have done. This motif is often connected to the authors' commentaries on cultural relationships in Canada: in coming to the aid of a colony in trouble, represented as a fallen woman, the British heroes are presented as benevolent protectors rather than violent conquerors. There is, however, a disturbing undercurrent to the motif, one probably unintended by the authors but brought about by their need to support a society ruled by an anglophone patriarchy. There is sometimes a sense that the British male is, in fact, "taking advantage," exploiting New France for his own benefit, expecting her "gratitude" for her rescue; his position of power over her makes it difficult to distinguish between lover and attacker. Furthermore, it is the anglophone authors themselves who construct New France as fallen so that she may be rescued, interpreting history in a way that further subordinates a "conquered" people.

I have just argued that Antoinette's illness plays a key part in Evelyn's proposal to her. Also relevant, though, is Antoinette's "fallen" state. Her death-bed visit to Sternfield scandalizes the community. While the author's sympathies appear to be with Antoinette rather than the "gossiping tongues" of the town (233), it is important that Antoinette is no longer a virtuous woman in the

eyes of her peers, especially when news of her secret marriage gets out. Her social status has been altered. Antoinette herself is worried about Evelyn being scorned by the world for marrying her. Allegorically, M. De Mirecourt's disgrace, Antoinette's illness and shame, not to mention the flight of Louis, all suggest that New France is in a very poor state. This paints Evelyn's/England's promise of protection and care rather than tyranny (a possibility demonstrated by Sternfield/England), as all the more heroic. Evelyn steps in to help the degraded De Mirecourts as England stepped in to "help" a fallen New France.

Throughout The Golden Dog, as well, New France seems aligned with a fallen women, Caroline de St. Castin, whom Bigot has used and then abandoned, making her one of many "victims of his licentious life" (69). Bigot has ruined her, though she clings, too late, to a sense of morality. Likewise, Bigot, at the beginning of the novel, has "already ruined and lost the ancient colony of Acadia [where Caroline is from] through his defrauds and malversations" (55), and the narrator states that he "ruined New France" through his ambition and "love of pleasure" (55). At the novel's beginning, Caroline/Acadia has been corrupted by Bigot the same way his immoral rule will ruin Quebec. As I have already argued, it will then be up to Britain to step in and pick up the pieces. As Murphy puts it, "Moral order is restored at the end of Kirby's novel when the Conquest becomes the chastening instrument of reform. The British entry into Canadian history is like a surgical intervention which cuts out the tumor" (14). I would suggest that, given the sexual vulnerability of the fallen women, the "British entry" Murphy refers to is not just a surgical metaphor.

The motif of the fallen woman also occurs in The Bastonnais, although in a slightly different way. Here, rape as a possibility is raised so that it can be discounted. The narrative emphasizes the benevolence of the anglophones, iterating marriage, rather than rape, as the suitable allegory for the conquest. The narrator describes the attempted rape of Batoche's daughter by British soldiers, and her resulting death. The relationship could be read allegorically in that the soldiers (Britain) assert their power over Batoche (France) by raping his daughter (Quebec). The novel, however, hesitates to interpret Canada's history as this violent, and the narrator will not consecrate the tale as fact: "The hermit always insisted that his daughter's death was caused by two drunken British cavalry men. The version was never proven, but it was impossible to dissuade the old man of its truth. Hence his abiding, ineradicable hatred for the English" (150). In a historical novel abounding with exact dates, descriptions of military strategy, the cost of bread, and so on, lack of hard proof is a rather heavy failing, even given Batoche's supposedly supernatural abilities to "see" into events. In fact, the teller of the tale is himself questioned. The emphasis on "old" man is perhaps intended to discount Batoche's credibility, as is the suggestion earlier in the novel that Batoche has a "diseased brain" (55).

Thus, rather than intensifying a sense of French-Canadian oppression, the melodrama of this scene of the daughter's rape and death actually takes away from any such sense. Batoche is not angry because he has daily evidence of the mistreatment of the French under the English, but because of a personal grief which may or may not be based on actual happenings. While Batoche's story

intensifies the novel's drama, it enforces the stereotype of French-Canadian superstition, and contrasts it with the rational "objectivity" of the anglophone narrator, taking The Bastonnais safely away from radical social commentary.

A similar representation of rape occurs at another point in the novel, during a discussion of some female *habitants* about the recent arrival of the American soldiers:

> "I saw M. le Cure yesterday, and he told me that we will have to shut ourselves up, and not show our faces, because. . . you know."
>
> "Pshaw, Josephine," said another, "it will not be so bad as that. My old man says that they are like other men. I'm not afraid. I will talk to them. I am sure there are some pretty fellows among them." (108)

Among these French-Canadian women, the implication of rape is quickly erased by turning the American soldiers into young handsome men to flirt with, not perpetrators of violence. The anglophones are not really a threat, but will treat women, and by extension French-Canada, with kindness.

Moreover, the marriages at the end of the novel counter, perhaps even silence entirely, any possibility of interpreting the actions of the English or the Americans as cultural rape, and of interpreting women as victims in a patriarchy. For example, the chase and capture imagery of Zulma and Roderick's relationship is transformed into eroticism rather than assault. If there were violent cultural and gender relations to begin with, and this is highly questionable for the narrator, they have evaporated in a loving peace.

In Antoinette De Mirecourt, The Bastonnais, and The Golden Dog, England steps in to help re-build a ruined colony. If New France is a fallen woman, then Britain is her rescuer. In his position of rescuer, the man is not only powerful because he is a man, but because he is benevolently giving aid and love to a woman who perhaps does not quite deserve it, and who is even more vulnerable than women usually are. This fantasy of the ruined female rescued by an honourable male does suggest something about the state of women in nineteenth-century Canada. Perhaps, given the little legal power women possessed at the time, and the fact that rape victims were blamed for being attacked, there was a clear need for this fantasy that not all men were perpetrators of violence, and that they could love and rescue women from those who were. In this sense, the novels themselves write against the violent treatment of women by men and sometimes, by extension, of New France by Britain.

However, the frequency of the appearance of this motif suggests something similar to that of women's illness in the novels. A woman's only means of power is through extreme weakness; in her ruin, others will act on her behalf. Woman can have no active political power. This portrayal of the heroines coincides with Amanda Anderson's thoughts on the fallen woman in British nineteenth-century fiction: the "sexually compromised woman" in Victorian fiction is presented as "lacking the autonomy and coherence of the normative masculine subject" (Anderson 2). The fallen woman has lost control, or has had her fate determined by outside forces, which puts her in contrast to the characters who

surround her, who assert their agency (9). Furthermore, she has lost her authority in the moral sphere, the only authority allowed to her. If woman is not moral, her whole being is threatened. In the Canadian authors' use of this fallen-woman stereotype[12] to convey the position of New France, they make "failure" the chief characteristic of French Canada, and thereby reiterate victory and supposedly benevolent rule as the chief characteristics of English Canada. In their representations of history through the conventions of fiction, the authors re-conquer French Canada again and again.

Each of these motifs – women's morality, illness, and falleness – all reinforce statements I made in the first section of this chapter about the interaction of cultural and gender hierarchies. The three motifs construct women in ways that give them only private or passive agency, and in constructing New France in the same way, serve to reconcile French-Canadians to British domination. Bhabha calls the stereotype the "major discursive strategy" of colonial discourse, and describes it as "a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (66). The repetition of these notions of female identity suggests both their fixity and their instability; they *require* repeating. As a genre that makes use of the stereotype, the romance is perhaps particularly suited to colonial discourse, and in early Canada the authors' use of romance as a genre seems, generally speaking, to assert the notion that this is mode that is primarily aimed at confirming the socio-political status quo. However, the fact that

the stereotype requires repeating suggests that it is not insurmountable, that alternate representations of identity are possible.

III. The Seats of the Mighty

I have argued throughout the first and second parts of this chapter that, while the authors critique anglophone male authority by suggesting it needs to be respectful of francophone female emotion and spirituality, nineteenth-century Canadian historical novels generally reiterate the status quo in terms of culture and gender. I would like to turn now to one of the novels at the end of this period, Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty (1896), where the status quo, though not ultimately subverted, is somewhat destabilized. I have stated the importance in Canada of the politics of finding unity through differences. The problem with these politics is that they demand clear categories of identity to begin with, solid components that are to then be united or prioritized. However, the categories of man/woman, English/French are sometimes unclear in Parker's novel, and there are at least moments where these apparent binaries threaten to come undone.

In many ways, the novel exhibits characteristics of other Canadian historical fiction of the time. There is a love triangle involving a French-Canadian woman, Alixe Duvarney, a British soldier, Robert Moray, and an influential French courtier, Tinoir Doltaire. As in the other novels, the French and English are portrayed as possessing particular characteristics. Doltaire lectures an imprisoned Robert on the subject:

> You English are the true lovers, we French the true poets; and I will

> tell you why. You are a race of comrades, the French, of gentlemen; you cleave to a thing, we to an idea; you love a woman best when she is near, we when she is away; you make a romance of marriage, we of intrigue; you feed upon yourselves, we upon the world; you have fever in your blood, we in our brains; you believe the world was made in seven days, we have no God; you would fight for the seven days, we would fight for the danseuse on a bonbon box. The world will say 'fie!' at us and love us; it will respect you and hate you. (232)

Darlene Kelly attributes this diatribe to Parker's reading of Francis Parkman's listing of the gendered, racial differences between the French and the English, which I quoted earlier. In this passage from the novel, though, Doltaire genders both nations as male: "you love a woman best when she is near, we when she is away." However, Parker also suggests that perhaps there are qualities that French *women* bring to Canada that can lead to a fruitful and beneficial union with England. Alixe Duvarney is resourceful, intelligent, and moral, and these qualities serve Moray throughout the time he is imprisoned.

Alixe is the traditional love-story heroine in several ways. For example, she possesses great natural beauty (15-16), as well as a certain youthful spirit and intelligence, reminiscent of Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennett: "She had a playful wit, and her talents were far beyond her years. It amazed me often to hear her sum up a thing in some pregnant sentence which, when you came to think, was the one word to be said" (15).

Also typical of the genre is Alixe's moral authority as heroine. Alixe chooses often to be in the company of Doltaire, just in case his attraction to her could somehow be used to benefit Robert, but there is always a danger of her being drawn in by his magnetism. Indeed, this is Robert's greatest fear: "I knew that he had ever had a sort of power over her, even while she loathed his character; that he had a hundred graces I had not, place which I had not, an intellect that ever delighted me, and a will of iron when it was called into action" (414). Doltaire is Alixe's temptation; at one point she even compares him to Satan (281).

Despite the fact that she finds herself drawn to Doltaire, she is finally able to resist him and prove her worthiness as moral wife for Robert, in a scene that, appropriately enough, takes place in a convent. While Robert, unbeknownst to both of them, watches through a peep hole, Doltaire tries to tempt Alixe to betray Robert and marry himself instead. Robert clearly sees Alixe as a battleground between himself and Doltaire; her struggles embody those between the men: "I knew well that this hour would see the great struggle in her between this scoundrel and myself" (414). Moreover, Alixe's battle takes on political as well as personal significance. Doltaire says to Alixe, "You would be a patriot? Then shut out forever this English captain from your heart, and open its doors to me" (420). Alixe's choice of husband, Doltaire suggests, will reflect her loyalty or disloyalty to her mother country. Doltaire warns Alixe that Robert is "an alien of poor fortune and poorer birth and prospects" who "has nothing kin with you in mind or heart" (422-23). Doltaire expresses a fear of exogamy, but by attributing this fear to the

novel's villain, Parker only reasserts the Canadian cultural incest taboo: New France must marry Britain.

Though initially swayed by Doltaire, Alixe chooses Robert, for his honour, over Doltaire's worldliness. She tells the latter, "You had great cleverness, gifts that startled and delighted; but yet I felt always, and that feeling grew and grew, that there was nothing in you wholly honest" (427). Alixe's words recall Doltaire's to Robert earlier on: "you believe the world was made in seven days, we have no God; you would fight for the seven days, we would fight for the danseuse on a bonbon box" (232). Alixe manages to choose morally in her choice of husband, and the implication is that, as Robert is honourable and Doltaire is not, the British will be better masters of Quebec than the corrupt French. Alixe's morality as woman helps prove Britain's moral superiority; once again, the love-story motif contributes to the national allegory.

Alixe also typifies the love-story heroine in that the power she is allowed is that relegated to women: her sexual appeal for men. She manages to walk a fine line between being extremely desirable for men, but maintaining morality. Though, at one point in the novel, she disguises herself as a Parisian dancer to distract some of Bigot's thugs from killing Robert, during the performance she is aware of the importance of her actions, and their morality: "I saw it all as in a dream, yet I did see it, and I was resolute to triumph over the wicked designs of base and abandoned men. I feared that *my power to hold them* might stop before help came" (286; emphasis mine). Although Alixe has her own (moral) vision, much of her control of the men comes from her ability to make herself into the

object of their gaze, a traditional power for women. One could see Alixe here as enacting a male fantasy; in a single moment, she manages to be both virgin and whore, maintaining her purity while using her sexuality to arouse and distract.

However, it is here that ideals about a natural and inherent gender, and Alixe's conventionality as love-story heroine, start to disintegrate. The very fact that Alixe is able to assume the costume of Madame Jamond, a Parisian dancer, and transform herself from untravelled and inexperienced *Canadienne* to worldly Frenchwoman, suggests the constructed nature of both gender and culture. Alixe's performance suggests that she is, in Judith Butler's sense, dressing in drag; she is a kind of parody of the courtesan, using the persona for her own means. Butler argues in Gender Trouble,

> acts, gestures, enactments [of gender], generally constructed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. (136)

Parker's description of Alixe's dressing in Jamond's gown emphasizes that feminine sexuality is *built*: "[The gown] fitted me well, and with the wig the colour of her hair, brought quickly from her boxes, and use of paints which actors use, I was transformed" (283). Alixe puts on this version of her gender like a costume, because it is one. Thus, she hints at the constructed nature of gender generally.

It is also clear at other times in the novel that Alixe is "performing" her gender consciously. She flirts and dissembles with Doltaire on various occasions, in order to find a way to save Robert. She is so successful that at the end of the novel Doltaire condemns her for using him, accusing her of having "all the gifts of the perfect courtesan" (429). But Alixe defends herself by emphasizing that these were all the tools left to her: "I was but a young girl; I had no friend to help me; he was condemned to die; I loved him" (429). She is forced to play this part because it is one of the few ways left open to her in terms of getting power, and her protest here may be viewed as a protest against the constricting expectations, and limited political power, of women. But also, in Alixe's admitting that she was performing her gendered role with Doltaire, she hints that gender is something which can be manipulated, rather than something inherent to her biological sex; this, Butler would argue, is where there is room for subversion. If there is no original, subversive possibilities lie in the variety of ways one can "do" their gender (141).

When she is a prisoner of the English, Alixe, with Doltaire's plotting, is forced to disguise herself as a nun so that Robert will not suspect she is nearby. Similarly, her family later literally forces the role of nun on her when they confine her to a convent, removing her from a heterosexual relationship of which they do not approve. Alixe's gender and sexuality are manipulated by her father, sought after by Doltaire, and her only resistance is to try to manipulate these things herself, to bring about her own desired ends.

There is another moment where Alixe's gender role seems unstable. This

occurs when she disguises herself as a man in order to visit Robert in prison. She comes to him outwardly disguised as the barber Voban, and wearing her brother's uniform underneath her coat, but somehow her femaleness is clear to Robert: "In spite of cap and great fur coat, I saw the outline of a figure that no barber ever had in this world" (137). Shucking off her outer clothes, she assumes a feminine, or childlike position resting her head on his chest. Despite this seemingly "inherent" femininity, the very fact that Alixe is able to put on a man's uniform threatens to undo the seams of gender. She explains to Robert, "I have grown so in height that an old uniform of my brother's would fit me, and I had it ready – small sword and all" (138-9). The reference to the "small sword" at her side perhaps suggests that Alixe has momentarily taken possession of the phallus; she is in possession of power now, penetrating the walls of Robert's prison, working to be his rescuer. Alixe's disguise threatens to reveal that masculine rule, like masculinity, is itself something that is assumed, not an inherent divine or biological right.

Alixe's cross-dressing is also crucial for the cultural hierarchy. By dressing in the uniform of a French soldier, she puts herself in a dominant position in relation to Robert. As French woman to British male prisoner, there is some balance in their relationship; he is under French power, but has power over her as the man. When she disguises herself as a member of the male military body which has imprisoned Robert, though, she threatens to subordinate him completely, both in terms of gender and culture. Again, she is the one with the power of action, the one who is free to move and have some influence over

Robert's fate.

In fact, Alixe is a much more active character than Robert. Because he is imprisoned, she must endeavour to save him. Gaile McGregor points out that the novel exhibits an inversion of the active/passive sex roles: "for almost the first twenty-six chapters – considerably more than half the book – the protagonist [. . .], while overtly described in the conventional terms of a romantic hero, is locked in a dungeon, passive and impotent, while the heroine takes the active role of plotting his escape" (136). Her position in this respect is not unlike that of Zulma Sarpy, who wished to storm the fort to rescue Cary, but the difference is that Alixe actually takes action and succeeds in saving Robert on more than one occasion. She distracts Bigot's men when they want to kill Robert, she sneaks into prison to visit him more than once, and she manages to get Robert moved out of prison and into the Governor's house after he is wounded while trying to escape. While Robert does eventually make a successful escape, this does not occur until the last third of the book, and it occurs with Alixe's help.

It should also be noted that Robert is never in a position where he gets to rescue Alixe. He finds her in the city on the eve of battle, but she will not go with him as she wants to attend her wounded father. As well, while Robert escapes after marrying her secretly, it is she who defies her family, suffers their indignation at her alliance with a Protestant Englishman, and is forced into a convent. It is she who finally defies Doltaire. Robert never gets his chance to confront Doltaire, as the latter is accidentally killed by Voban; if there is any triumph over Doltaire, it is Alixe's moral one. Likewise, Robert goes looking for

Alixe after Quebec has fallen, but she has already escaped into the hills outside the city, with the help of another woman, Voban's former fiancée, Mathilde. Alixe, then, appears to be more of a hero than Robert; in fact, at one point Robert compares her bravery to that of Montcalm.

The ending of the novel, with Robert and Alixe married, and her father's approval of the union, would seem to repeat the pattern we have seen in other novels. French-Canadian woman and British man are married, and French Canada has been "conquered", an idea emphasized by Monsieur Duvarney's wounds, and the death of Alixe's brother, Juste, as well as that of Doltaire, Voban, and Gabord. However, Alixe's happy ending with Robert does not erase, for the reader, her bold and brave actions throughout the book.

More importantly, Parker seems ambivalent about the importance of nation, which makes an allegorical reading of the love story as a justification of British rule problematic. The primacy of patriotism over erotic love is suggested in Robert's interpretation of General Wolfe's comment, "It is the most lasting passion," as referring to love of country (448). The importance placed on patriotism is emphasized by Doltaire's failure as a lover. One of his faults, it seems, for Alixe, is that he would do anything for her, but little for France. With her love, he says, he could defeat the English:

> "Will you not do it for France?" she said.
>
> "I will not do it for France," he answered. "I will do it for you alone." (421)

Patriotism means little to Doltaire. He tries to use Alixe's sense of patriotism, to

convince her to marry him, but he has no sense of it himself. Robert, on the other hand, is fully patriotic, risking his life in battle and espionage for his country.

Conversely, it seems that Robert's love for Alixe is sometimes even more important than his love of England. Upon telling General Wolfe of a plan to get himself into Quebec to rescue Alixe, and thus also prove that the army can reach the city, love of woman and love of country blur:

> "A woman!" [Wolfe] said. "Well, it were not the first time the love of a wench opened the gates to a nation's victory."
>
> "Love of a wife, sir, should carry a man farther." (355)

Since he and Alixe have been secretly married at this point, Robert's love for her may be even more important than any nationalist sentiments. Such incidents appear to contradict Parker's desire "to inspire the love of things done for the sake of a nation rather than for the welfare of an individual" (Parker, "Introduction" ix).

The ending of the novel is also anti-national in some ways. It contrasts with much of the novel's action – peace after war, nature after the city, love after hate, God over secular concerns. While Moray relates the fall of Quebec to his own personal situation by commenting "Peace was upon it all, and upon us" (469), the reuniting of Alixe and Robert in the countryside rather than in the ruins of Quebec appears to put them outside of national political concerns. From Robert and Alixe's spot in the wilderness a "wall of rosy hills" hides "the captured town" (469). Rather than emphasizing the power of the English here, Parker leaves all nationalist concerns aside, cherishing "universal" precepts of love.

Parker does refer to divinity, but these further support his extra-national vision. In the final words of the novel, Mathilde hands Robert a cross and says, "I know a place where all the lovers can hide" (469). This turn to divinity has been somewhat predicted by a childhood memory of Robert's, in which a man preached, "Ye that build forts here shall lie in darksome prisons; there is no fort but the Fort of God" (83). The forts of the new world are nothing, national differences are nothing compared to a love of God.

I do not mean to suggest that there is something radical about Parker's text. Alixe's influence is still limited to the moral realm. The private sphere of women is definitely connected to the public sphere of men, in that women can try to have some moral influence over men's political actions, but the two spheres nevertheless remain distinct. There is, in this novel, an emphasis on the importance of women in society, but no real challenge to their situation. Alixe's moments of cross-dressing are important, but they are also contradicted by passages where she seems to have a "true" gender when she is with Robert: "with me she was ever her own absolute self, free from all artifice, lost in her perfect naturalness" (294). While Alixe's cross-dressing presents moments of subversion, these seem to be the result of crises, and she returns to an "inherent" femininity with Robert.

Furthermore, in many ways the novel seems to celebrate the disadvantageous position of French Canada. While Robert can vacillate between love of country and love of woman, or conflate the two in his penetrating of Quebec's walls, Alixe cannot share this privilege. She clearly has to choose

personal love over love of country in her marriage to Robert, and also choose human love over divine love in her alliance with a Protestant. Alixe must face the disdain of her culture, religion, and society; Robert does not. Parker's implication is that the French are cruel in their treatment of Alixe, and that she will be happier under the new British rule. Her heroism might suggest some admiration on Parker's part for French-Canadians, but her activeness may also serve to paint Britain in a better light by suggesting, allegorically, that Britain did not have to actively force French-Canadian allegiance; in Alixe's choosing Robert rather than Doltaire, French-Canada chooses its own ruler, thus sidestepping any interpretation of the conquest as a tyrannical oppression.

Moreover, while the final scene takes place outside of the city, outside of the remains of war, the narrator does not show any regret about who has won. This is a first-person narrative, so the view of the readers is always the view of Robert. And perhaps the religious references at the novel's end only serve to justify the British; it is easy to say that God is more important than nation when your own nation is in a secure position of power.

The character of Mathilde is important in this respect too, as she is another figure of the fallen woman as New France. Voban's fiancée, it is implied that she has been driven insane by sexual corruption, forced or coerced, at the hands of Bigot and his men. Moray makes this metaphor of New France explicit when he imagines "the scarlet body of British power moving down upon a dishonoured city" (207). The British body moves down upon Quebec, but the city has already been dishonoured by Bigot and his corruption. The city has been

made vulnerable because of the immorality of French politicians, and the English are able to get at Quebec through, in interesting sexual imagery, a crack in the hillside. Despite then, the ending in nature, Britain will "never takes its foot from that sword of France which fell there on the soil of the New World" (207). This fallen sword of France, which is perhaps a symbol of impotence or castration, is demonstrated at the end of the novel in the figure of Alixe's wounded father, the ailing patriarch a sign of his nation's powerlessness.

While Parker presents moments in which the lines between man and woman are not always clear, and he interferes somewhat with the allegorizing of Quebec as a passive female, his novel ultimately underscores the superiority of the British male. As Kelly puts it, "For all that he declared his fiction to be a portrait of French Canada it became in the end a self-portrait, preserving for future readers the sensibility of a chauvinistic age" (48). While Kelly uses the term "chauvinistic" in its original sense, to refer to an intense patriotism (in this case British-Canadian), The Seats of the Mighty demonstrates a masculinist chauvinism too.

I have drawn attention to what I see as the subversive moments in The Seats of the Mighty because these moments suggest the possibilities for the romance; it need not always be a genre that contributes to cultural and gender oppression. For example, cross-dressing, both in terms of gender and culture, is not an uncommon characteristic of the historical romance, and it contains within it potential for looking at identity as something that is performative and shifting rather than essentialized. Furthermore, in the active strength of a heroine like

Alixe, there is some suggestion of women's ability to push at the boundaries of their roles, even if Alixe's own narrative ends rather conventionally. Likewise, while the main point of view is that of the British officer, and he is the hero of the tale, in many ways Alixe and Doltaire, the two main francophone characters are far more interesting, at least from my contemporary perspective. Doltaire, and the subversive potential of his relationship with Robert, I will explore in more detail in a later chapter, but for now I wish only to suggest that some of the love-story motifs I have explored are used for more radical means by other novelists.

Unfortunately, though, in the case of this novel, and for many contemporary novelists, such moments of resistance, of complicated gendered and cultural identities, are often contained within narratives that, overall, come to very conservative conclusions, supporting gendered and cultural hierarchies. The moments of resistance, as in Parker's novel, appear to be raised only so that they can be sealed in an ending to the narrative that supports the status quo.

The novels I have analyzed in this chapter create for French-Canadians a role of importance in Canada; francophones are to contribute their language, culture, folklore, and history to help Canada develop a unique national identity. The authors believe that *Canadiens* should not be *wholly* assimilated. In fact, this maintaining of difference is not only about enriching English-Canadian culture, but also is crucial to maintaining colonial authority. Bhabha points out that "The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial

and sexual" (67). If the French were simply assimilated, there would be no difference between them and the English, and thus no basis for British claims to superiority. The power relationships between French and English remain clear and stable in the novels by presenting their cultural relationship through an erotic one. In the discourse of gender as a natural category, the submission of French-Canadians to English-Canadians is naturalized and reified, equated with the submission of women to men. Again and again, though, this submission is presented as protective rather than oppressive. The erotic triangle plays an important role here, as it reconfigures a violent military conquest in the language of female "choice" in marriage partner. As I have suggested, though, the restrictions on women in Victorian society limit any reading of their agency as equivalent to that of men.

New France-as-woman also gets constructed in a variety of ways. Whether she is moral authority, ill woman or fallen woman, New France usually finds power only in passivity. The novels, then, not only perpetrate the powerlessness of women, they also violently demand the submission of an enormous minority culture in Canada, and add insult to injury by recommending that this submission be viewed as beneficial. In a century that saw the War of 1812, the Napoleonic Wars, the 1837-8 Rebellions, the American Civil War, the Fenian Raids, Confederation, and the Suffrage Movement, the authors I have discussed may have been reacting against radical social change by portraying stable relationships between cultures and genders in Canada.

These authors do so by turning to the past. In depicting the "fall" of New

France and its effects, the authors simultaneously draw attention to war, to clear differences between nations, even while they emphasize peace and stability by figuring a union of national differences through a happy marriage. The marriages at the end of the novels represent a society at peace with itself, of people at peace with each other, while also maintaining a clear social hierarchy.

While one of the aims of this dissertation is to compare early Canadian historical fiction with contemporary historical fiction, I have not included any contemporary examples of novels which deal with English-French conflicts in Canadian history by employing the love-story plot for the simple reason that there are very few to choose from. Although nineteenth-century authors seem obsessed with this topic, contemporary anglophone authors, for all the postmodern re-writings of history, have not felt the need to re-explore the way English-French relations have been presented, though there is a proliferation of literature about English-Canadian and Native relationships (which I shall discuss in my next two chapters).

Contemporary French-Canadian writers, on the other hand, show an interest in their history, but often choose to explore this history outside of the historical novel. Jacques Poulin's Volkswagen Blues, Pierre Nepveu's Des mondes peu habites, Hubert Aquin's Prochain Episode, and Lola Lemire Tostevin's Frog Moon, for example, are all concerned with French-Canadian history, but none of them is set in a historical period.[13] Herb Wylie, in Speculative Fictions: Contemporary Canadian Novelists and the Writing of History, suggests that one of the reasons Native-Canadian authors do not write historical novels is

that they wish to challenge the stereotype of Native culture as belonging to the past (xvi). The same may be true of French-Canadians. They have so often been portrayed by English-Canadians as, at best, charmingly backward and superstitious, or, at worst, insular and oppressively religious, that contemporary francophone authors may wish to maintain a contemporary perspective, and thus contemporary setting, in their approach to historical events, rather than reiterating straightforwardly their "conquest" by the English.

Moreover, as I suggested in my Introduction, there is something innately conventional in the historically-set novel. Wyile argues that as much as contemporary English-Canadian novelists "make use of various devices to question the place of historiography and historical consciousness in a postmodern era, they also exploit realist conventions to cultivate an acquaintance with that historical arena in the first place" (253). To set about portraying daily life in the past is to believe that this past is accessible enough to be reconstructed. Likewise, if we can only know the past through its documents, as Linda Hutcheon's analysis of the Canadian postmodern purports (66-67), and these documents are the products of a society which has marginalized French-Canadians and Native peoples, then to attempt to reconstruct history using these documents is to concede to their authority.

Though contemporary anglophone writers in Canada refrain, for the most part, from exploring French-Canadian history, they seem to still be working under the influence of these nineteenth-century writers of historical romances. I shall demonstrate, in subsequent chapters, the ways that late twentieth-century writers

adapt, challenge, or – postmodernism aside – repeat some of the same love-story motifs employed by Leprohon, Lesperance, Aubert de Gaspé, Kirby, and Parker in discussions of culture. While many authors of the nineteenth-century were uninterested in challenging cultural and gender hierarchies in any radical way, such authors are important because they provide a tradition that contemporary authors might sometimes strive to resist in their more ironic representations of history and nationalism, but also often reiterate in the erotic preoccupations and stereotypes of identity that appear in their novels.

For example, some early Canadian novelists set about depicting concrete social identities in order to envision a particular political order, and while many contemporary authors question the stability of any category of identity, they also seem wary of becoming too interrogative. As Linda Hutcheon notices,

> The current post-structuralist/post-modern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminist and post-colonial discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical post-modern challenges are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge that which it securely possesses. ("Circling" 130-131)

Issues of national, cultural, and gender identity are still crucial in Canada today. Women battle for equal treatment in various aspects of their lives. The Multiculturalism Act, with its rhetoric about promoting "the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of

different origins" (3.1 g), would seem to still demand "marriages" between cultures in Canada. One of the issues I am interested in, in the following chapters, is the paradox within contemporary Canadian novels: a questioning of love-story motifs (among other literary traditions) and of secure politics of identity, alongside the employment of love-story motifs and a continued exploration of secure identities from which nation, colonialism, and patriarchal structures can be interrogated. In the employment of stable identities, even if they are employing such identities to assert characters' gendered and/or cultural distinction from a white anglophone patriarchy, contemporary authors end up couching radicalism in the very structures of difference that have helped create hierarchies and oppress women and minority cultures in Canada's past.

Notes

[1] Trumpener makes the similarity between British and Canadian literatures explicit when she states that Aubert de Gaspé's Canadians of Old is derivative of Waverley, and notices, "the conquest of Quebec offers clear analogies with the [Jacobite rebellion of 18] '45 as a national conflict with novelistic appeal" (260).

[2] McClintock describes how the cultural difference of the Irish was often configured in the nineteenth century as racial difference (53). Similarly, the protagonist of Owenson's The Wild Irish Girl admits he has been taught "to look upon the *inferior* Irish as beings forming an humbler link than humanity in the chain of nature" (176), and in Scott's Waverley, the Highlanders appear as foreign to the Lowlanders and English as "African Negroes, or Esquimaux Indians" (323). A refinement in the upper-class Irish (Glorvina) in the first novel, and devotion from the Lowland Scots (Rose) in the second novel, allows for unions between the colonized and the English.

[3] Leprohon's Antoinette De Mirecourt, Kirby's The Golden Dog, and Aubert de Gaspé's Canadians of Old, for example, were all published in translation – the first two from English to French, and the last from French to English.

[4] Sedgwick uses the term "homosocial desire" to stress a continuum of male bonds that includes homosexuality, even though this continuum, she points out, is disrupted for males in Western society due to homophobia (1-2).

[5] Catholicism is rarely praised by nineteenth-century English-Canadian writers, many of whom were Protestant, but the exception here may be due to

Leprohon's own Irish Catholic background.

[6] Louis Beauchesne, Antoinette's childhood friend, is another important figure here, as the man her father wishes her to marry. However, Dean, Murphy, and Cuder-Domínguez all notice Louis' significance as a representative of defeated French-Canada, so I am choosing to pass over him here.

[7] The question might be raised as to why we cannot read *female* homosocial exchange in the Pauline-Cary-Zulma triangle, because Zulma brings about the marriage between Pauline and Cary. However, Rubin argues, "If women are for men to dispose of, they are in no position to give themselves away" (175). Thus, they can hardly give men away. However, even if we disagree with Rubin's analysis, and allow Zulma some active power here, whatever power she does have is eradicated by the end of the novel, in the defeat of her dreams of rebellion and her marriage to Roderick. For more on this, see my analysis of the novel's gender stereotypes on p.61-63.

[8] While I am dealing, in this chapter, with no other novels originally written in French, Aubert de Gaspé's novel is important here because it appears to be one of the few French-Canadian novels of the nineteenth century that presents the possibility of love between an anglophone and a francophone, and, as Enn Raudsepp points out, because it is one of the few francophone texts of this period to have been translated into English and embraced by an anglophone Canadian audience (108).

[9] Blanche appears to mimic Flora Mac-Ivor, a heroine in Waverley, who

also shuns the love of her brother's friend for patriotic reasons. (I am indebted to Dr. Julia Wright for this observation).

[10] The notion of women as moral authorities often excluded lower-class women, whose morals were suspicious to Victorian Canadians, especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century (see Kinsman 109). This explains why all of the female protagonists in the love-story plots are from the land-owning class, rather than *habitants*, and why their lovers are officers, rather than common soldiers. While the new nation provides new opportunities for its citizens, it maintains much of the class bias of the old world. The fact that the nation is allegorized in the marriage of two upper middle-class individuals reiterates the power of members of this class as the leaders of the new country.

[11] I shall take up the subjects of on Angélique's sexuality and violence, and the fall of New France, in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

[12] I will take up the issue of the fallen woman in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

[13] One exception to this trend is Anne Hebert's Kamouraska, which I discuss in Chapters Five and Six.

CHAPTER THREE

"Beautiful little brute!": Native Canadian Women and the National Allegory

In one word she was untamed. But was she untameable?

–Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald, An Algonquin Maiden (151)

As I stated in my first chapter, nineteenth-century British imperialism often figured its power in the image of familial unity, with the white male as the benign father ruling over all other races and genders. That model is also useful in an examination of love-story plots involving British and Native Canadians in historical novels. In similar ways, the white male is set up as the father/lover, but here he rules over the "inferior" and subordinate Native woman, who is also representative of her race. But these encounters, unlike those outlined in my last chapter, do not result in marriage. There may be moments of genuine affection between a British man and a Native woman, but these are fleeting; more often than not, he ends up with a white woman, as in Robert E. Wall's series The Canadians (1981-), or the Indian[1] maiden ends up dead, as in John Steffler's The Afterlife of George Cartwright (1992), or both events occur, as in Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald's An Algonquin Maiden (1887).

Robert Young's Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, sheds some light on these representations that gesture towards consummation of a white-Native relationship but seldom complete it. Young outlines nineteenth-

century theories about miscegenation, and explains the ambivalent feelings of the white male towards the colonized Other. Theorists in the Victorian era stressed that, because each race carried particular characteristics, the blending of races was necessary for the improvement of civilization. However, some writers also iterated that this blending would pollute the white race, and thereby lead to social chaos and the destruction of civilization: "Conjugal fusion of blood is therefore necessary for civilization, even if adulteration also destroys it" (Young 108). Thus, as Young stresses, white colonizers were both drawn to the exoticism of other races, and frightened by the possible effects of miscegenation. Colonialism forced "disparate territories, histories and people to be thrust together like foreign bodies in the night. In this sense it was itself the instrument that produced its own darkest fantasy – the unlimited and ungovernable fertility of 'unnatural' unions" (98).

While Young's subject is not directly the Canadian Native, his theories apply here. The ambivalent reaction to the indigenous Other is also the topic of Terry Goldie's work Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures. Goldie notices that female Natives are often portrayed in seemingly contradictory ways, as either the attractive young maiden or the hideous old squaw. He finds the latter a symbol of what happens to the white man when he gives into his attraction to the former: "The maiden represents the positive anticipation, and thus temptation; the squaw is the fruition, the aftermath of that temptation, and becomes fear" (72) In nineteenth-century literature, French-Canadians provide enough difference from

the English to promise cultural fertility, but Native Canadians are culturally and racially different, and thus fears of the Native proliferate alongside sexual desire for the Native.

Goldie also stresses that assumptions about Natives' "natural" instincts are key to sexualized representations of them. Often, they symbolize an inviting (in the case of the maiden) or hostile (in the case of the squaw) landscape (72), and are part of a non-Native desire to find a sense of home: "In their need to become 'native,' to belong here, whites in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia have adopted a process which I have termed 'indigenization.' A peculiar word, it suggests the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous" (13). Alan Lawson, as I suggested in my Introduction, develops this idea of indigenization: unable to mimic imperial authority exactly, the settler attempts to appropriate that of the Native (26). The settler displaces the Native, but must not lose himself by "going Native" completely (27). Ambivalent attitudes towards cross-cultural sexuality appear indicative of this state: sometimes it seems promising, a chance for the protagonist to connect to the land, while at other times it is repugnant for its threat to the purity of white society.

I wish to expand Goldie's analysis of how ideas about the natural get tied, in multiple and contradictory ways, to Native sexuality. I will do this by focussing on the historical novel and its love- story motifs, particularly in regard to the authors' project of exploring the Native-settler relationship in the developing Canadian nation. The Native characters in the novels succeed and fail in conforming to European romantic conventions in various ways that reflect upon

the civilization/nature binary. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, the male Native is often depicted in the novels as a rapist, but in this case naturalness is the reason for his base criminality; he has been deprived of the moral influence of civilization. My focus in this chapter, though, is Native women. The connection between Native women and the natural world is related to the stereotype of the "Green Indian," a concept which has its roots in the nineteenth-century, but continues into the environmentalist movements of the twentieth century (see Krech 16-22). The Green Indian can be of either gender, but I see her most often manifested in Canadian historical novels as female. The Green Indian (or the Ecological Indian) represents, in Shepard Krech's terms, an attitude towards nature that demonstrates concern for and understanding of the state of the environment (24), and an employment of nature's resources without wasting or ruining them (26). The Indian maiden possesses practical knowledge of the wild that can be crucial to the hero's survival, as well as a respect for its beauty. I would add, for my own usage, that the stereotype of the "natural" Indian also often represents what Leslie Monkman calls a "natural humanity" (50). Natives are depicted as having access to an Edenic state that is not only more deeply connected to non-human nature, but human nature as well, manifested in an openness towards emotional expression and sexuality, and a comfort with the naked human body.

Goldie's survey focuses on non-Native representations of Natives. He argues that the image of the indigene "reveals very little about the indigenes or their cultures. It reveals a great deal about the whites and their cultures" (12). My

focus on historical novels means that the authors of the texts under consideration here are all non-Native too. As Goldie notices, the Native is often, by definition, an artefact: "The prehistoric Aborigine is Aborigine; the present Aborigine is not" (168). Thus, historical fiction may be, for some non-Native writers, early and contemporary, the only way to write about the "true" Native Canadian. What interests me here, as in the last chapter, is the way Canadian historical novels often construct history in order to make comments on the Canadian nation: where do Native Canadians fit in this picture?

The proliferation of Canadian historical novels in the nineteenth century, as well as in the last twenty years, reveals that representations of Natives have not changed over time in Canada. Monkman, in A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature (1981), notices similar Native stereotypes in early and contemporary Canadian literature; Goldie, writing several years later, observes the same thing. Fifteen years after Goldie's study was published, and despite developments in postcolonial studies which acknowledge the harmful effects of such stereotypes, little has changed. In the context of a critique of colonialism, some contemporary writers, such as Rudy Wiebe and John Steffler, attempt to depict Native Canadians in a more human way than do the early writers, but in their use of love-story motifs and the conventions of the historical novel, they reiterate some of the gender and racial stereotypes used in the earlier novels. Something similar can be said of less canonical or "popular" texts. Thus I consider Wall's series, The Canadians, which would not be found on the syllabus for most Canadian literature courses, but was successful enough in the 1980s for

the author to publish several sequels.

What is key in the texts under consideration in this chapter is the way that stereotypes of Native women interact with stereotypes of white women. Goldie touches on this issue, and acknowledges that "the basic view of the indigene as sexual figure is an extension of the masculinist reification of the Other" (65), but further analysis is required in order to tease out the ways that Native women are both classified in the same categories of "nature" that restrict the political power of non-Native women, but they are also denied even the "power" white women are meant to discover in romantic relationships. Homi Bhabha, in an analysis of colonial discourse, argues that stereotypes recognize the difference in the racial Other, while subsuming that Other to a set of fixed characteristics that becomes familiar to the colonizer: "colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (70-71). The stereotype of the Green Indian, for example, is a version of Native identity that is familiar to non-Natives, and therefore safe. I would also argue, though, that the unfamiliar Native is made familiar through non-Native discourses on gender. As with the French-English courtships in Canadian historical novels, the social relationships between Native and non-Native are translated into relations between the genders in the context of a love story: the Native woman is judged, by white society, according to how well (in Judith Butler's terms) she "does" her gender. Can she be feminine enough to earn and keep the white hero's love? Can she play a key part in the new Euro-Canadian society?

Not surprisingly, the Indian maiden's success or failure (and it is usually

failure) is very much connected to her race; being Native can be both a help and a hindrance to acting as the romantic heroine. Sometimes the Native woman is conventional (read: European) in her femininity, because the "powers that be" have granted her gentleness and beauty; she stands apart from other women from her race, and closer to Europeans, by an inherent sense of womanly virtue. At the same time, however, she is more "natural" and in some ways *more* womanly than her European counterparts. Women are conventionally associated with the body more than the intellect, and have often been explicitly identified with landscape. Women's bodies have been described in literature as earth to be fertilized, fruit to be plucked, and so on. More literally, women of a certain class have been affiliated with the land that they might bring to marriage as part of their dowries. The stereotype of the Indian maiden intensifies these qualities of woman as natural world and body. In fact, Diana M.A. Relke notices a connection between the way Natives and women generally have often been depicted: "the Green Indian is a kind of consort to Mother Nature; together, they function to keep in place the image of women and aboriginal peoples as hopelessly embedded in non-rational, amoral nature and the image of the White Man as the sole legitimate signifier of civilization" (261). The Native woman, though, is more sensual, in her freer sexuality and barely concealed skin, than the European female, and she also acts as a symbol for the Canadian landscape, "an explicit opportunity for the white patriarchy to enter the land" (Goldie 65).

However, at other times the Native woman's "naturalness" can make her repugnant – she is uncouth, untameable, unable to provide the domestic

comforts the white male would require of a mate. The Native woman of many historical novels, in fact, presents a contradiction most Victorian women faced. She is feminine because she is biologically determined to be so, but this femininity is supposed to be expressed in socially prescribed ways: her "nature" is supposed to make her more inclined to live by the hearth rather than on the heath; the purpose of her nature is to support civilization. The Native woman's position, though, is more imprisoning than that of the white woman's. On one hand she is sometimes portrayed as more feminine, in her sensuality and emotionality, than European women, who are constricted by the inhibitions of civilization. On the other hand, the intensity of such sensuality and emotionality can at times make the Native woman unfeminine, too wild for the white male, and so she is rejected by him. Relke notes that "In their 'primitive' licentiousness" Native women "are important as signifiers of everything that white women are not" (262). The Native woman's intense femininity imprisons her in a gendered hierarchy, even as it disqualifies her from access to the limited power allotted white women. What we find then, in the Canadian historical love story, is Native women who are trapped in non-Native narratives that subordinate them for being *too* womanly, and often resign them to heartbreak and death. In the context of the historical novel and its visions or interrogations of Canadian nationhood, Native women have only a limited role to play in the new, white-dominated society, even as they are perpetually set up as the objects of a desiring white gaze.

I. Nineteenth-Century Novels

Such contradictory expectations and desires are at work in An Algonquin Maiden: A Romance of the Early Days of Upper Canada (1887) by Graeme Mercer Adam and Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald. In this novel, the anglophone hero, Edward Macleod, returns to Canada from England and finds himself embroiled in a love triangle with Hélène DeBerczy, a French-Canadian of Huguenot background, and an Indian girl named Wanda. Alongside this plot is the developing romance between Edward's sister Rose, and a local politician named Alan Dunlop.

Occasionally, Wanda, the Indian maiden of the title, is described in similar romantic terms to those of the two women of European descent. Wanda, Hélène, and Rose are all aligned, at various times, with the natural world. For example, Hélène is, appropriately enough, linked to the lily (143), a French symbol, and Rose Macleod, the anglophone heroine, shares her name with the flower that is a symbol of England. While Wanda is not identified with any particular flower, she is described by Edward as a flower to be plucked (75). Comparing women to flowers in the context of erotic attachment is no new tradition. The depictions of each of the women this way, then, stresses the characters' roles as romantic heroines, symbols of the heroes' desires, as well as their roles as representatives of their cultures. (Wanda as a flower to be plucked is particularly interesting in this latter case, as I shall demonstrate).

Hélène, Rose, and Wanda, are also associated with the unstudied and

vulnerable qualities of children. Infantilizing women again stresses that they are sensual rather than intellectual, but also innocent and emotional rather than worldly as men are. Portraying women as childlike is a staple of the love-story plot. As Rosalind Coward argues, the conventional love story posits the male hero as an idealized father figure for the heroine; he will love and protect her without oppression, as one would love and protect a child (195). The presumed, innate authority of father over child is transferred to man over woman. Thus, it is no coincidence that when Rose first kisses Alan it is because the room is dim and she mistakes him for her father. Their romantic parent-child relationship is prefigured when she is thrown from her horse (clearly a symbol of her own unrestrainable passions for Alan)[2] and rescued by him: "Gathering her into his arms he carried her as he might have carried a child to the shelter of his own house" (83). Similarly, when Edward and Hélène enjoy a romantic boat ride, her dress is "like an infant's robe" and he notices her "incredibly small" feet. Her child-like qualities identify her with nature, as "The newborn sweetness of the spring morning was about them" (37). Likewise, Wanda seems to Edward "a veritable child of nature" (64), and later, when she has fallen in love with him, he notices that "The dark lovely face bent forward seemed more childish in its soft curves since the capacity to love and suffer had wakened in her breast" (151). Apparently, Wanda's female, adult heterosexuality only makes her more like a child in relation to Edward. In fact, the childlike vulnerability of all the women seems to endear them further to Alan and/or Edward. Thus, the romantic plot infantilizes the women in order to stress the masculinity of the males whose job it

is to love and protect them; the women's adult sexuality expresses a subjectivity that is only manifested in passivity.

However, in the very ways that Wanda is like the other heroines, she is also unlike them; she is even more intensely "natural" than they are, and this is part of her special appeal for Edward. Goldie argues that the Indian maiden "represents the attractions of the land but in a form which seems to request domination, unlike her violent male counterpart who resists it" (65). This is true, or especially true, Goldie stresses, even when the erotic relationship is never consummated; the Indian maiden is emotionally conquered by loving the white male, without him engaging in the risk of miscegenation (68). I would qualify Goldie's argument, though, by suggesting that the Native maiden in this novel actually resists domination (as I will demonstrate in a moment), and this very resistance is one of the things that makes her so attractive to Edward.

Initially, Wanda seems even more appealing to Edward than her French-Canadian rival because of her associations with a pristine nature. While Hélène and Rose are identified with cultivated garden flowers, Wanda is associated with the wilderness. When Hélène gives Edward hothouse camellias, he wonders, "What place had hot-house plants, either human or otherwise, in this wild new land, whose illimitable forests as yet were almost strangers to axe and fire?" (44). Shortly afterward, while he is chasing Wanda through the woods, one of Hélène's flowers is "rudely crushed beneath his heel" (45). Edward resists civilization in favour of the less attainable beauty of the wild. The narrative further stresses Wanda's "naturalness" through her emotional identification with the forest. When

Edward convinces her to take cover in a hollow tree trunk with him during a rainstorm, Wanda gazes "longingly forth upon the wild elements of whose life her own life seemed to form a vital part. Her pulse beat fast in sympathy with the beating rain" (64). Part of Wanda's appeal for Edward, undoubtedly, is that she is much more like the wild land of Canada, which Edward so adores, than the hot-house flowers of Hélène. As Rose comments, "Edward chafes a good deal under the restraints of civilized life" (68).

Wanda's identification with the land is especially enticing for Edward because this sense of belonging to the new world seems to be unattainable for him. He may be seeking what Goldie refers to as *indigenization.* Goldie argues that the non-Native's alienation arises from the fact that s/he is an intruder, a stranger to the land. This position is represented in the novel by the fact that Edward cannot tear himself from his own civilization; he has just returned to Canada, which he loves, and which he considers home more than England, but he cannot, ultimately, forego his family and culture to live in the wilderness, as much as he is attracted to it. As Rose is quick to point out to her brother, Wanda is merely "a wild thing of the woods" and would eventually be only a source of aggravation to Edward as a wife (189). Although he longs for Wanda and her wildness, his fantasies about her as his wife inevitably have her sitting in a cozy home by a hearth (157).

It is Wanda's transgressive wildness and her initial resistance to loving him that make her so appealing for Edward; she is a challenge; and since he cannot understand and make himself at home in the land, he attempts to

possess it. During the rainstorm, Edward is annoyed by the fact that Wanda is more interested in watching the storm than in paying attention to him, so he forcibly kisses her. When he receives a blow in return, he responds with the voice of one who would conquer, rather than cherish, the natural world: "'Beautiful little brute!' he muttered under his breath, 'I haven't done with her yet. She'll live to give me something prettier than this in return for my caress" (75). In recounting to his family the story of his kiss and Wanda's assault, he describes the event as an encounter with a wild animal he was hunting (70-71). Rose later uses the same analogy to describe Edward's fascination with Wanda, but with less humour and more criticism: "I have seen you go without food and sleep simply because you were on the track of some beautiful wild creature that was forced to yield its liberty and life merely to gratify your whim. It is in that despicable way you would treat Wanda" (190). Even when he has acknowledged that he cannot really love Wanda, he still plans to try to civilize her: "He would do everything for her. She should be educated, and inducted by gentle degrees into the refinement of civilization" (223-24). He cannot let the land, or Wanda, exist on its own terms.

This motif of conquest and colonization, with its specifically Canadian inflections regarding wilderness, is also an important part of many conventional love stories. Wanda is the "little brute" to be conquered, a fate to be met by most romantic heroines. Many love stories of popular fiction and film begin with an immediate antipathy between the hero and heroine, which is supposed to be no more than a mask for sexual attraction. Thus, Wanda's initial unattainability

simultaneously identifies her as the romantic heroine and stresses her role in cultural interaction; she is the promise of love for Edward which is also the unrealizable promise of indigenization.

When Wanda finally begins to return Edward's feelings, she maintains some of her appealing "naturalness" because she is less inhibited in her expression of emotion than Hélène, who is constrained by societal expectations. In her jealousy over Wanda's attentions to him, Hélène is, for Edward, "an angel carved in ice" (97-98) and "cold as death" (98), while Wanda is "warm-blooded" (98). Hélène, in fact, notices the differences between herself and her rival. She calls herself a "well-trained puppet" who can smile, chatter, dance and sing, and who hides her true feelings, while Wanda "has rich beauty, a rarely luxuriant vitality, and the immense advantage of being free to show her love in a natural way" (226). Hélène recognizes that she has lost Edward because she was frightened by the prospect of turning her love for him into a real relationship rather than keeping it as a secret fantasy of her own. She was offended by the intense expression of his feelings for her (he stole a kiss, as he did with Wanda) and subsequently she rejected him (144). As the narrator empathizes, "A woman's heart is dumb, not because it is created so, but because society has decreed that that is the only proper thing for it to be" (216). The narrator holds up stereotypes that associate women with emotionality, but stresses that it is European civilization that inhibits the expression of Hélène's natural, womanly feelings, while Wanda faces no such limits.

Again, the authors of this novel are drawing on romantic motifs. It seems

likely that Wetherald and Mercer read Austen's Sense and Sensibility (1811) as there are so many similarities between the novels. One of Austen's heroines is named Elinor, perhaps similar in sound to "Hélène." More substantially, both Hélène and Elinor are so reserved that they come across, at times, as cold, and their lovers do not know their true feelings. Both Hélène and Elinor fight to repress their feelings for the hero, named Edward in each case, who is also romantically involved with another woman. As well, both Elinor and Hélène are contrasted with other young women, Marianne (Elinor's sister) in one case and Wanda in the other, who exhibit more freedom of expression. At the end of each novel, when the female rival is taken out of the picture, the more reserved woman gives vent to her feelings and she and her lover are united in marriage.

While Elinor/Hélène may be critiqued for being too reserved, Marianne/Wanda is critiqued for being too wild. Just as Marianne's passion leads her into an ill-advised romantic attachment, Wanda's "wildness" eventually becomes her undoing. Her childlike qualities become, in Edward's eyes, uncouth; she embarrasses and alienates him when he attempts to "civilize" her by dressing her in European clothes and taking her on a picnic with his acquaintances. She makes what Edward calls "'an object' of herself": "Left for a brief season to her own devices Wanda had torn and muddied her gown, lost her hat, and in other respects behaved, as a maiden lady present remarked, precisely like an overgrown child of five years, who has 'never had any bringing up'" (193).

Although the difference in class between Austen's heroines and heroes is

eventually overcome by love, the difference in race in the Canadian context cannot be. In contrast to Wanda, Hélène, at the same picnic, exhales "invisible radiations – the luxurious sense of refined womanliness. How gross and earthly, how fatally commonplace and prosaic seemed everyone about her" (193). By implication, of course, the comparison to "everyone" is most focussed on Wanda. In fact, Edward eventually becomes repulsed by Wanda: "The mere touch of her soiled fingers was repugnant to him. She seemed like some coarse weed, whose vivid hues he might admire in passing, but which he would shrink from wearing on his person" (198). While this revulsion is tempered after more thought, Edward finally realizes he does not love Wanda because he suspects she cannot meet his intellectual demands (224). Their interaction will never be like the sportive verbal play that he and Hélène share. That is, Wanda is almost too much the stereotype of woman. Edward needs a mate with some intellect and civilization; she cannot be *all* sensuality and natural spirit.

Similarly, while Hélène envies Wanda's freedom of emotional expression, Wanda's intense emotion is eventually daunting for Edward: "if in thought he ever yielded to this great, untamed unrepressed love of hers, it was with something of the exaltation and ardour of one who makes a supreme sacrifice" (223). Wanda's "unrepressed love" provides Edward only with opportunities for martyrdom, rather than inspiring a similar feeling of his own. Once again, her unrestrained emotion links her with characterizations of the wilderness as part of the inner self; Wanda may represent those dark desires which must be repressed somewhat in order for the individual to be healthy. Northrop Frye, in his "Conclusion" to The Literary

History of Canada, argues that in nineteenth-century Canadian literature nature sometimes comes across as a great unconscious, a repository of the unknown (243). Here, though, Wanda-as-nature is, rather, the *sub*conscious, or the id, the child-like desire for freedom and pleasure which must be overcome in order for Edward to become an adult. Edward will not abandon civilization for the wilderness, or refinement for lack of inhibition, and eventually he marries Hélène and departs for England.

Readers might be able to predict the transience of Edward's and Wanda's romance based on the various ways that Wanda and her culture challenge Edward's ideas of masculinity. During the rainstorm, Wanda finds shelter with only Edward's comfort in mind, but he insists that she share the shelter with him, even though she clearly prefers to be out in the rain. His "sense of chivalry rebelled at the idea of looking from a place of security upon an unprotected woman, exposed to the fury of the storm" (64). But Edward's European sense of chivalry is merely stifling for Wanda, who is "impatient and ill at ease in her enforced shelter, as though she had been one of the untamed things of the wood, caught and prisoned against its will" (64).

It is important to note, here, that Edward is somewhat criticized in the narrative for his inability to understand Wanda. For example, when Edward first announces his love for Wanda, Rose correctly views it as only fancy: "Rose was clear-witted enough to see that persistent opposition would only intensify the halo of romance which her infatuated brother had discovered upon the brow of the Algonquin Maiden, and that outward acquiescence would give the attachment an

air of prosaic tameness, if anything could" (191). Rose appears to be right: in light of Edward's eventual rejection of Wanda, his tendency to form and quickly lose romantic attachments suggests immaturity.

Edward eventually learns to feel some shame for leading Wanda on, but he even gets a martyr-like satisfaction out of this: "Edward Macleod was no sentimentalist, and yet he was conscious of a very delicate, infinitely sad satisfaction in the belief that he would expiate with his life the folly he had committed in permitting her to love him. In the loftiest sense he would be true to her" (223). Moreover, while Edward previously referred to Wanda as a beast, once he realizes he has misled her, he turns this appellation on himself: "do you know what it is to marry a man who cares a great deal for your lips and eyes, and nothing for your mind and soul? It is to marry a beast!" (220). There seems to be, in passages such as this, the narrative's critique of the fervent romanticism, and disdain of social propriety, that landed Edward into trouble in the first place.[3] At the same time, he is, as in the passage quoted earlier from Rose, too quick to conquer rather than understand Wanda, and here the authors critique British treatment of both Native peoples and the natural world. Edward has degraded himself in his dishonourable actions, by not really understanding the natural world: he is too negligent of his civilized responsibilities or he is too wrapped up in the civilizing impulse so that he harms nature. The authors' critique of Edward is limited, though, by the fact that, rather than coming to some kind of practical understanding of the Canadian natural world, Edward is simply removed from it when he marries Hélène and moves to England.

Like many novels of its time, An Algonquin Maiden is concerned with history. Carole Gerson notices, "Throughout the nineteenth century most Canadian writers and critics shared [John] Richardson's reverence for history based on the assumption that history was objective, factual, one of the classical pursuits, and therefore unquestionably superior to 'mere works of fiction'" (92). An Algonquin Maiden, though, is mainly interested in depicting history through romantic relationships. The love- story plot mirrors the history of Canada. Edward and Hélène, English and French, have a shared history – the lovers have known each other since they were children, and England and France are intimately connected historically by the invasion of the Normans, and by territories such as Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine moving back and forth between them. However, the countries/lovers fall into conflict, and Edward goes running to Wanda for comfort: "His feelings toward Hélène and Wanda at the present moment were just such as a man might entertain toward the enemy who had conquered him, and the woman who, in his greatest need, had succored and saved him" (152-53). During the Seven Years' War with the French, the English made alliances with some of Canada's Native peoples. The authors suggest, though, that eventually the real partnership must be between the anglophones and francophones, and the Natives shall just pass away, taking part in what Daniel Francis sees as the nineteenth-century fantasy of Natives as "the vanishing Canadian" (see 16-43). Thus, Wanda, realizing she can never truly gain Edward's love, rows into the middle of a lake during a storm and drowns herself.

When Wanda drowns, she allows Hélène and Edward finally to finally be

together. This, as Gerson points out, suggests that "blending Canada's linguistic heritages is permissible – so long as English remains dominant – but mixing of classes, races, and religious groups is strictly controlled" (102). This prohibition about the mixing of races is further emphasized in the narrator's description of Wanda's own mixed heritage; she has both the "peace-loving" Huron nature of her mother, and the "vengeful propensities of her haughty Algonquin father" (51). "Invariably," the narrator tells us, "with the mixture of blood comes the warring of diverse emotions, the dissatisfaction with the present life, the secret yearning for something better, the impulse towards something worse" (51). If the mixing of different Native peoples can have such an effect, the implication is that the mixing of Native and non-Native peoples will be even more catastrophic.

This "vanishing race" does not go unmourned, and the white man does not go uncriticized, but the authors seem to accept the Indian's fate as a matter of fact. The Algonquin chief is angered by the influence of the white race: "Like the poison vines of the forest it touches all who come near it with fatal effect" (49). He also stresses their murder of the landscape, their physical weakness, and their greed for money (47-48). As Monkman notices, the authors, rather than considering this prophecy, "consistently subordinate the tragedy of the red man to the demands of sentimental romance" (67). I would add that the chief's criticisms are overshadowed by the passages that immediately follow: a history of violent conflict between the Huron and the Iroquois in the seventeenth century. Wanda remembers tales of the Iroquois "hacking the flesh off their prisoners with tomahawks and hatchets and scorching them with red-hot irons" (51). Such vivid

and horrific details seem to outweigh any criticism put forth about the colonizers, and may even suggest that, whatever the evils of civilization, it is still an improvement over such savagery.

The ambivalent characterization of Edward and his society is echoed, throughout the book, in ambivalent attitudes towards the romance, and particularly its love-story elements. On the one hand, the authors sometimes seem conscious of separating their work from the romantic tradition. Of Rose and Alan's courtship, the narrator explains, "Had she been the heroine of a novel there would inevitably have been misunderstandings of the most serious and complicated character" (158). In asserting that Rose is not a product of fiction, though, the narrator then goes on to employ a stereotypical love-story motif: "But she was mortal, and withal a very tender-hearted little maiden, and the secret of her cold tones and wistful glances, though for a while it surely puzzled Alan, was at last divined by the sure intuition of love" (158). As Tania Modleski notices, in the love-story plot reading practices must be inverted; that which appears to be indifference or anger is actually love (40-41), and Alan seems to know this. Thus, it appears that the authors use love-story motifs *self-consciously*. The authors critique this element of the romance, but employ it; they critique civilization, but ultimately it wins out. The Native is simply eulogized, and the white- heterosexual order prospers.

A better-known novel which examines the relationship between a Native woman and an English man is John Richardson's Wacousta (1832). The

interaction between Oucanasta and the British soldier Frederick de Haldimar[4] exhibits some of the same qualities as that between Edward and Wanda, and, in fact, in some ways Frederick interacts with Oucanasta as though she is his love interest. In one scene, he catches her "wildly to his heart; his lips pressed hers, and during the kiss that followed, the heart of the latter bounded and throbbed, as if it would have passed from her own into the bosom of her companion" (259). Moreover, just as Wanda deposits Edward into a hollowed out tree trunk to protect him from the storm, Oucanasta deposits Frederick in a similar place so that he may spy on Ponteac. The sexual appeal of the female indigene in each case might be embodied in these hiding places – the hollowed cylinders are possible vaginal symbols, and the male is placed inside them.

Oucanasta is appealingly different from the European women in the text in that she exhibits a practical understanding of her environment – an understanding which is of great help to Frederick. She helps him sneak quietly through the woods so that he can spy on the Ottawa, and determine their hostile plans against the English forts. When Frederick is discovered, and must run for his life, he longs for Oucanasta's guidance: "What would he not have given for the presence of Oucanasta, who was so capable of advising him in this difficulty!" (260).

However, Oucanasta's differences are also repulsive. Like Wanda, Oucanasta feels an intense love for an anglophone man, so deep it is frightening to him. Her first avowal of her love "not a little startled and surprised, and even annoyed him" (258). But it is not only the intensity of her feelings that alienate

him; there are other differences as well. As she is leading Frederick through the forest to help him spy on Ponteac and his followers, she suggests that he put on her moccasins to make his footsteps quieter and also to protect his feet. Just as Edward is offended when Wanda tries to give him shelter without taking any herself, so is Frederick's sense of chivalry offended in this scene: "This was too un-European, – too much reversing the established order of things, to be borne patiently" (240). Frederick declares that he cannot "think of depriving a female, who must be much more sensible to pain than himself" (240). Indeed, Frederick's ideals about gender are supposedly grounded in what is "natural." The narrator asserts, "Gallantry in the civilized man [...] is a refinement, of that instinctive deference to the weaker sex, which nature has implanted in him for the wisest of purposes" (240). Oucanasta's response to this "gallantry," though, proves that gender is not so inherent, but is rather a European construct that does not apply to her culture. She places his hand on her foot where he feels "numerous ragged excrescences and raspy callosities that set all symmetry at defiance" (241). Frederick's gender ideals have little purpose for a woman of the New World, and he eventually capitulates and slips on the moccasins.

While this misplaced chivalry does seem designed to poke fun at romantic ideals, ultimately these ideals are reified; they are just embodied in somebody else. In fact, the relationship between the British man and the Native woman, as Goldie notices, is often not sexual; she can serve her purpose by loving him, without his returning that love. Goldie comments on the significance of the female indigene in Wacousta and other nineteenth-century fiction: "her careful protection

of a white male suggests the possibility that the white might find within the apparently inimical land an element which will save him" (73). That is, the binary of "fear and temptation" still holds; she can love and help him, but fears of miscegenation, in the hero, author, and readers, prevent the European male from joining sexually with the Native woman. While in An Algonquin Maiden this is prevented by Wanda's death, Richardson deals with the issue by entirely defeating any suggestion that Frederick returns Oucanasta's affection for him: "Never was a kiss less premeditated, less unchaste. Gratitude, not passion, had called it forth" (259). As well, Frederick is already in love with his cousin Madeline, and their eventual marriage, as one between members of the same family, further emphasizes resistance to exogamy.

Unlike Wanda, Oucanasta survives, but she puts her own feelings aside to help bring about the union between Madeline and Frederick, her assistance appearing to be culturally symbolic. After helping Frederick get the information he requires to save Fort Detroit, Oucanasta helps him further by rescuing Madeline from Fort Michilimackinac, and this act brings about an important homosocial relationship between the two women. L. Chris Fox argues that this female bond stresses the need in the Canadian nation for strong mother figures (Madeline) who can cooperate with Native women who have knowledge of the land (Oucanasta).

As Fox also argues, though, female homosocial relationships can serve merely to support the patriarchy, and this is certainly the case here. Since the English male cannot be sexually involved with the Native woman, she can serve

her purpose, her promise of indigenization, by bonding socially with the English male's wife. The end of the novel, and the relationship between the women, asserts the power of the British over the Natives.[5] Because the cross-racial bond is between women, it becomes part of the female realm of the personal, rather than the male realm of the political. If Frederick had married Oucanasta, her male relatives might have used this personal alliance as leverage to ask for political power, but since the strongest bond is with an English *woman*, who has no political power herself, there is not the same kind of danger.

Not only do Oucanasta and her brother refrain from entering into sexual unions with Europeans, but they seem, in fact, to renounce heterosexuality altogether. Fox notices that the white fear of Indian sexuality "seems to deny the young chief a wife and to warrant Oucanasta's decision to 'go to her solitary wigwam among the red skins'" (Fox; Richardson 529). The privilege of propagation is reserved for English-Canadians, with Oucanasta and her brother acting as nannies of a sort. Natives will have a reduced role as "helpmates" in the survival of the new nation, but no more. Other versions of history suggest, though, that there was not even this interim of peace and happiness that Richardson depicts at the end of Wacousta. The authors of History of the Canadian Peoples observe that, after Pontiac's uprising, Native peoples continued to face famine and poverty, and Pontiac himself was eventually murdered by a political rival (216-17). Whatever Richardson's views of Native peoples' role after the uprising, however, Oucanasta's and her brother's lack of offspring suggest that this role is only temporary. Richardson appears to project

no long-term future for Native peoples in Canada.

Douglas S. Huyghue's novel Argimou: A Legend of the Micmac (1847) is even more careful about maintaining strict racial divisions in terms of the love-story plot than Wacousta. In Argimou, Englishman pursues Englishwoman and Native man pursues Native woman. However, despite this clear separation of the races in the characters' erotic interactions, the text is useful in exploring the ways that Native and European heroines were constructed in nineteenth- century romances, as the two cultures' erotic attitudes are often compared in the novel.

The plot of the novel revolves around two women who are being held against their will by a group of Milicete. Their rescue is effected by their respective lovers, Argimou and Edward, who have joined forces to save the women. As in An Algonquin Maiden, the Native woman and the non-Native woman are, in some ways, similarly described. Both are compared to flowers. Clarence, the lover of Edward, a British soldier, has been "nursed like a delicate flower" (56); Argimou, a Micmac warrior, is in love with a Métis woman, Waswetchcul, whose name means "flower of the wilderness" (14). Not only are the women identified with the natural world in this way, but the flower as symbol also represents, not just their physical beauty, but their feminine virtue. For example, Clarence is so good that she inspires goodness in others:

> If the eloquence of a flower lifts the mind to the contemplation of Him who is an incarnation of all good – if the glorious rainbow is a pledge of hope to the benighted world, why should the lovely face

> of a woman be less expressive than the lovely flower, or less hopeful than the evanescent bow? (32)

Clarence's beauty inspires others to think of God, the way nature is likewise a text where God can be read. Similarly, Waswetchcul is inherently good in her "natural" state. When Clarence is taken prisoner by the Milicete, Waswetchcul comforts her. In Waswetchcul's face, "Clarence read[s] at once, in its soft lineaments, as in a brook, a world of tenderness, and the dark melancholy eyes seemed to look down upon her with pity and kindness, as though their owner yearned, with the warm feelings of her sex, towards the beautiful and helpless stranger" (57). The rest of Waswetchcul's race is "savage" in their kidnapping of Clarence, but Waswetchcul herself maintains "the warm feelings of her sex." Waswetchcul's femininity is "natural," and can be clearly read in her face. In this case, a stereotype of feminine purity overcomes that of the ignoble savage; two versions of "naturalness," as represented by Waswetchcul and those around her, clash.

Waswetchcul is also so attractive, for the narrator, because she has some French background; she blends European gender ideals with romanticized "Indian" characteristics. She is beautiful precisely because she does not look like other Natives. As Goldie points out in relation to the female indigene, "a mixed-race ancestry is presented as an explanation of the variation between her attractions and those of other indigenes" (69). When Clarence first meets Waswetchcul, she is surprised to see "an exceedingly beautiful face bending over her," which seems so out of place among the "barbarism and deformity" of

the other Natives: "the clear, pale face before her, was as lovely as ever visited a poet's dreams" (57). Waswetchcul's paleness reflects something of Clarence's own self in an alien countenance. Waswetchcul, pale herself, is naturally sympathetic to a white woman.

However, as in the distinction between Wanda and Hélène, Waswetchcul is presented as more in tune with the wilderness than the Europeans, and this gives her certain advantages. When she and Clarence try to feed two young moose, the animals happily accept the offering from Waswetchcul, but they cower at Clarence's touch. Since the narrator assures readers that there is no "gentler or more harmless being than Clarence Forbes" (131), the only conclusion one can draw from the beasts' reactions is that Waswetchcul has a connection to them, and Clarence, the product of white civilization, does not. Furthermore, it is Waswetchcul's cleverness that helps both her and Clarence to escape from the Milicete. She is able to distinguish her lover's voice in the cry of an owl, and she disguises Clarence and sneaks her out of the Indian encampment.

Additionally, while Clarence is certainly beautiful and innocent, Waswetchcul is depicted as especially beautiful because of her lack of exposure to civilization. Her

> unstudied graces and unaffected delicacy would have shamed the artificial allurements of many a fashionable belle, if the symmetry of her round unshackled limbs – the surpassing beauty of the small hand and foot, did not create a sensation of mingled wonder and

> envy [. . .]. (14)

Waswetchcul is feminine precisely because she does not have to try to be so. There is also a suggestion of voyeurism on the part of the narrator, a fetishism surrounding the small hand and foot, perhaps, but maybe also a thrill at the "unshackled" – that is, unclothed – limbs. As in An Algonquin Maiden, there is a sense that civilization can actually impede rather than shape femininity.

More importantly, though, Waswetchcul and Argimou express an unrestrained sexuality. As Gwendolyn Davies argues in her introduction to the novel, the scene in which both sets of lovers are reunited contrasts two erotic responses, that of the Natives and that of the English (v-vi). Waswetchcul and Argimou retreat into the woods and shun formalities:

> [. . .] the '*Flower of the Wilderness*' unfolded its leaves beneath the warm atmosphere of passion, whose mild dew descended, pouring a refreshing balm into its depths, enhancing its fragrance, deepening its fairest hues, nor were its grateful odours, its stores of unrifled sweets withheld sparingly in return. (140)

Monkman describes the scene as "the most explicit nineteenth-century vision of the Indian's physical and emotional spontaneity" (51). The language in the passage of lush sexuality, clearly associated with the natural world, is strongly contrasted with the reunion of Clarence and Edward which, while not exactly formal, is presented in the love-story terms of parent and child, rather than two sexual adults: "as a babe clings closely to its mother's bosom for protection; even so did poor Clarence nestle her fair head upon her lover's breast and give vent to

a full flood of delicious tears" (140). She sobs "like a child in its first grief" and then falls asleep in Edward's arms (141). Here, the Europeans' love reverts to the traditional father-child motif of the love-story plot. Interestingly, Waswetchcul and Argimou appear to meet as equals, while there is a clear power distinction in the way Edward and Clarence are portrayed. The narrative sympathizes with both sets of lovers, and certainly seems to luxuriate in the sensuality of Argimou and Waswetchcul, but eventually proves that the latter pair's Edenic ways of life cannot be sustained.

While Wanda's natural attractiveness eventually turns to repulsion for the anglophone male, Waswetchcul's situation is slightly different. It is not that she is viewed as too erotically uninhibited, but her inability to adapt to white civilization brings about her downfall. Edward and Clarence return to England after their trials in the wilderness, but Argimou and Waswetchcul continue to live in their own ways, although they sense political and social change is coming. Eventually, Waswetchcul and her young child are killed by European disease: "The *Wild Flower* had withered years ago, with the bud that sprung up from its root, in the scourging pestilence of the whites" (181). Her racial difference, her "natural" state (flower imagery again), make her susceptible to a disease brought in by civilization, most likely smallpox. She is betrayed by her own body, although the blame for this falls clearly on the Europeans.

Davies argues that the novel demonstrates that racial differences can be overcome on an individual level – in the friendships between Edward and Argimou, Clarence and Waswetchul – but not on a wider social scale (vi). The

Micmac are subdued by the English, and practically destroyed. Thus, while Argimou is different from some of the novels featuring French-English romances in that the homosocial relations are peaceful and do not involve competition for or exchange of a woman, this peace does not translate into the cultural situation generally. The narrative voice calls for political action at the beginning of the novel, asking legislators and philanthropists to "Pour out, not hundreds but thousands" to relieve the "utter want and wretchedness" of the Indian. At the end of the novel, the narrator says that those who merely want to enjoy the romance of the novel and the triumph of love over obstacles are thanked for their time, but "To the moralist, the man of thought, we offer a subject of mournful but not unprofitable meditation" (174). The narrator then details the death of Argimou, and the end of his people. The narrator laments this, but also accepts it as fate:

> *Peace to the red men that are gone!*
> *Their children are the pale strangers' scoff;*
> *The heritage of their Fathers is a mournful thought;*
> *The memory of their glory – a broken song!* (183)

The novel's end makes a reader wonder who exactly will profit from the "mournful but not unprofitable meditation." Clearly not the Native, for he is already gone. He has no place in the future of the land: "In a few years the record of their names, their noble struggle, their empassioned eloquence, will live but in the cold historic page, or faintly linger in the memory of those 'who linked them fast to sorrow'" (3).

Daniel David Moses, in conversation with Goldie in the introduction to An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English, makes some comments on white guilt that are relevant to the nineteenth-century writers I have discussed. Native artists, Moses says, examine suffering in order to find meaning in life, and to heal, but this, he contends, is not the case with non-Native artists:

> To me it sounds as if this guilt is the opposite thing: it seems you don't want to heal, you want to keep the wound. In romanticism you're dancing around a wound. You have these great desires, these great idealistic possibilities, and then they're cut down and things end in death and it's very sad and beautiful. I've seen the attraction of it, because I've grown up partially in the mainstream culture, but it strikes me as really sick. (xxiv)

Moses' comments echo those of Renato Rosaldo in "Imperialist Nostalgia." Rosaldo states that "agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed" (107-08). He adds that "Nostalgia is a particularly appropriate emotion to invoke in attempting to establish one's innocence and at the same time talk about what one has destroyed" (108). The romantic genre of the nineteenth-century novels appears to help contribute to a sense of catharsis for non-Natives in relation to Natives. The death of Argimou's culture, like the death of Wanda or the projected end of Oucanasta's people, becomes romanticized; whites can revel in a delicious feeling of guilt, perhaps in the idea that the guilt itself is sufficient atonement, but the myth that the Natives are all dead means that non-Natives are not responsible for taking any action in

the present. They can simply appropriate the Natives' authority in the new world; if Natives are dead, the wrongs perpetrated against them need not be addressed. The Native woman may help the non-Natives survive or understand the Canadian landscape for a time, but in the love-story plot she is subordinated to her more restrained white counterpart. She is overtly sexualized, but her sexuality, unlike the non-Native woman's, does not allow her erotic access to the white male and moral "authority" over him in marriage.

II. Contemporary Novels

Contemporary texts differ from the nineteenth-century representations of Natives in a number of ways. Frequently, these later novels attempt to offer a more self-aware view of Native-European relations in Canadian history. Generally speaking, contemporary authors look at history with a more critical eye than their nineteenth-century counterparts; they tend to be more interested in asking who gets left out of history books, and this often means Native women.

I am interested in these differences, but I am more interested in the similarities between the early and late texts. What has *not* changed in the representation of the Native? The Native woman is still an object of desire, still contrasted to the European woman, and she is still associated with the land, although she is occasionally provided with a bit more subjectivity. The European male is still attracted to and repulsed by her, although this reaction is critiqued and examined in a more detailed way; still, though, the Native character is often just a tool for exploring the white, and often male, self, and the Native is

presented as “the vanishing Canadian.”

John Steffler's The Afterlife of George Cartwright (1992) interesting makes more explicit an idea that some nineteenth-century novelists suggest. George Cartwright, a British sportsman, soldier, entrepreneur, and explorer, sets up a post in Labrador in the 1770's, bringing with him an outspoken woman named Mrs. Selby (who fulfills an ambiguous position as business partner, housekeeper, and lover to Cartwright). Cartwright eventually befriends the local Inuit, and begins a sexual relationship with the chief's sister-in-law, Caubvick. Caubvick's story presents the notion, expressed earlier through non-Native characters such as Hélène in An Algonquin Maiden, that the "naturally" attractive Native woman has access to a femininity that her European counterparts lack. However, unlike Wanda, Caubvick eventually becomes repulsive to the white male not for being too natural, but for being exposed to European civilization.

Initially, Caubvick conforms to some of the ideals of the European romantic heroine. She has a heroine's beauty, particularly in "Her long black hair, unusually coarse and glossy, almost like a horse's mane – he had loved to dig his fingers in it, feeling her body's pull like a river's current" (20). In contrast, when Mrs. Selby desires economic independence, Cartwright accuses her of being unfeminine: "Have I brought with me, by mistake, one of those masquerade ladies from Covent Garden who favour men's dress?" (160). At first, Caubvick is not at all threatening to Cartwright's authority in the way that Mrs. Selby is. She is sexually available when he needs her, and asks for nothing in

return.

Furthermore, Caubvick also represents the possibility of indigenization, which Mrs. Selby cannot provide. Cartwright clearly sees the land in feminine, sexualized terms: "Newfoundland seemed to Cartwright endlessly open, inviting. He imagined himself plunging into its clear healthy space, consuming it, swelling to fill it" (101). He sees Caubvick herself as embodying this land he wants to fill. Her hair "seemed to spring not just from her skin, but from her whole history and the land that had made her" (20). Goldie notices that "the reified indigene is seen to put us in contact with pure prehistoricity" (148). In having sex with Caubvick, Cartwright is connecting to the land and its (pre)history. This prehistoricity may be appealing because it suggests a universal origin, an affiliation with all human beings as well as with nature. It is not a coincidence that Cartwright's first sexual encounter with Caubvick takes place the same night that Attuiock has told Cartwright, "You are Inuit [...] You are human" (193); Cartwright starts to feel that he is a part of the Inuit and what he views as their simpler way of life. He shucks his clothes to sleep as they do, and feels not the fur covering, but the body heat of the others all around him.

Part of Caubvick's appeal for Cartwright may also be the freer sexuality often associated with Natives. When Cartwright and Caubvick sleep in the tent together, she initiates sex, even though her husband is asleep directly beside them (193). Her free sexuality may be connected to Cartwright's own sense of freedom in Newfoundland. She is atypically feminine in her physical strength – "Even her skull seemed muscular" (196) – but this may only further tie her to the

challenging, robust landscape. Caubvick's combined strength and tenderness, "Calling his manhood out," is not unlike Newfoundland, which gives Cartwright "a sense of vigour he hadn't known since he was twelve years old" (101). He is thrilled by the country's robust quality, its danger, as much as by its beauty. Caubvick, like the land, is "endlessly open, inviting" (101).

But there is an ambivalence here; Cartwright wants to both understand the land and conquer it: "He liked the idea of mating his culture and country to theirs, bringing the two continents into contact, with himself as the bridge. Perhaps he could become their great leader" (102). The codes of gender, of "mating," become ways of describing racial power relationships. He wants to be a bridge, which perhaps suggests equality between the cultures, but at the same time he fantasizes about becoming the Inuit's leader. He cannot resist wanting to change what he sees as their prehistoricity by encouraging contact with European culture; he cannot resist exchanging universal human connection for a specific political relationship.

Caubvick and her “natural” sexuality, in fact, start to change as she is exposed to British “civilization,” when Cartwright takes her and the rest of Attuiock's family to England. Initially, Cartwright is pleased by the blend of old world and new world in Caubvick. He is delighted watching his sister teach Caubvick how to dance, and thinks, "Could anyone else ever send such a warm embrace with her eyes as Caubvick could?" (222). Caubvick is learning to dance in a European manner, but she is still unguarded, warm and natural. Cartwright is also delighted with the changes in her appearance:

> Caubvick especially took to the new way of life. She wanted dresses like those of the ladies she saw at the theatre. She got Mrs. Selby to take her to a hairdresser and came back with her glossy hair swept up in an impressive chignon. She was remarkably beautiful, Cartwright saw. (211)

Caubvick maintains her beautiful glossy hair, but styles it in a European fashion.

Cartwright's voyeuristic gaze here may be related to the pleasure associated with cross-dressing. Anne McClintock, drawing on work by Marjorie Garber, states, "Cross-dressers seldom seek the security of a perfect imitation; rather, they desire that delicious impersonation that belies complete disguise" (175). The transvestite "inhabits that borderland where oppositions are perpetually disarranged, untidied and subverted" (175). While Caubvick's cross-dressing is cultural rather than gendered, and the pleasure of the gap is Cartwright's as gazer more than Caubvick's as object (it seems she would prefer a "complete disguise"), McClintock's remarks are still apposite. The thrill for Cartwright may be not that Caubvick is convincingly European – her hair, representative of her native land, is still Cartwright's focus – but rather that she demonstrates a slippage, a combination of European and Native. She has taken on the signs of European class and femininity, but also reveals the constructedness of these marks of class by being able to slip into them so easily. Caubvick in England is not unlike Mrs. Selby in Newfoundland. Cartwright tells the latter, "the thought of you clothed in a silk gown in the midst of this wilderness fills me with pride, and a sense of victory – no matter how cold I am or how far

away in the hills" (158). Selby's silk gown, a sign of British civilization for Cartwright, demonstrates his process of conquering the wilderness. Caubvick's Native body, a sign of the wilderness for Cartwright, adorned with her new hairstyle and gown, challenge this same civilization.

That Cartwright should enjoy both wildness and civilization in his mistresses is no surprise, as he is ambivalent, throughout the text, about his colonial position; he loves Newfoundland, but he often seeks the approval of England; at the same time, he appears to resent England because he has never achieved much success or respect there. This is the whole point of his taking Attuiock's family "home" for a visit. They are signs of his success in North America, but they shock and disconcert British culture with their strange appearance and habits; Cartwright seems pleased when the Inuit go fox hunting and annoy his British acquaintances by getting to the fox first (221). If Caubvick demonstrates that at least some signs of European class can be put on and off, then this would be of comfort to Cartwright who has struggled financially in Europe. He desires her as the sign of the constructed nature of British success, and at the same time she acts as a kind of fetish for him. McClintock explains, "By displacing power onto the fetish, then manipulating the fetish, the individual gains symbolic control over what might otherwise be terrifying ambiguities" (McClintock 184). Caubvick's clothing can be manipulated, accepted or rejected, while Cartwright's actual status in England is more difficult to change. For example, despite his attempts to impress the king and queen, they seem for the most part confused, annoyed, and bored by him (212-14). In his desire to have

sex with Caubvick while she's wearing her European gown, Cartwright wishes to possess England in a way that he cannot do otherwise, as well as possess Newfoundland and the Native culture that her body, previously, has represented for him.

However, when Caubvick becomes *too* European, Cartwright is dissatisfied. He tells her family one night that he is taking Caubvick to the theatre so she can show off her dress, but he actually takes her to an inn so they can have sex. Caubvick is willing, but more fastidious than usual, much to his chagrin:

> In the room upstairs she didn't resist his caresses, but insisted on taking her dress off to keep it from being mussed. He wanted her to keep it on so he could run his hands over her shoulders and breasts under its white sheen, so he could lift it over her hips and take her on his lap. Instead she hung it over a chair and pulled him down on the bed on top of her.
>
> "Come on, hurry," she told him. "I want to go to the theatre like you said." (218)

Cartwright wants the combination of Caubvick's "civilized" dress and her "natural" sexuality, but he is disappointed because Caubvick is much less interested in the slippage between identities than he is; she wants to be, it seems, convincingly European, and at one point complains that her family's presence is ruining her experience of England (227). Later, though, Cartwright gets to fulfill his dream of copulating in colonial costume when he has sex with Caubvick in one of her

European dresses, up against the outside wall of his family's home. However, their lovemaking is cold; they fondle each other while their minds are occupied in conversation about Caubvick's dissatisfaction with her family, Cartwright's poor financial state, and even the illegality of hunting deer in England. The sex is described in different terms than their previous encounters: "Now he slid his hands under her buttocks and drew her up on his body, her legs closing around him as he leaned his shoulders back, crackling the leafless ivy against the wall" (228). While before, in Newfoundland, Caubvick summoned for him images of dark streams and horses, now their copulation is associated with crackling, leafless ivy; the vital wilderness has been replaced with a dying garden plant.

Within the context of Cartwright's trip to England, Steffler distinguishes between the sexuality of the Natives and that of the Europeans. In Cartwright's family, sexuality is a corrupt thing. His recently married brother responds to a disparaging comment from his wife by throwing a scone across the dinner table at her (223), and another of his brothers, it is implied, has a habit of molesting children (226). While Caubvick and Cartwright are sleeping together in Newfoundland, no one seems to feel any conflict surrounding the fact that she is already married, but once in England Caubvick complains that she is bored with her husband, and demands to live with Cartwright. "The "natural" sexuality of Canada, where Cartwright and Selby live peacefully unmarried, without anyone expecting them to be ashamed, and where Caubvick and Cartwright experience what for them seems to be an unproblematic sexuality (although this is partly because Mrs. Selby does not know of their affair until they get to England), is

valued above European sexuality, which is corrupt and corrupting.

Caubvick's total corruption is figured finally in her affliction with smallpox. Everyone else in Attuiock's family dies, but Caubvick survives. On the voyage back to Newfoundland, however, she loses her hair: "The fever had lifted it off like a wig. The potent mane was attached to a scalp-shaped layer of scabs and dried skin" (21). Though Cartwright tries to persuade her to get rid of her hair, she refuses and eventually, through the hair, carries the smallpox back to the rest of her people, who are subsequently wiped out. Since her hair has been termed a symbol of "her whole history and the land that had made her" (20), it is clear that its infestation with smallpox after the trip to England is a representation of the destructive nature of European-Native relations. Peter Jaeger states, "The permanent loss of Caubvick's hair may be read as a sign for the permanent loss of traditional Inuit culture as a direct result of biological and cultural imperialism" (49). Cartwright, indirectly, has destroyed the people he claimed to love, at least in part because he was too caught up in his own ambitious desires. It's important too, that Caubvick's long hair is a sign of her sexuality and her gender. The female indigene, as in nineteenth-century novels, is the means through which the land can be dominated, but ultimately the land and its people are destroyed by these attempts at domination.

In terms of cultural allegory, Cartwright, as colonizer, is certainly criticized. Mrs. Selby, for example, expresses scepticism about his desire to civilize the Inuit: "'I wonder, though,' Mrs. Selby said, 'what use our habits will be to them, except to make the Eskimos more acceptable to us'" (127). And there are times

when Cartwright is caught up in his own delusions of grandeur. At one point he briefly toys "with the idea of making himself king of the independent nation of Labrador," leading an Inuit army on a rampage of violence and conquest (196). He gives up the idea not for moral reasons, but because it is strategically impractical; the British military is too strong. The anglophone in Canada ends up exploiting the land and the Native people, although he may love them both.

Ultimately Steffler does not seriously challenge nineteenth-century representations of the female Native. Caubvick never becomes much more than an attractive or decaying body. Her physical being is the site of the culture clash, exploited and corrupted by Cartwright and his culture. Because most of the descriptions of her are filtered through Cartwright's perspective, her own concerns seem absorbed only in sexual pleasure and, in Europe, vanity. Because the text repeats the perspective of the colonizer, it does not move much beyond cultural stereotypes. Native sexuality is valorized and European civilization is criticized but wins out anyway.

The novel ends with a guilty colonizer – like Edward Macleod, the narrator of Argimou, and Frederick de Haldimar – achieving some sort of peace in the world after the defeat of the indigene. Having faced up to his own guilt in the destruction of Attuiock and his people, Cartwright's ghost returns to Newfoundland, where he is gradually consumed by a large bear: "He watches and, incredibly, feels not pain, feels instead the satisfaction of feeding a fierce hunger. He has been starving for so long" (293). Cartwright gives up his own self, stops consuming and hunting the land, and instead lets himself become it: "The

bear's white head is a wide pointed brush, moving from side to side, painting him out, painting the river, the glittering trees in" (293).

Steffler critiques colonial selfishness and the lust for conquest, and posits instead a humane selflessness, but his critique of racial relations is limited. While the white character receives metaphysical indigenization by changing his attitude, the Native characters are simply wiped off the face of the earth. Caubvick, like Wanda, dies, just as her people die; the novel does not acknowledge the continued survival of the Inuit in Canada. The flashes of the present day that we get in Cartwright's afterlife refer to the descendants of Cartwright's family: "He has spied enough on the present to know how small, how mechanical people there have become. Children of Edmund, he thinks, remembering his brother Edmund's power-loom and gunpowder engine. This is where all that led" (4). While the descendants here are ideological rather than biological, the suggestion seems to be that descendants of the colonizers have survived, and those of the colonized have not. The novel may be read, as Jaeger suggests, as a wake-up call to the contemporary white man, who has lost any substantial understanding of the ecology surrounding him: "Steffler participates in replacing the *grands recits* of rationalism and dualism with the new 'master' narrative of environmental consciousness" (51). Ultimately, though, Steffler fails in indicating any kind of real reparation, environmental or otherwise. As Tony Tremblay points out, white guilt in novels like Afterlife is only unproductive:

> Such a guilt, observes [Njabulo S.] Ndebele, merely entrenches the colonial embrace, representing 'for the white minority a defeat in

> which they have lost nothing' (341). And such is the legacy of re-imagining history, a revision borne of remorse that constructs yet another narrative from the raw materials of colonialism; trapped 'inside' of language, we can never get out. Historical revisionist fiction can never be about anything more than itself. (170).

While Steffler's novel criticizes the colonial position, it repeats some of the same gestures of colonialism and colonial narratives, especially in relegating the Native to the past. Native-Canadians do not explicitly appear in any of Cartwright's flashes on the present. Like Attuiock's tribe, they have been consigned forever to the pages of historical fiction.

The second contemporary novel that I want to consider is Robert E. Wall's Blackrobe.[6] The novel, the first book in a series titled The Canadians, spans 1730-1745, and follows the experiences of a Bostonian named Stephen Nowell, who is captured by Indians as a child, raised by Jesuits, sent to France for an education, and eventually returns to North America where he has a brief stint as a missionary before becoming involved with a Native woman; he subsequently abandons the priesthood and becomes a soldier, fighting against the French in the War of the Austrian Succession. As one might guess from such a plot summary, Wall is less overtly interested in criticizing the colonial narrative than Steffler is, and more interested in creating an adventurous, and at times sensationalist story. However, Wall's representations of Native women are not as predictable as one might expect from a work of "popular" fiction. In fact, what is of

particular interest in Wall's work is the way that he deals with some of the same issues as his more "literary" contemporaries. In some ways, Wall gives a more balanced view of Native women than Steffler, although, like Steffler, he envisions Canada as ultimately belonging in the hands of non-Native men.

The romantic heroine of Blackrobe is Molly Brant, who is described on the back cover of the 1981 McClelland and Stewart edition as "a passionate and powerful Indian princess," but Brant, unlike the other Native heroines, is a well-known historical figure, and Wall gives her a place of great importance in his novel. Despite the cover of the novel, which pictures Brant as a beautiful maiden kneeling at the white protagonist's feet, the text describes her in mixed terms:

> Her smile was very beautiful, even if the girl was not. She was very thin and small. She seemed to consist mostly of bones housed uncomfortably under tightly drawn skin. If it were not for the outline of her young breasts, it would have been extremely difficult to tell that she had begun to mature. Her face bore the scars of the dreaded smallpox. (145)

Molly, in this way, subverts the Disney Pocahontas model of the Indian maiden; she is girlish with a beautiful smile, but is also scrawny and scarred by disease.

However, like Oucanasta and Wanda, and like romantic heroines generally, Molly cares for the white protagonist in his time of need. When Stephen Nowell, training to become a priest, attempts to rescue a Native woman in a blizzard and contracts smallpox, Molly is sent to live in a shack with him outside of the village. Through her care, he eventually recovers. Molly's ability as

a nurse, a quality often attributed to romantic heroines, is also apparent when others in the village fall ill; no one else will help them, but Molly, who has already survived the disease, cares for them.

However, Molly's attractiveness for contemporary readers is very much tied to her racial difference. Like Caubvick, Molly has no sexual shame, and cannot understand it in others. Early in their acquaintance, she questions Stephen as to why he has no wife; when he explains that as a "man of God" he will not marry, she assumes he is homosexual. Stephen is flustered at any hint of such a thing, but Molly means no offense in her statement. Molly also states matter-of-factly that "Mohawk women live with many men until they find the one who is worthy to be the father of their children" (148). Stephen finds this immoral, and Molly replies, "White men have strange ideas" (148). Because she is frank, and speaks from a perspective contemporary secular readers may find easier to identify with, Molly's views may be closer to the views of the narrative voice than Stephen's inexperienced prudishness. Her attitudes towards sex are a critique, which the narrative voice shares, of constructed "civilized" sexuality, since Stephen's discomfort and embarrassment ends up looking ridiculous next to Molly's calm, practical approach to sex.

Eventually, the reader is not the only one who finds Molly attractive. When Stephen awakes in Molly's wedding hut, having passed out in the blizzard, he discovers he is unclothed and wrapped in furs, and suggests to Molly, who is there nursing him, that he get dressed. She does not understand:

> "It is warm enough in here so far. You have nothing to hide. I saw

> when I took your clothes off you. You are well formed."
>
> Stephen was flustered by her bluntness. It had not occurred to him to think of how his clothes came to be hanging from the rafter, and the idea of the young girl undressing him was mortifying. (161)

In spite of this mortification, though, Stephen lies back in the furs and does not dress. And that night, when Molly kisses him, he does not resist and they have sex. For Stephen, it is the first time. Goldie argues that, often, in sexual encounters between a white man and a Native woman, the encounter is presented in such a way that "The normative sexuality of the white male is confronted by the aberrant sexual powers of the female Other" (76). However, in this case, Molly takes Stephen away from an "unnatural" celibacy. The priesthood in the novel is represented by Father LaGarde, who helps keep Stephen's family from finding him, for political reasons, and by Father Lalonde, a selfish man who is more concerned with power than Christian mercy, and who attempts to molest Stephen one night while he sleeps. If anything, then, Molly moves Stephen towards a heterosexuality which, though in some ways not in line with the European sexual morals of the novel's temporal setting, is perhaps quite acceptable in terms of contemporary mainstream values. Molly and Stephen's sexual encounter is further normalized in that it is brought about by genuine affection, developed in the intimacy of Molly's nursing Stephen, their frank conversations, and his comforting responses to the death of her aunt.

However, after they have sex, Stephen cannot accept what he has done,

and begins to feel a sense of revulsion. The explicit detail the narrative provides about their lovemaking suggests that the author has a sensational purpose in mind, but the aftermath echoes the alienation from the Indian lover that occurs in An Algonquin Maiden:

> For several days after they had made love, Stephen had had difficulty looking at Molly, much less talking to her. [. . .] He was in despair. Never before, when he had failed to live up to his ideals, had he been left alone. He wished that Father LaGarde were with him to console him, to hear his confession or even to whip him for his sin. But there was no one. (167)

Stephen is racked with Catholic guilt for what he is done. He is haunted by dream imagery that connects Molly's diseased body with a hell mouth: "Once again he saw the flame-engulfed open mouth approaching him. The flames leaped from the mouth and formed figures of red. There was the form of a naked woman, covered with open sores" (168). As Joseph Andriano notices, there is a literary tradition linking the vagina with a hell mouth (28), and this motif seems to be at work in Stephen's dream; female sexuality equals sin. Stephen's guilt is of course tied to his breaking his vow of celibacy, but there is also some sense that Molly's racial difference is part of his fear. The figures of "red" in his dream, covered with sores, may be a representation of the smallpox-infected Native woman.

The text is ambiguous here, though. After he and Molly have sex, Stephen develops smallpox. If this is meant to have metaphorical significance, the text is unclear about whether Stephen's illness derives from a narrative that abhors the

consequences of miscegenation, or if it is a reflection of his own overdeveloped sense of Catholic guilt. Importantly, though, the smallpox threat is brought into the village by a Native woman, Molly's aunt, who encourages the sexual union of Stephen and Molly before she dies. Through her, the narrative distances the smallpox from its European source in the new world. This motif suggests, again, that the diseased and disfigured body is that of the Native woman, and though her sexuality is heterosexual and "natural" in some ways, it is also dark and threatening to the white male's virtue and strength.

What is most alienating for Stephen is the violence of Molly's people. In the sequel to Blackrobe, entitled Bloodbrothers, Stephen spends a winter living with Molly and their son, Aaron, among the Iroquois. While at first they are quite happy, and Stephen learns to be more sexually free – copulating with Molly in the lodge they share with others, while their son sleeps beside them – eventually Stephen is horrified by the "savages." When two Huron are taken captive, Stephen is told they will be adopted into the tribe, but this turns out to be a euphemism for torture by burning: "'Don't you feel the warmth of my love for you, my brother?' mocked Old Brant. 'With this fire you become one of us, adopted by caressing'" (76). After this event, Stephen tries to convince Molly to abandon the "pure savagery" of the Iroquois (79). In response, Molly stresses the horrors of European society, such as public hangings. Stephen has to admit, "There was truth in what she had said. European society was every bit as cruel as the Iroquois society, but he did not want Aaron to be confronted with the worst of either" (79). Later, Stephen kidnaps Aaron and leaves, but the Mohawk come for

Aaron, and Stephen and Molly are permanently estranged.

What is perhaps unexpected about this relationship between Molly and Stephen is that it troubles the traditional symbolism of the white-Native romantic relationship in fiction. Instead of using the breach between the Native woman and anglophone man to represent a split between the two cultures, the novel suggests that this breach might be particular to these two *individuals*. Molly, fictionally and historically, has several children by Indian superintendent William Johnson, and she becomes a powerful force in maintaining an alliance between the Mohawk and the British. Her union with another, different anglophone male does "work out," and so reading her and Stephen as representatives of their nations in this respect is problematic.

Importantly, though, the reader's sympathies are still with Stephen, who feels betrayed by Molly's choice. He is the prime reference for "The Canadians" of the series title, because he is Canadian in his endlessly ambiguous identity. The Canadians is very much a "romance" in the way Northrop Frye uses the term in The Secular Scripture, in that Wall's series is concerned with the hero's search for identity (see Frye 54). Stephen's father was killed when he was a child, and his evil uncle disinherited him. He has had a number of father figures in his life – French, Native, and Irish – and his relationship with Molly may be one more attempt, in part at least, to discover some sort of stable identity for himself. If Stephen is a settler, uncertain of his relationship to this new place, then his desire for Molly may represent the settler's yearning for a sense of belonging and a more secure identity.

Though William Johnson, arguably, achieves indigenization, Stephen does not. Stephen eventually marries a European woman and sets up a ranch, but he pines for Molly and their son for the rest of his life. Because Stephen seems so reflective of the way contemporary English Canada sees itself, he, and perhaps his mixed-race son Aaron, may be more representative of Canada's future than either Molly or William. Stephen moves constantly between nations, territories, identities, and lovers belonging to different cultures. Furthermore, he is reflective of the history in the novel's setting in that he represents the conflict of cultures happening on North American soil during the War of the Austrian Succession – French and English are at war, alliances with Natives are made and broken; Stephen's anglophone heritage eventually makes him revolt against the Jesuit priests who raised him and lied to him about his family.

The fact that Stephen is white is key. He rejects European society, but he also rejects Native society. If he is the nation's symbol, then the narrative seems to be using a representation of history in order to suggest, like all the other narratives I have discussed in this chapter so far, that the future of the nation, despite Brant's political power, is in the hands of the white man. Because Stephen is the protagonist, because what happens to him is made most crucial, the position of the white male in Canada is solidified and given prime importance.

The last romantic heroine I would like to consider is Greenstockings in Rudy Wiebe's A Discovery of Strangers (1994). This novel further complicates the power relationships between man and woman, and nature and civilization. It

uses many of the same romantic motifs and images of the Native, but presents a more hopeful end for its heroine, and for Native and non-Native relations generally.

Like many of the Native women in the historical novels discussed in this chapter, Greenstockings has some of the characteristics of the typical romantic heroine. She is attractive and sought after by several males, Native and European alike. Seaman John Hepburn calls her "a full, mature beauty, the belle of her tribe" (100). She is also, like many romantic heroines, a spirited young woman, which is part of her attractiveness. Hepburn comments, "Not only was she strong and skilled in woman's work, but she also had an independence of mind amazing in a female" (100). Moreover, when Back attempts "to overcome her reluctance by force" she slits the leg of his trousers (although this, admittedly, is a bit farther than most romantic heroines would go). According to Hepburn, the fact that she has slit the cloth rather than the flesh means "she considered this exchange an initial part of a proper courtship where blood, when it flowed – as it probably would – would simply confirm conquest" (103). Whether or not Hepburn's interpretation of her actions is correct, Greenstockings' violence may be Wiebe's way of critiquing romantic views of male-female relations; the antipathy between man and woman at the beginning of many contemporary popular romance novels, an antipathy associated with sexual desire, is taken to its "logical" conclusion – violence equals love.[7]

The primary context in which Greenstockings can be considered a romantic heroine, though, is in her relationship with the British officer, Robert

Hood. While Wiebe is certainly concerned with a postcolonialist revisioning of history in this novel, the back cover sells the book in a rather conventional way: "At heart this is a love story." This emphasizes the fact that, whatever else it is doing, the novel is drawing on romantic motifs.

For example, an aspect of Greenstockings' appeal for Hood, as with the other Native heroines I have mentioned, is that she has access to a state that Hood and the narrative view as simultaneously ancient and childlike, rooted in the physical world. She is very sensual, a fact that is underlined because she and Hood do not speak the same language, and so they must communicate via food and touch. Kenneth Hoeppner argues that "their flesh makes the 'Word,' makes love, creating a knowledge that is outside of language" (146).

In fact, their interaction is figured much like the Lacanian pre-linguistic attachment between mother and infant. Before the child enters the realm of the symbolic by learning to speak, the child's relationship with the mother is most important, for she is the one perceived as answering all the child's needs (Hill 61). Primarily, the mother feeds the child, and in the absence of language, feeding becomes a form of bonding between Hood and Greenstockings, taking them back to an earlier time: "Laughter pulls her mouth wide at his exploding breath, at this game of eating, together, learning with simple silly laughter what they have both done since before consciousness" (168-69). Hood feels, "in this warm place thick with indescribable smells there is not listable fact, not a single word. Never. Simply the insatiable influx of eye and uncomprehending, musical ear, of fingertips and skin" (158). Later, their relationship as that between mother

and child is developed even more explicitly. Hood is initially disgusted when Greenstockings pulls him into her lap to pick and eat the lice from him, but he soon associates the bodily intimacy with motherliness: "Her close face above him soothes him so completely out of his revulsion that he will remember nothing of this moment but her ethereal face. It floats golden in the firelight, serene as a madonna, offering in this filthy frozen world the ultimate hospitality of food and tender, intimate cleanliness" (175).

Hoeppner argues that the bonding of the flesh in this scene stands in thematic contrast to the cannibalism that occurs later in the novel; the latter "is the monologic, profane inversion of the dialogic, sacralizing knowledge of and through the body" (146). However, Wiebe is not setting up an easy binary between love and cannibalism. Hood and Greenstockings are performing a kind of cannibalism here. Greenstockings eats the lice from Hood's body, and says to him, "I could feed you now, should I give you my breast, should I sing?" (163). As well, Hood "accepts each spoonful she offers him as though he would gladly swallow her too" (171). Here, though, eating is about intimacy, not conquest. Existence itself seems to depend upon a kind of cannibalism too, as the animals, whom the Dene feel intimately connected to, are consumed by humans, and vice versa. Perhaps the problem is not cannibalism itself, but the power relationships behind the act. Greenstockings and Hood, in their relationship, emphasize sharing rather than domination.

Hood and Greenstockings do speak to each other, although they cannot understand each other's words. These attempts at spoken communication,

though, only further emphasize their relationship as linked with Lacanian mother-child relations. While initially the child does not know language, he (and Lacan's subject is usually gendered male) eventually starts to learn language through his mother, in order to continue to get her to fulfill his needs: "As the infant gets older, the mothererer feeds him less often, but talks to him more. What is she doing? She is feeding her baby signifiers" (Hill 63).[8] Hood and Greenstockings have returned to a space where, because they do not speak each other's language, it is as though they are children, each trying to communicate with the mother. Rather than this being frustrating, though, Hood feels that "he has fallen into freedom" and his own speech starts to express sexual and nutritional needs only; language becomes flesh:

> "I . . . if I . . . could touch her, there is only a . . . tongue, licking."
>
> An ineffable word. And he can only repeat it: "Licking, licking." (83)

Words become ineffable, and at the same time emphasize physicality, eating, loving, the mother-child bond.

In this same scene, Hood acts as the male lover-as-father of the love story, pushing a phallic silver spoon between Greenstockings' lips: "He lifts fingers to her lips, tips moist against her mouth, and a shadow of red along the silver curve withdrawing between her folding lips, which are all he sees, swallowing as he senses her swallow" (169). However, Hood is not just lover-as-father but, in a nineteenth-century context where women (European and Dene)

were the primary child-rearers, lover-as-mother. He feeds her with a spoon and simultaneously teaches her language; he coos at her with an "o-o-o" to show her how to purse her lips to accept the spoon, and she coos back at him. In fact, at one point in the same scene he even "mumbles like her mother" (170). Pursing her lips to take the spoon Hood moves into her mouth, Greenstockings pronounces his name, eating and speaking in the same gesture:

> "Ho-o-o-o-o," she blows. And he has become so delicate she can touch his hand and the spoon waits for her, entering between her lips into her hollow mouth. "O-o-o-o. . . d." Closing around the spoon. (169)

She learns his name, as a child's first word is often a term for mother.

This connection between Greenstocking's mother and Hood emphasizes the uniquely flexible gender relations between him and Greenstockings. Greenstockings remembers when, as a baby, her mother fondled her "until she cried in ecstasy" (29). Hood, if he comes closer to this than other men, does so, perhaps because he is so gentle; Greenstockings finds herself drawn to this gentleness, to the fact that he does not make demands the way other men do (161). As well, it is positive that she can take his name and make it her own, forming it in her own way in her mouth. Throughout the novel, male law and power is associated with language; Greenstockings teases Broadface about his big words, and, in frustration, she wonders if she will never be free of men: "will there ever be a time when their assumption over her ends, even if she slits lengthwise or crosswise every single one of their throats or cocks?" (85). Her

fantasy of attacking the organ of speech as well as the organ of sex suggests again the power of men through language. If she and Hood can return to a more sensual space, a space where language is about connecting to the mother, then perhaps they momentarily escape these power-fraught gender relations. (As I will demonstrate, later, though, this kind of relationship is not sustainable.)

In suggesting that Hood and Greenstocking regress to childhood, Wiebe reiterates a common motif in the representation of Natives and of women. Anne McClintock notices that, in the nineteenth century, both non-white races and women generally were viewed as primitive, less developed than white men; they were viewed as a "living archive of the primitive archaic" (41). Goldie sees the same thing happening with Native peoples. In his discussion of early explorer narratives, he notices that "Many early accounts imply that these voyagers were just as much time travellers. The meeting made them and the indigenes 'in fact' contemporaries but the whites viewed the interaction as across a gap of time too great to be bridged" (165). The Native, and the woman, are relegated to a prehistoric era.

Parallel to McClintock's discussion of race and women as prehistoric, is her discussion of the metaphor of the family, which I referred to in Chapter Two. The figure of the family uses the idea of the "natural" subordination of women and children to the father to justify the "natural" subordination of non-white races to the white male. These races are less developed, like women and children, and so they must be ruled by the benevolent patriarchal father. In emphasizing that Greenstockings takes Hood back to an earlier time, a time before language, and

thus, symbolically, in terms of history, a pre-history, Wiebe repeats this metaphor of the family, of women and non-white races as less developed. One might argue that it is Hood who takes Greenstockings back to this time of the infant, as well as vice versa, but the emphasis is so much on Hood's freedom from the European lust for the written word-as-history; he escapes to the prehistoric. The difference, of course, between A Discovery of Strangers and the nineteenth-century theories of women and dark races, is that Wiebe is criticizing the linguistic domination of the white patriarchy. Hood's abandonment of his need to sketch Greenstockings, and of the Franklin party's need to record things, is depicted as positive. However, at the same time, Wiebe is also repeating the idea that non-Natives have been alienated from the land, from pre-history – through this need to conquer via language, to force names on things – and that Natives are more "natural," more connected. Paradoxically, Wiebe privileges the language of the body, the non-linguistic, but does so through the written word, the tool of the very contingent he is trying to critique. As Tony Tremblay suggests, Wiebe, like some other contemporary writers of historical novels, is not critical of his *own* mode of discourse (164).

Wiebe's image of the Native woman as affiliated with the wilderness is perhaps more subversive than his response to the prelinguistic. Wiebe acknowledges men's view of women as land to be conquered, but critiques this view. Birdseye tells Greenstockings, "For men, women are *just* places to go, go in and go out" (76). Keskerrah, Birdseye's husband, replies by putting a more positive spin on gender relations: "women are the place of living and men want to

be there too, then they are both truly alive" (77). This kind of sexual connection may be evident in some of the novel's relationships, but there is also a great deal of violence. Greenstockings remembers Broadface taking her by force by the river, and the incredible pain and rage it evoked in her (74). As well, Hepburn notices that Back thinks himself a kind of Napoleon when it comes to women: "he considered any female taller than himself (every one over the age of twelve) a Russia to be assailed, boarded and subdued" (102). In fact, Back seems to think that the Natives generally ought to be conquered, as he stresses the importance of their obedience to the expedition, but suggests they do not know what work is (47). Thus, the relationship between women and the land is viewed as an oppressive one, one created by men in power, and used to subdue a gender and/or a people.

Greenstockings, though, reclaims this connection to the land for herself, rather than for some male's ideas about indigenization or conquest. Near the end of the novel, when she is about to give birth to her daughter, she feels an intense affiliation with the spirituality of place: "When she can think, she hears the lake of the great bear, Sahtu, breathe against the rocks below, and she feels her happiness multiplied by the length and depth of that deep, black water she knows she has climbed out of, at last" (254). She remembers, too, the first time she menstruated, when "her body travelled within itself in its own indelible way" (257); her body was her own, not simply a place for men to travel in and out of. She was attended to by other women, and felt "happy at the dark slip of her unstoppable womanhood" (257). Greenstockings remembers female power and

female community. Wiebe stops short of idealizing female-female relations, in that Greenstockings also realizes that women can betray each other when she has a sudden insight into the story of She Who Delights, a woman captured and raped by an enemy tribe: "White Horizon's men could never have held She Who Delights without other women helping them" (268). However, this comment is followed by a discussion between Greenstockings and her sister, Greywing, about sharing Greenstockings' mate, Broadface, so that they can both have more freedom and so that they can together convince him not to harm Greenstocking's and Hood's baby. Men's dominance is challenged by female community.

This pattern of female power in relation to the land is echoed at the very end of the novel. On one hand, Hood seems to have achieved indigenization, through Greenstockings' love: "Hood will remain here, alive in every wolf and raven she sees, for ever" (317). But the emphasis is on Greenstockings', not Hood's, sense of belonging in the great North: "why would anyone bother following such bent little Whites when there is such a large land to walk on wherever the light leads? She cannot, she will never want to understand this" (317). Greenstockings seems to know and understand the land better than the men, Native and white. Moreover, when Twospeaker and Back wish to know whose child she holds, she refuses to name the father:

> "Whose child is it!"
>
> So she tells him: "Mine."
>
> Back, like Twospeaker, stares at her.
>
> "Do you hear me?" she confronts them. "Mine."

> And she turns, leaves them both as the arctic light darkens around her in its impenetrable, life-giving cold. (317)

The land, as woman, is inscrutable but life-giving, as is Greenstockings. The use of language is important here too. Back and Twospeaker can only stare, and it is Greenstockings who gets the final word, a word that refuses the name-of-the-father and asserts her independence, as well as that of her child.

The difficulty of Wiebe's narrative is that though Greenstockings' associates the land with female power rather than passivity, the novel does not escape gendered and racial stereotypes. Greenstockings is an "Earth Mother," a figure which Relke notes carries a certain appeal for Native women. The Earth Mother combines "maternalism and environmentalism" and rewrites the stereotype of the Squaw in a positive manner, resisting the cultural demand that Native women be quiet and unobtrusive (263). However, as Relke notes, such an identity continues to tie contemporary Native women to nature and to the past (265), and thus the Earth Mother is associated with the same "romanticizing of aboriginal history" which created the Green Indian (265-66). Greenstockings, in drawing power from the Northern landscape, does not challenge the binaries of man-culture/woman-nature, and white-culture/Native-nature.

However, Wiebe at least differs from authors such as Huyghue and Steffler in that he does not figure Natives as a vanishing race. Greenstockings asserts that, despite the Dene prophet's prediction that "someday Whitemuds will rain horror on the world" (272), her "child will be born strong nevertheless; no Whitemud can stop it" (272). And this is emphasized at the end in her devotion to

her child as "hers." Her daughter not only underlines the continuation of Native and Métis peoples but, as possibly mixed-race, an emblem of the love between Greenstockings and Hood, the daughter is also an emblem of hope for interaction between Native and non-Native peoples that is not oppressive.[9]

While Wiebe has faced accusations of voice appropriation, it is important here that he attempts to give his female Native character agency beyond that of "helpmate." Though Greenstockings, as woman, is stereotypical in some ways – her connection to the body rather than language, her beauty and desirability – she asserts her independence at the end of the novel, rather than living happily ever after, subordinated to the white male, or killing herself in grief over unrequited love. Through Greenstockings, Wiebe also sees for Natives a future in Canada, rather than delineating them as the "vanishing race."

Again and again in Canadian historical novels, the Native heroine symbolizes the promise of indigenization for the white hero, and/or she is prehistoric and childlike, emphasizing a return to a simpler time. In this way, she is nicely suited to the motifs of the love story in that her childlike Indian nature further underlines the representations of romantic heroines as somewhat infantilized, especially in relation to the authoritative hero. However, the hero of the love story, and especially the Indian love story, cannot return to the childlike state of the heroine. In the traditional love story, this means that he becomes a protective father figure for the heroine in an erotic relationship, but in the Indian version, fears of miscegenation prevent this same result. Instead, he must "grow

beyond" the Native heroine and what she represents.

The use of the historical romance in the representation of Native peoples in Canada provides particular challenges for the authors, and these challenges often result in generic fissures. How does a nineteenth-century author who has anxieties about miscegenation create a Native heroine and non-Native hero in a genre that demands a love story? While the authors in the nineteenth century seem interested in upholding a social structure with the English male as the ruling party, they hesitate to exemplify this in a marriage between a Native woman and a British man. Marriages between white francophones and white anglophones are permissible, but marriages across race appear to be too abhorrent to allow. Instead, the early authors manipulate the love- story plot in such a way as to emphasize the subordination of the Native to the English, through the analogy of the subordination of women to men, without implicating and tainting the English male with a sexual relationship with and/or marriage to a Native woman. The nineteenth-century authors deal with this in various ways, but in most cases, while the Native woman falls in love with the British male, he explicitly chooses not to be with her. Sometimes this means the Native heroine kills herself, and at other times she merely settles for a platonic relationship with the white male and his white mate.

What is perhaps unexpected is that contemporary authors continue some of these portrayals of Native women. While such authors might, for the sake of "realism," have their historical protagonists iterate racist ideas, the narratives themselves often concur with rather than challenge such racism. While Steffler

and Wall critique the white male's limited perspective, they ultimately focus on him as the rightful ruler of Canada. In Wiebe's novel alone is this motif altered: the British man, rather than the Native woman, dies, and she survives to raise their daughter independently.

The continued use of nineteenth-century motifs in representations of Native peoples arises partly from the genre itself. As I have stressed in my Introduction, as well as in Chapter Two, the love-story plot embodies the coming together of a man and a woman, each of whom brings different, fixed qualities to the union. This demand for clear differences that can be united or, in the case of Native women and white men, almost united, can lead an author towards stereotyping.[10] Less consistent characters might trouble the idealizing of love which is a staple of the romance: the hero must end up with one heroine who is clearly better than the other heroine, the one with whom he will find marital bliss. Native women like Wanda, who are eventually viewed as too wild for the white men, are rejected not when the men come to a more nuanced understanding of the women's wildness, but when the men substitute one set of fixed characteristics for another, or a positive view of the Natives' wildness for a negative one. Even contemporary authors like Wiebe, who attempt to create more rounded Native characters, end up drawing on stereotypes. This, I believe, is because certain racial stereotypes have become so embedded in Canadian culture that they have taken on the status of "realism." To write of a nineteenth-century Native woman who was, for example, constantly cursing the mosquitoes and losing her way in the woods would perhaps be farcical, because it would

challenge a very base assumption about historical Native peoples. The historical novel, with its reliance on history's documents, contributes to this problem; because the dominant versions of history present Native women as Ecological Indians or Earth Mother and affirm the dominance of a white patriarchy, a historical novelist must be particularly rigorous in drawing upon such documents to write a different version of events. Canada still suffers from a limited vision that, in very real ways, continues to see Natives as associated with "outdated" attitudes towards natural resources, and continues to see women as more emotional and "earthly" than men.

The continued pervasiveness of such Native stereotypes may also derive from the non-Native need for indigenization, and the influence of "imperialist nostalgia." The current popularity of historical novels, many of which feature Native characters, may be a result of "the pose of 'innocent yearning'" which "capture[s] people's imaginations" (Rosaldo 108) in such novels. Canadian historical novels can relegate Natives to the past, and while some contemporary examples of the genre critique imperialism, there may always be a (false) sense for the non-Native reader that there is an immense distinction between the British colonizers and the contemporary Canadian. That is, in Lawson's terms, the Canadian is neither imperial authority nor indigene, but can appropriate the authority of Natives by designating them as "vanished" (see Lawson 26-27). Frantz Fanon argues that stereotypes create "a continued agony rather than a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture. The culture once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yolk of

oppression" (qtd. in Bhabha 79). As long as contemporary non-Native writers perpetuate racial stereotypes – especially through the historical romance, which is currently a very popular genre – they contribute to a social situation that severely limits the rights and agency of Native peoples in Canada, trapping them in the past.

Notes

[1] I use this term as Daniel Francis uses it in The Imaginary Indian, to refer to representations of Native peoples rather than Native peoples themselves.

[2] Accidents involving horses are a recurring motif in the Canadian love-story plot, appearing in Rosanna Leprohon's Antoinette De Mirecourt, John Lesperance's The Bastonnais, James DeMille's The Lady of the Ice, and Anne Hébert's Kamouraska.

[3] Mercer and Wetherald may here be drawing on the protagonist of Scott's Waverley, who also allows his susceptibility to romantic thought to get him into trouble, and to fall for a woman from a different culture whom he is not able to marry. Edward Waverley eventually gains a more tempered attitude towards Scottish nationalism, and transfers his affections from the resistant and extremely Jacobite Scottish woman, Flora MacIvor, to a more receptive and less political Scottish woman, Rose Bradwardine, indicating the peaceful subsuming of the Scottish to the English. Edward Macleod's affections, though, must shift cultures, from a Native woman to a French woman, indicating a French-English "union" in Canada that is allowable because the participants are of the same race.

[4] The relationship between Oucanasta and Frederick has received much critical commentary (see, for example, Monkman 24, Hurley 50-51, Jones 52), but it has not, as far as I know, been analysed specifically in the context of the love-story motifs assessed in this dissertation.

[5] Of course, the unknown whereabouts of Ellen Halloway, and the

possibility of her return, haunt the novel's reification of British colonial authority. Manina Jones, in fact, reads Ellen in relation to indigeneity, colonialism, and the role of women in the Empire in her essay "Beyond the Pale." However, while Ellen's curse is fulfilled in The Canadian Brothers, it does not affect the position of Native peoples in that novel, as they are still presented as subordinate "allies" to the British.

[6] This novel should not be confused with Brian Moore's novel, Black Robe (1985).

[7] This is an important notion in the romantic representations of Native Canadians, and one which will receive more focus in Chapter Three.

[8] Hill deliberately uses the term "motherer" rather than "mother" to designate the child's primary caretaker in order to acknowledge that "mothering" can be done by a person of either gender who is not necessarily the child's biological mother.

[9] The parentage of the child is never stated directly – this would perhaps interfere with Greenstockings' independence and her disruption of the law-of-the-father – but Hepburn says he has "reason to believe" Hood is the father (111), and the baby has one brown eye and one blue (314), which suggests mixed race.

[10] Gaile McGregor notices that Canadian novels often present characters who become disillusioned with the power of love (128). This is true of twentieth-century love stories with contemporary settings, and I would postulate that such

disillusionment comes, at least in part, from the characters' realization that lovers are inconsistent rather than idealized stereotypes. In the Canadian historical novel, this disillusionment between lovers is usually avoided by the death of one or the other (or both), or by a narrative that ends with the beginning of marriage, before disillusionment can occur.

CHAPTER FOUR

"far worse than death": Rape and Race in Representations of Native Men

Goldie emphasizes that the male indigene in literature is often associated with violence, and in early works especially, "even the slightest suggestion of the male indigene's sexuality is an emblem of fear rather than temptation" (79). While the Native maiden is often appealing and seductive, the young Native male's sexuality in many Canadian historical novels is aligned with the rape of white women. By "rape" I mean both forcing sexual intercourse, and, from the Latin "*rapere*," simply "to seize." While earlier novels are hesitant to depict actual sexual assault, they often feature a kidnapping, a seizing, of a woman; the meanings of the verb are connected in that, whether or not she is actually assaulted, the honour and chastity of a white maiden are implicitly at risk in the abduction.

Native men, like Native women, are often erotically connected to the idea of the "natural." Goldie argues that, "The terrifying power of the earlier indigene was an expression of an innate, natural sexuality, unbounded by the necessary restraints of civilization" (83). In other cases, though, it is the influence of European civilization, not a lack thereof, that make the Native man's sexuality violent. In fact, sometimes the male indigene's lack of social inhibition is one of his strengths, and he is admired for his understanding of his environment and his freedom of movement, thought, and feeling. Thus, sometimes the male Indian rapes because he is too uninhibited, and sometimes because he has had too

much interaction with a corrupt non-Native civilization.

What further complicates the associations between rape and the civilization/nature binary, is that many of the historical novels that depict rape by a Native man also feature a rape committed by a *white* male. In this case, definitions of, and differences between, "nature" and "civilization" are even further complicated. Is the European's crime a product of his civilization, or a product of straying too far *from* that civilization? And is the European hero, likewise, a product of civilized values or exceptional, individual virtue?

The contradictory explanations for the Native male's sexual violence, alongside his comparison to a white male who rapes, indicate the constructed and shifting nature of the white-civilization/Native-nature binary. This indication, however, does not liberate the Native male. Instead, he is caught in paradoxes: he is too savage to be reformed by colonization, too savage for colonizers not to try to intervene, and at the same time too innocent not to be corrupted by European society. Such contradictions make him a necessary object of colonization, while preventing his full colonization.

His violation of the white female, in fact, helps justify the colonial project and the white man's colonial authority. Jenny Sharpe, in "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter Insurgency," explores the way that the 1857 "mutiny" in India was depicted in newspaper and personal accounts as centering on the rape of white women by the insurgents. Sharpe describes how images of the rape of the "English lady," epitome of morality, signifies a moral colonial authority under attack by savages (34), and helped justify the harshest

and most gruesome of colonial measures to put down the insurgency (37). While one of Sharpe's aims is to consider representations of gender and race in a very specific colonial moment and place, I see similarities to the way that Native men have been portrayed in Canada. As Leslie Monkman notes of literary representations of the Native, "The Indian need not be simply the negative antithesis of the white man, but definition of him as savage will always override any positive individual traits. Should he oppose white civilization, he becomes the demonic antagonist of an ordained mission to bring civilization to the new world" (8). Representations of Native men as violent rapists justify the need for British colonization and reformation of the Native, while simultaneously insisting that the Native can never be equal to the white man. The Natives in Wacousta, for example, depict an uprising against British authority that must be put down; in Bitter Shield, the Natives are allied with the French and must be defeated. The depiction of the Native male as rapist in Canadian historical novels contributes to a representation of colonial history as necessary and even on the side of moral right.

Crucially, though, in most of the Canadian novels examined in this chapter, the Native male is not punished for his rape of the white female, and the presence of white rapists suggests that the British are not innocent of such crimes themselves. These two issues I see as being aligned with Alan Lawson's comments on the position of the settler. The settler, in his inability in the new world to replicate exactly the identity and authority of the old one, attempts to appropriate the identity and authority of the indigene (26). I am suggesting that

one of the many ways the settler does the latter is to discredit the indigene's authority in the new world by depicting him as a savage rapist; but he does not directly eradicate the Native, although the Native often dies by some other cause or simply absents himself from the scene of action. As Lawson states, "The frequent scientific observation of the 'dying race' in the nineteenth century enabled a narrative of ethical indigenization in which the settler simply assumed the place of the disappearing Indigene without the need for violence (or, of course, the designation 'invader')" (27). The lack of violence against the Natives in the novels helps distance the settler from the very invasion and colonization that he represents.

The presence of a white rapist further distances the settler from the imperial centre, and puts forth, in these historical novels, a sense of Canada as a distinct country. Lawson states, the settler, "in becoming more like the Indigene whom he mimics, becomes less like the atavistic inhabitant of the cultural homeland whom he is also reduced to mimicking" (28). The white rapist, therefore, often represents the British homeland, or some element in it, that the "Canadian" wishes to distance himself from: "The national is what replaces the indigenous and in doing so conceals its participation in colonization by nominating a new colonized subject – the colonizer or invader-settler" (Lawson 30). In some early Canadian novels, the narrative expresses a desire for continued affiliation between Canada and Britain, so that the white rapist only represents some corrupt aspect of British society that must be dealt with; in other novels, the desire to distinguish Canada from Britain is stronger. The Native

rapist on the one hand, and the non-Native rapist on the other, stand as symbols of savagery or corruption that will not be tolerated in the new, idealized Canada, which is both Native and European, and neither. The white woman who is the rape victim becomes an embodiment of Canada, attacked on both sides, and must be rescued by the virtuous anglophone male who will form and rule the new nation.

The power of this male is further emphasized through the ambivalence in the representations of the rapes themselves, which sometimes depict violence in a way that is meant to titillate even as it horrifies. This is only hinted at in the first two novels under study here, but other novels make this more clear. In such depictions is embodied the fear of and desire for the dark Other that Goldie writes about, but I would add that this sensationalizing also further subordinates women as it condemns Native men. The women's violated or near-violated bodies are viewed and enjoyed by the white men who, alone, can rescue the women from the very act the men voyeuristically enjoy. Such depictions demonstrate the blurry lines between romance and rape, indicating a violence against women that is ingrained in the love-story plot, and expresses, even celebrates, the limited power of women in the Canadian colonial patriarchy.

The depictions of abducted white women in these novels, and of violent interaction between Native and non-Native cultures, might be viewed as evoking to some extent the genre of the the captivity narrative. James Russell, author of the second novel I examine in the chapter, seems to connect such narratives with his own in his novel's title, Matilda; or, The Indian's Captive (1833).

However, I find the motif of rape a more useful focus than that of captivity because, for the most part, the novels in this chapter allow for less subversion than the captivity narrative purportedly allows.[1] In Bound and Determined, Christopher Castiglia argues that women's captivity narratives, while on one level directed at maintaining the status quo, also depict liminal spaces where gender and racial identities become destabilized. White women captives sometimes find greater independence in Native society than they do in their culture of origin, and in some cases write against racial prejudice (see Chapter Two of Castiglia's study). Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, in her Introduction to an anthology of women's captivity narratives, notices the same patterns (xxiv-xv). In many of the novels in my study, though, Native culture represents a threat to white womanhood, without the opportunities for female power. Rather than destabilizing racial and gendered identities, most of the novels employ the motif of rape only in order to reify cultural and gendered hierarchies. Many of the captivity narratives Castiglia reads "challenge the treatment of women in both societies" (43), but the perspectives of white women in novels in this chapter generally serve the opposite goal. And critiques of white culture, often an element of the captivity narrative, are present in the novels usually only to a very limited extent, and only with the intention of mourning the "noble savage" rather than changing white "civilization."

I will examine how the novels set up limited visions of nation, gender, and race through the construction of the civilization/nature binary in relation to Native men, and the interactions between the characterizations of Native men as rapists

and the characterizations of white men as rapists and romantic heroes. Ultimately, I view the rapes as stereotyping Native men and distancing Canada from its own history of colonial and patriarchal violence while positing a more peaceful, non-Native, non-European rule in the country.

I would like to consider first, the motif of the Native man as rapist in a text in which there is no corresponding white rapist in order to establish the stereotype before I show how it is complicated elsewhere. In Argimou: A Legend of the Micmac, Clarence is kidnapped by the Milicete. Clarence is certainly the ideal of white womanhood – beautiful, virtuous, gentle – which is exactly what makes the kidnapping so terrible for her; she has no mental defenses against the "savagery" she sees around her as she travels and camps with her captors. Sexual violence, alongside torture and eventual death, is implied in Clarence's worries: "her fate? O god! who [sic] would attempt to pourtray the unutterable thoughts that weighed like a horrid phantom upon the soul of the wretched girl?" (56). Rape, a traditionally unspeakable, yet common fear for Victorian women whose greatest asset was their virtue, might very well be one of these "unutterable thoughts." Sharpe notices, in fact, how reports of rape during the Mutiny were effective without ever actually having to present the rape directly (33). I would suggest that in nineteenth-century Canadian depictions of rape, the act itself achieves greater impact on readers for being too horrible to mention.

Edward seems to have similar fears for Clarence; he imagines her tortured, but especially tortured while, it is implied, nude, and thus "exposed to

the gaze of heartless savages" (129). His worry too delineates the dynamics of the gaze. To be gazed at, is to be the object rather than the subject of power. As a woman, Clarence is the object of Edward's sexualized gaze. He is attracted by her loveliness, and, as I explained earlier, her beauty inspires those who look at her to contemplate God. In the image of Clarence "exposed to the gaze of heartless savages," the European male's sexual but religious gaze is perverted. For Clarence to be gazed at by Native men in a sexual and violent manner threatens Edward's romantic claim on her; she would become the object of their desire, their claim staked through looking. Sharpe notices how in reports on the Mutiny, "the display of violated bodies of English women produces the 'English Lady' as a sign for a colonial moral influence under threat of native violation" (36). The body of the virtuous white woman is a site of contest between two groups of males, one colonizing and the other indigenous. However, Clarence is rescued by Edward before any such tortures can occur.

The Natives who kidnap Clarence are depicted, much of the time, as deriving their violence from an unconstrained, base, animal nature. As such, they are characterized as an undifferentiated group rather than individuals, as when Clarence is first being carried off: "all further appeal to the commiseration of her friends was prevented by the ferocious menaces of the savages, who held her by main force on either side of the horse and brandished their knives and tomahawks in the maiden's face with significant gestures" (54). A similar thing happens later when the Indians grieve for lost comrades:

> [. . .] they seemed frantic with excess of passion; and with the yell

> of baffled vengeance, was mingled the howl of distracted men, and the low wail, or shrill, piercing accents of woman's grief, as they bent over the dead, with streaming hair and distorted faces, visible only by the red and searching torchlight. (137)

The Natives are depicted as making undecipherable animal sounds and gestures, unable to control their "excess of passion." The effect of this is to further place the reader's sympathies with Clara, the white individual. It also makes the possibility of rape more horrific, for the Indians are so animalized here, that such an attack would almost amount to bestiality.

I suggested in Chapter Three that the Native is sometimes represented as connected to nature as a repository of the unknown, a great unconscious (Frye, "Conclusion" 243). This is figured during the first moments of the ambush: "The whole party were now upon the narrow bridge which trembled with the heavy tread of the soldiery, when, suddenly, as if from the bowels of the earth, a terrific yell burst forth" (42).[2] The violence of the indigene, represented by the "terrific yell," arises from a wilderness that is hostile, or at least inscrutable. If, as Bhabha suggests, a crucial aspect of colonial authority is surveillance (76), here the Native is simultaneously contained in a stereotype of wildness, even as this wildness makes him unknowable.

There is some ambivalence in the novel's representations, as elsewhere Native peoples as a group are described more favourably. However, in these cases it is not clear whether the Natives are inherently virtuous, or have gained this virtue through European influence. The narrator seems to admire, for

example, the abilities of Clarence's captors to find their way through the forest by examining the moss on trees: "the very language of Nature appeared intelligible to her dependant children" (59). As well, the Micmac in particular have the "indefinable air of majesty which breathes, as it were, from the lineaments of the forest-born" (6). That is, they are naturally noble. However, the Milicete and Penobscot who kidnap Clarence, are less noble because they have less, not more, contact with civilization: "occupying a territory further removed from the European settlements, they had not caught insensibly the polite tone which was evident in the Micmacs, from their intercourse with the French" (6). Thus, Natives are contradictorily both noble because of civilization and because of their own nature.

But at the same time, the Native hero as individual seems superior to the rest of his people, also by nature. Goldie argues that the term "noble savage,", instead of referring to a distinction between the indigene as noble compared to other races, may refer to an individual indigene in relation to the rest of his or her race: "The noble savage, as a specific category, tends to have this aristocratic distance from the general race" (32). This nobility is not "a direct product of nature" but "their natural context enables their aristocracy to flourish" (32). Argimou embodies this kind of physical and moral superiority. His height is “rather above that of his brethren” and he exhibits “a degree of strength and agility which excited the wonder and admiration of the warlike tribes” (9). He is also “never known to quail at the face of man, or to falter upon a trail,” and he “never let the grass grow over the memory of a good deed, but, with the

unrelenting constancy of his race, an injury was never forgotten" (10). Argimou is the pillar of masculinity, the ideal hero in all respects. The important difference between the positive descriptions of him as individual and the limited positive descriptions of Natives as a group, though, is that the admirable traits of the group delineated above refer mostly to appearance and skill. The Natives know how to survive, and they bear themselves with grace. In terms of personality traits, his race only gives Argimou an ability to hold a grudge. Argimou, however, stands out from his race not only for his physical strength, but for his intellect and morality. It seems then, according to the narrative, that Argimou is not a representative of his race. His moral goodness stems from individuality, rather than from a generalized and inherent Native virtue.

However, Edward and Clarence too may possess virtues that are aberrant rather than representative of their culture. Even though there is no white rapist in this text, the novel demonstrates and criticizes the way the English contribute to the erasure of Native culture. Argimou, and his people's way of life, are wiped out. European contact, whatever moderate positive influence it might have, eventually destroys the Natives. Neither "natural" nor "civilized" goodness can help them. The Native man, for all his prowess, must be overcome by the white male. The evil of the Milicete, their power over a white woman, is eventually conquered through a partnership between virtuous Native man and virtuous British man, and Clarence is rescued. The fearsome sexualized violence of the Native men is stymied, but even Argimou's more virtuous sexuality is defeated when his mate and child both die. The only ones left with reproductive

opportunities, and thus with futures, are the non-Natives. While the narrative laments this, it views the "vanishing Canadian" as a *fait accompli*, rather than urges social change.

Like Clarence, the protagonist of James Russell's Matilda, or, The Indian's Captive (1833) is the victim of attempted rape by a Native man, although she is later attacked by a British man as well. Matilda, kidnapped as a child by a Native couple, who intend to one day make her their son's wife, is rescued and adopted by American Loyalists, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. When Matilda is a young woman and out for a walk alone, the Indians' son springs out of the woods, seizes her in his arms, and claims that he has come to take her for his wife. Through the intervention of Captain Clifford, Matilda is saved from the "Savage" and a fate "far worse than death" (35).

The portrayals of the Indian rapist and Matilda's saviour, Clifford, indicates a slippage between the indigenous other and the colonizing self. The Indian son is motivated by his own culture's sense of how things are done. He is acting according to his religion: "this day my Great Father has put it in my power to find you" (30). As well, after being captured by Matilda's foster father and some other men, the Indian claims that he had been told by his parents that "it would redound to his honor to secure her, dead or alive" (39). Like the Indian, Clifford also acts with regard to God and honour. While the Indian credits his discovery of Matilda to the Great Father, Captain Clifford also sees himself as "the happy instrument in the hands of Providence" (36). And, like the Indian, Captain Clifford

acts with honour in mind – Matilda's – in preventing the rape, and his own, in treating her with gentleness and respect afterwards.

However, the difference between colonial self and Native Other is asserted when it is made clear that the Indian's ideas about God and honour are not the *right* God nor the *right* concept of honour. The two value systems cannot co-exist. At Matilda's request, Mr. Wilson prevents the men from harming the Indian, "for the object of their hatred, though a savage, was nevertheless a human being; and exhibited to them a mortifying proof of what man was in his fallen and uncivilized state, and especially when uninfluenced by the benign dictates of christianity [sic]" (41). His horrendous behaviour is attributed to the fact that he is "uncivilized." The implication is that every man is "fallen" because of Adam and Eve's sin, but, with civilization, man can be improved. And the civilization which improves man is defined in the novel by Christianity.[3]

In this simultaneous condemning and pitying of the Native man is evidence of an aspect of colonial ambivalence outlined by Bhabha. Bhabha notices that stereotypes of the colonized are often contradictory: Black men might be depicted both as savage and as the best of obedient servants (82). The reason for such contradictions, Bhabha explains, is because what he calls the "colonial fantasy" must be ambivalent in order to justify the colonial project. "Tamer" stereotypes suggest that "under certain conditions of colonial domination and control the native is progressively reformable" (83), but the more savage ones help deny "the colonized the capacities of self-government, independence, Western modes of civility" and "lend[] authority to the official version and mission

of colonial power" (83). In Russell's novel, then, the Indian-as-rapist indicates the savage nature of his race, but he also demonstrates that he is able to recognize and learn from the white man's authority. Spared by Mr. Wilson's, and Matilda's, Christian mercy, the Indian falls on his knees and thanks Mr. Wilson, telling him that "he should ever look upon him as a being of a superior order, and approaching more to a God than a man" (45). The Indian does not promise to change his "savage" religious values, but he promises to stay away from the area where Matilda resides for the rest of his life, and to speak to others of the kind treatment he received from the white man. Thus, the Indian does not convert, but he bows to the civilized authority of the white man, and then disappears. The Native man is not presented as being killed by the white man, as in Argimou, but he is clearly no longer a threat to white society.

Matilda is also the victim of attempted rape by Captain Fitzgibbon who is, like Clifford, in the British military. Spurred by wounded pride, because Matilda has turned down his offer of marriage, Fitzgibbon seizes the reins of Matilda's caleche one evening, and is readying to "convey the unfortunate young lady to some secluded retreat which the ruffian ha[s] in view" when he is stopped by Captain Clifford (84). Again, rape is portrayed as a worse crime than murder. Clifford, Matilda acknowledges, "had twice saved her life, or rather her honor, which was far more dear" (96). Matilda's honour is crucial because it is not only a matter of her own sense of worth, but its loss would also reflect negatively upon her family. Matilda's foster mother emphasizes that Matilda's ruin would bring all in the family to an early grave (96), and the narrator, after Clifford wounds

Fitzgibbon, wishes that a similar fate befall "every unprincipled wretch who endeavours to carry misery and disgrace into a virtuous family" (103). In the world of the nineteenth-century love story, Matilda's sexual partnering must be carefully policed because her sexual purity is the currency by which she will eventually gain economic security in the form of a respectable husband.

Captain Fitzgibbon, as a rapist, is treated in a slightly different manner than the Indian rapist. The narrator emphasizes that Matilda has little experience in the world, and such actions as those of the Indian "she confined to these people alone [,] little aware that there are savages equally cruel, without the excuse in their favour which the poor benighted sons of the forest have" (74). The savage acts because ignorant, but Captain Fitzgibbon cannot make such a claim. In fact, his fault seems to be that he puts too much emphasis on the comforts and delights of civilization, and not enough on the virtues of civilized religion. Fitzgibbon and Matilda meet at the few social events her parents, concerned for her safety and virtue, allow her to attend, and in this context Fitzgibbon is more interested in her beauty and charming musical talents than her morality (77). Clifford was won over, not only by her beauty, but by the pity she evinces for her Indian attacker (45), and the fact that her "mental endowments" are "superior to those of any young lady of her age with whom he had ever been acquainted" (61).

Captain Fitzgibbon never acknowledges, as the Indian does, the moral superiority of Clifford, but he is only an aspect of his culture, not his culture in entirety, as comparisons to the other non-Native characters demonstrate. The

Indian, on the other hand, seems to represent his culture, as there are no virtuous Indians to compare him to. The problem is not in white culture itself, but of individual choice within white culture. Fitzgibbon has virtue available to him, but chooses to act without honour. This representation further damns the Native, who, apparently, can respect the white man's honour, but not mimic it himself.

Captain Clifford is obviously contrasted with Fitzgibbon, but at the same time he and Fitzgibbon seem to share an attraction to female victimhood. Clifford tells Matilida that he has loved her "since he first saw her in the Indian's arms" (132). Her nearly violated body imprisoned by the Indian becomes the object of Clifford's gaze, and provokes his love. Matilda's "power" over honourable men is in her passivity, although this same quality makes her susceptible to attack by dishonourable men. The delineation of non-Native male power in relation to the threatened white woman is often a feature of the captivity narrative (Castiglia 41-86), a genre which Russell evokes in his title. However, in Russell's novel this male power is ultimately reified rather than destabilized. Pilar Cuder-Domínguez, whose essay on the novel demonstrates its distinctions from the more subversive qualities of captivity narratives, argues that the threats to Matilda "do not humanize her; they serve only to encourage and justify the existence of mechanisms of male surveillance" (19). While the narrative wants to emphasize Clifford's morality, in its support of a patriarchal social structure, the narrative encourages and celebrates female victimization as erotic, and demonstrates, even celebrates, the slippage between rapist and romancer.

Carole Gerson emphasizes that Canada, in this novel and others like it in

the early nineteenth century, is merely the place of trial for characters, who at the end are allowed to live happily ever after in England (Purer 144). In Matilda, as Cuder-Domínguez argues, this motif emphasizes the importance and authority of Canada's connection to England. Cuder-Domínguez observes that "the episodes that make up Matilda's story overlap with crucial moments of the history of the continent," beginning just after the Seven Years' War and spanning periods of Native rebellion and the American Revolutionary War (20). Threatened by such forces, safety for Canada only lies in dependence on Britain, represented in the novel by Captain Clifford and Matilda's birth father. The novel's end sees Matilda as wife to the one and heiress to the other: "In exchange for submission, Matilda/Canada gains a stable sense of self" (Cuder-Domínguez 21).

The fact that Matilda is an orphan is particularly important in Russell's construction of this national allegory. Amanda Anderson argues that the fallen woman in Victorian literature has literally lost her "character," her identity, her coherence of self, and this stands in contrast to the other, often male, characters (2). In Matilda, though, the cause and effect of this motif seem to have been reversed. Rather than having Matilda's rape lead to identity loss, Russell suggests that her lack of familial identity makes her vulnerable to rape. Because Matilda's biological parentage is not known, it is suggested that the lines of her character are not solid, her body and identity are permeable. Thus, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are careful about keeping Matilda from harmful influences, as if she might be too vulnerable to seduction and sin. They also keep the unknowability of Matilda's origins a secret, even, until late in the novel, from Captain Clifford.

There is a sense of shame regarding Matilda's lack of identity which seems not dissimilar to the shame that the characters see as being attached to rape. Matilda views herself "as an outcast in the world" (135), and feels certain Clifford will never marry her once he knows the truth. Even after they are married, she fears he "might one day or other censure himself, and consequently look down on her for the great sacrifice he had made, in preferring her to one who moved in the same rank of society with himself" (175).

The difference between chastity and identity is that the former, once lost, is lost forever. Matilda's identity, though, can be rediscovered, and of course it is when Matilda and Clifford return to England and locate Matilda's biological father. The romance heroine is faced with trials, but overcomes them to find love and her true self. Despite Matilda's trials, some core part of her is maintained, enough to gain the love of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and of Captain Clifford, until she can return to England where her "true" identity, which she has really carried within her all along, can be discovered. Importantly, as a woman, Matilda's identity hinges upon her interactions with men – she loses identity in rape, and gains it in marriage.

This association between rape and a loss of identity and marriage and a discovery of identity, also reflect upon the state of Matilda's country. As Cuder-Domínguez notices, Canada is vulnerable to penetration by other races and cultures, but what Cuder-Domínguez does not notice is that Canada may also be threatened, as readers see with Fitzgibbon, by immorality from within. Canada is vulnerable to the more corrupt and decadent aspects of European civilization,

just as Matilda is threatened by outside forces, but also vulnerable to sin from within herself (as all humans are, in the novel's Christian perspective).

However, Canada is also a place where growth can occur. The attempted rapes bring Matilda and Clifford together, and although Matilda loses her birth parents, she is embraced by another set of loving and good-natured parents who, importantly, are American Loyalists who eventually move to Canada. Under their care, Matilda develops goodness and faith. Ultimately, though, Canada is not the location of the happily-ever-after. Virtue can develop in Canada, and happiness be found, but the root of identity must ultimately be located in England. Lawson's comments on the settler wanting to distance him/herself from the imperial centre have to be modified in relation to this novel, where it is only certain corrupt aspects of England that need to be eradicated from the empire. Matilda's goodness in Canada only makes her deserving of a home in England, and a solid identity there. Canada is threatened by inner and outer forces, but the Indians will be subdued, the Americans fended off, and Canada's identity will be solidified by a strong attachment to England.

I would like to turn now to a series of contemporary novels called The Story of Canada, by Dennis Adair and Janet Rosenstock. While this series is not canonical, they demonstrate very clearly how nineteenth-century stereotypes of Natives persist, sometimes even more horrifically, in the late twentieth century. The novels also demonstrate more explicitly than the last two how the perspective from which rape is represented influences its meaning and

contribution to ideologies of gender. The first two novels in the series, Kanata and Bitter Shield, span from the Battle of Culloden in Scotland (1746), to North America just previous to the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1763). In the course of events, two minor characters, at different times, are assaulted by Native men, and the female protagonist is raped by an English man. The first assault by Native men involves Louise Deschamps, who hires the heroine, Janet, as governess. On a visit to friends at night, their carriage breaks down and, when Janet rides off for help, the rest of the party is attacked by Indians; Louise is raped by multiple assailants and tortured with burning twigs (252). The second rape by Native men occurs, in Bitter Shield, to a woman named Hepzibah, the mistress of Major-General Edward Braddock. She is pursued and assaulted by Indian allies of the French during the British attempt to capture Fort Duquesne. She is not raped, but the violence enacted against her is clearly sexualized. The narrator, previous to this scene, has emphasized her voluptuous and desirable body, and the Indians now set about slashing her with knives, particularly attacking her "huge breasts and stomach" until, after hours of torture, she finally dies. Then the Indians eat her flesh: "her womb and buttocks were cooked first. These were consumed by the women of the tribe, who hoped that eating them would increase their own fertility. Then the rest of Hepzibah was also cooked and eaten, and portions of her fatty meat were given to all" (125). As in Argimou, the Indians in both of these scenes are depicted as moving as a mass, and this dehumanizes them: “A dozen or so red-eyed Indians had surrounded her, and whooping and yelling their ungodly cries, they dared her to shoot” (Bitter Shield

124). Readers get little sense of individual action or motive; in Hepzibah's and Louise's torture, the Indians express only delight at the women's suffering.

The British rapist in the novels is constructed differently. Sergeant Stanley, after the Battle of Culloden, enters Janet's home and rapes her. One of the differences between the sergeant heand the Indians is that, while their sexualized violence is enacted as a group, Stanley's is enacted as an individual. The novel prefigures the rape of Janet with Stanley's rape of a Scottish female prisoner. The narration of this event takes readers inside Stanley's head, hearing his thoughts and motives, his perspective on his actions, on his impressions regarding his victim. When he assaults Janet, the perspective is hers, as she is the novel's heroine, but Stanley by this time has already been delineated as an individual.

Stanley is, in some ways, the representative of the worst of the British treatment of the Scots, his rape of Janet a symbol for the slaughter of the Scots at Culloden. However, the narration also works to separate Stanley from his society. His subordinates are disgusted by his behaviour and, in Bitter Shield, he feels the British are being too soft on the French-Canadians after the conquest of Quebec Ccity, as there are no opportunities in the terms of surrender for the British to loot and pillage (205). Stanley is differentiated from the rest of the British. Thus, like Captain Fitzgibbon, Stanley is evil because of a perversion, rather than an inherent quality, of his civilized state. His rape of Janet seems more disturbing than the other rapes in the series because he acts with thought and deliberation in his evilness, rather than with the abandoned group frenzy of

the Indians.

There are several effects of the representations of the Native and European rapists side-by-side. There does seem to be a moderate critique of civilization at work. The Indians who assault Hepzibah are allies of the French, and so, in some ways, their behaviour is condoned by a supposedly civilized society. Likewise, Stanley proves that "savage" behaviour can very much be a part of civilization, and thus the narrative challenges the savage/civilized binary. However, the Natives perhaps receive greater criticism than the Europeans. Stanley's is a monstrous humanity, but he has the human capacity for thought and planning. The Indians are not even provided with these tools, and so they become dehumanized, totally Other, animalistic. While Stanley's evil is an exception to the rule – many of the civilized characters in the novel are good, silly, or flawed, but few are as intensely evil – the cruelty of the Indians is viewed as a trait of their race. It is as though, as a people, they are incapable of rational thought. Thus, their "natural" evil is both a reason for their violent behaviour, and a means of damning them entirely.

Perhaps more importantly, though, the rapes emphasize the heroism of the *heroine*. Janet's rape is presented differently from the others. It is not simply the content of the depictions of sexual violence that is important; it is the way these episodes are depicted. Laura E. Tanner, in Intimate Violence, explains, that literary representations of violence may involve the reader in a variety of ways, encouraging the reader to be critical of the way violence is depicted and the social forces behind violence, or enticing the reader into passivity. Tanner

states, drawing on the work of Joel Black, that in some representations of violence, "instead of wresting away the violator's power to confront and resist the violation that she is forced to observe, the reader-viewer is lulled into 'seeing' violence without its attendant consequences, experiencing the 'rapture' without recognizing its connection to the very pain she seeks to avoid" (14).

The graphic detail with which Hepzibah's and Louise's rapes are represented seem intended to create this pleasurable passivity. Louise's rape is viewed by Robert, a child and an unwilling witness: "the biggest one kept teasing her flesh with tips of twigs he withdrew from the still burning fire. Each time he touched her breasts with the hot sticks, she screamed and wiggled about. Then obviously excited by the scene, another man would fall on her" (255). This scene's voyeurism implicates the reader in the violence in a way of which he/she may not be aware. While Robert, traumatized, cannot close his eyes or cry out in protest, the reader has choice; the reader can cease reading. But this is not the intent of the text. We are implicated in Robert's gaze; his traumatized inability to look away excuses our own inability to look away. The use of the word "wiggle," too is more akin to inviting sexual movement than a horrified reaction to torture. Thus, the text draws the reader into a sadistic pleasure in Louise's rape. The scene is horrific, and yet we are fascinated; we do not want to look away. The reader's reaction may not be entirely without an element of revulsion, but it may be the kind of revulsion one feels at horror films. This is not a narrative that asks readers to identify with the victim and examine critically the social structures and ideologies that contribute to rape. The reader's position here is that of

desensitized gazer who need not cry out nor stop the rape.

This kind of narration is not repeated to the same extent when the protagonist is raped early on in Kanata; in Janet's experience, the reader's perspective is hers; there is more sense of the horror of rape. The difference in the representations of the assaults has something to do with sexual morals. For example, previous to Louise's rape, Janet thinks of Louise as "sheltered and greatly spoiled. A lovely little child-woman, a reluctant mother" (251). Louise is immature and manipulative, using her body to get what she wants. Her husband, Maurice, has misgivings about her travelling, precisely because of the hostile Indians in the area. In the face of Maurice's objections, Louise begins to undress, teasing him with her naked body but refusing to have sex with him unless he agrees to let her go. Perhaps, in the harshly conservative moral stance of the narrative, Louise's rape is a "punishment" for her misuse of her sexuality, and her refusal to listen to Maurice's warning. Similarly, Hepzibah's sexuality might also be perceived as morally questionable within the context of the narrative. She acts as mistress to Braddock, and this might be viewed, in terms of conservative sexual ideals, as immoral. Janet, on the other hand, is a virgin, *and* married, when the rape occurs; she is morally chaste. Furthermore, Louise and Janet both survive the rapes, but respond differently. Louise becomes insane, and eventually murders her husband and his new mistress. Janet, on the other hand, survives with her mind intact, so that she can help keep Robert alive: "[Stanley's] act of animalism was complete, yet in spite of her total revulsion, Janet felt her

senses triumphing over fear and terror. The fear that had taken her over only moments ago was now replaced by pure hatred and utter disgust" (77). Janet not only manages to live to save herself and Robert, but she also lives to get revenge on her rapist. When Janet encounters himc years later, when he has just raped a friend of hers, Janet attacks, stabbing him in the chest and belly several times with a large knife. The rape of Janet emphasizes her emotional and mental strength. Like Louise, she survives rape, but she does not lose her sanity in the process.

Kanata and Bitter Shield then, reach extremely conservative conclusions regarding race and gender. While there are one or two examples of "good" Indians in the text, as a group, the Indians are animalistic fiends who delight in the torture of white women. Thus, the text enacts the fear of the dark Other, who cannot even be appealed to on a human level for mercy. As well, the Indians express their disgruntlement with the white man by attacking the white woman; Hepzibah, for example, is an enemy because she is English, and her torture is a practice of war. Woman's vulnerability, always, is her sexuality, because her pregnability is that which is valued by the male; thus, it is the point of attack for the male's enemies. The violent sexuality of the dark male will attempt to destroy the white male through the white woman. While both moral and immoral women are vulnerable to attack, the “good” woman will survive and be rewarded with a virtuous husband, the greatest protection, it seems, against assault. Thus, Janet eventually marries Mathew, whose heroism is furthered through his love and honour, in contrast to Stanley.

Mathew's goodness is a key part of the national allegory of the novels (and an allegorical reading is encouraged by the series title, The Story of Canada). In many cases in the novel, the rapes represent cultural relations: the rape of the Scottish heroine by an English officer suggests the oppression of her people by the latter. The rape of the French Marguerite by the same English officer suggests something similar: English dominance in the old world transferring to the new. The rape of the English by the Natives suggests non-Native fears of the "savages," of those who are wholly Other.

It is the Scottish couple, Janet Maclean and Mathew Macleod, who have the brightest future. As Katie Trumpener notices, in nineteenth-century Canada, the Scottish were often the most successful colonists (252), and she calls Wolfe's Highland soldiers "the first real imperial subjects" because of their assistance in colonizing the French-Canadians (262). Scottish nationalism, separated from the homeland, transforms into a "nationalist nostalgia" that is absorbed into empire, privileging the Scots' own suffering at the hands of the English over the suffering of indigenous peoples under white colonists (252). Likewise, the Scots in The Story of Canada critique the rigid authority of the English: Mathew Macleod, the novel's hero, is contrasted to the English Stanley by his gentle and steadfast love for Janet. At the same time, the Scots provide an appreciation of the land that is more "civilized" than that of the Indians; Janet and Mathew start a farm in Canada, which they christen Lochiel, in memory of Scotland. That is, like Lawson's "settler-invader," the Scottish heroes are the Canadian middle ground, indigenized yet civilized, rooted in the new world but connected to the old.

Importantly, too, for the novel's interest in maintaining the status quo, while the heroes are not English, they are white and anglophone; and so it is they who are allowed to survive.

John Richardson's Wacousta was published one hundred and fifty years earlier than The Story of Canada, but it problematizes the nature/civilization split in a much more conscious way than any of the novels I have examined thus far. It also demonstrates, perhaps less consciously, the slippage between the language of rape and the language of the conventional love story. As in Argimou, there is an ambush on a bridge and a white woman is kidnapped. Initially, the Natives in the novel are portrayed in the standard way – as very much associated with nature. A number of men from the fort have gone to the bridge to execute Frank Halloway as a traitor, when "suddenly, in the direction of the forest, and upon the extreme height, there burst the tremendous and deafening yells of upwards of a thousand savages" (152). As in Argimou, the cries seem to come from the earth itself, and the savages, initially, are sketched as a group. Eventually, though, Frank Halloway's wife, Ellen, is carried off by Wacousta, who claims her as his wife. Even though Wacousta is set apart from the rest of the "savages," in his superior size, strength, and speed (and racial origins), he is still very much connected to nature: "he bounded and leapt like a deer of the forest whence he came" (155). Wacousta seems naturally violent, like the rest of the savages, with his fiendish cries and thirst for blood.

Later, Wacousta commits another rape in his capturing of Clara De

Haldimar. Interactions between them are described in such a way that we might expect them to eventually become the traditional lovers of romance; their descriptions are both gendered and racialized, but the descriptions of race emphasize those of gender, and further the notion of Wacousta and Clara as star-crossed lovers; out of context, readers might expect that the characters' antipathy will grow to love. Clara is "delicate in appearance," as well as being "blue-eyed, and of surpassing fairness of skin" (426). Wacousta, the "formidable warrior," "lay at his lazy length," smoking a pipe tomahawk (425), and is viewed by Clara as having a "swarthy countenance" (428). The racial descriptions – the dark and intimidating male pitted against the delicate and fair female – only emphasize the gender differences necessary for the traditional love story: he is powerful and mysterious, while she is beautiful and innocent. We might expect then that, as with the love-story plot, he will eventually use his power to protect her as a father would a child, rather than oppress her.

Indeed, in some ways Wacousta's interaction with Clara echoes the attitude of the lover. He is almost fatherly when he bears "her from the earth in his arms with as much ease as if she had been an infant" (427). At other times, his sexual energy is barely restrained, even to the point of becoming violent, but it is the kind of sexual violence that one might encounter in a contemporary popular romance novel: "in despite of her efforts to prevent him, he imprinted a burning kiss upon her lips" and "he pressed her struggling form more closely to his own" (429). Rosalind Coward, in her discussion of contemporary paperback romances (which have their roots in nineteenth-century gender ideals), notes,

"The hero's desire is so great that it borders on the uncontrollable. One journalist called it the 'bruised lips' syndrome, and it is certainly the case that the uncontrollable desire has close resemblances with descriptions of rape" (194). Wacousta's actions might be part of any number of late twentieth- or early twenty-first-century contemporary popular romances about white women and Native men. The white woman initially resists but eventually gives in to her own desires for the Native hero. In Wacousta, though, Clara is not at all a willing partner, and will never be. She is not merely resisting Wacousta; she is terrified of him.

Wacousta, in fact, demonstrates that the language of the love story and the language of rape are sometimes one and the same; both emphasize the subordination of woman to man. The love story, of course, stylizes the oppressive masculinity in such a way as to make it controllable – the hero is rough and forceful, but this is secretly what the heroine wants, though she's having a hard time admitting it. Tanner argues that while violence can affirm the violator's own self, it has the opposite effect on the victim: "violence is defined by a literal and psychological destruction of form, a threat to personal coherence, a sacrifice of self-control" (4). The love story, though, takes this violation and, perhaps in order to give the female reader a greater sense of control, transforms it into an affirmation of self. Tania Modleski argues, regarding the contemporary romance novel, that "The rapist mentality – the intention to dominate, 'humiliate and degrade,' which, as Susan Brownmiller shows, is often disguised as sexual desire – is turned into its opposite – sexual desire disguised as the intention to

dominate and hurt" (43). Rather than the heroine's own needs being ignored or violated by sexual force, the violence is actually an affirmation of her own subjectivity, a means of allowing her sexual pleasure without sexual responsibility (see Coward 194). Perhaps, for the romance genre, representing male gentleness would be too radical, and rupture the idealization of the father-lover who can totally protect the heroine, so the solution is to change the woman, change her response to such violence. The way of claiming power within an act of violation and patriarchal dominance, is to transform it into an assertion of the coherent self. (Although, as I have said, this is not Clara's response; she is terrified of Wacousta).

The duplicity of the romance/rape language of the text also somewhat reflects ambivalent attitudes towards the male indigene male. Goldie notices that in many contemporary texts where the Native male provides indegenization for a female character, there is still an element of risk: "the danger lies in the necessity which the sexual relationship creates for intense proximity with the violent indigene" (81). In cases of cross-cultural rape, "the white female's sentimental view of the indigene contributes to the disaster which befalls her" (83). The Native male, from the female character's perspective, is attractive, but also fearful. Thus, the language of the love story is particularly suited to ambivalent representations of the Native because that type of narrative lacks clarity in the distinction between violence and pleasure.

Of course, in the novel, the racial aspect of the rape is complicated by the fact that Wacousta was born in Britain, served in Scotland, fought for the French,

and now lives as a chief among Ponteac's people. Wacousta's hybrid identity makes it impossible to blame his savagery on his race, or on his connection to nature. In fact, Wacousta emphasizes to Clara that love for her mother and hatred for her father "has rendered the savage you now behold!" (428). That is, civilization, in the form of De Haldimar's betrayal, has created Wacousta's wild thirst for violence, vengeance, and rape. The ambiguous language of the romance/rape, then, might reflect an ambiguity in terms of the reader's sympathies. Wacousta, violent rapist, the novel's villain, in his interaction with Clara tells his own side of the story, and becomes a Byronic figure.[4] Before De Haldimar's betrayal, Wacousta lived in an idealized existence, happy and at home in the natural world and well-liked by his regiment. De Haldimar, the pillar of British law and order, makes Wacousta into the "savage" he becomes.

Ellen Halloway furthers this troubling of the nature/civilization and Native/White binaries. On the one hand, Ellen seems to embody the possibility of what Clara De Haldimar could become in her "union" with Wacousta; Ellen, as Richardson describes her in Wacousta's tent in Volume Three, has gone mad: "Her eyes were large, blue, but wild and unmeaning; her countenance vacant, and her movements altogether mechanical" (426). A "fallen woman," now, Ellen has no reason; furthermore, she appears to have lost with that reason her British self, as she is now in the dress of an Indian woman. It would be tempting to read her as a warning about what happens when a white woman is "polluted" by a Native man, except that Richardson troubles the racial relations by making Wacousta European by birth. Again, it is the European male who is a threat to

the European female. As well, Ellen's insanity, like Wacousta's fierceness, has been caused by De Haldimar; she appears mad before and during the execution of her husband, killed by De Haldimar's order, before she is kidnapped by Wacousta. It is British law and order, the pinnacle of reason, that has taken her own.

While the novel puts forth a greater critique of the civilization/nature binary than the other two nineteenth-century novels in this chapter, the end of the novel sets up the "Canadian" as neither/both indigenous and colonial authority. At the end of the novel, both Wacousta and De Haldimar – chaos and order, respectively – perish. While Frederick De Haldimar's is a kinder, gentler colonialism, Richardson's critique of colonialism is limited, as it is still the anglophone male who gets to rule, and who the narrative seems to feel ought to rule, in Canada. As Monkman notices, the historical Pontiac plays "only a secondary role" in the novel (23), and the prime force behind the Native rebellions seems to be Wacousta rather than the Native leader. It is as though only a European can be a threat to another European. Wacousta has the inside knowledge to attempt to dismantle the garrison. The novel's focus on Wacousta and his motivations, rather than those of the Natives, counteracts any real criticism of the treatment of the Natives by the Europeans. Gerson notices, "Richardson's plots of curses and revenge risk losing sight of the historical issues at hand. While historical events provide a factual anchor as well as local colour and sensational effects, the politically based moral claims of the conflicting parties soon evaporate" (86-87). Ultimately, in the novel, the Natives seem to

have little chance to speak for themselves as a people; even if Wacousta is viewed as Native, he thinks mostly of his personal motives and goals, rather than those of his Native culture.

A Discovery of Strangers (1994) problematizes representations of rape more than any of the other novels in this chapter, in that a Native woman is the victim of rape rather than a white woman, and this complicates the notion of rape as an allegory of cultural conflict. Greenstockings is raped twice, once by Broadface, who becomes her mate, and then by Michel, a Mohawk employed by the British. Midshipman George Back also attempts to rape her, but she gets away.

One of the things that Wiebe seems to be suggesting with these rapes is that violence between the sexes spans cultures. The fact that Native men rape Greenstockings, and a European male attempts to, indicates a certain acceptance of sexual violence against women in both cultures; women are there to be taken. Wiebe here refrains from valorizing Native sexuality the way Steffler does. The Dene women all acknowledge

> the inescapable power and fear – sometimes joy, often brutality, even terror – that men forever carry about them like their cocks, limp or rigid, hanging somehow gently, possibly tender or abruptly lethal; which they bring to women as certain as the meat they hunt, offer them or thrust, even their quietest moment at the flicker of a glance threaten to jerk out at them whether they would accept it or

not: grab, ram, pound into them. (32)

Despite the possibilities for sexual pleasure, it is clear that the women live constantly with the possibility of rape too.

In terms of the definition of the natural, then, the text is hard to pin down. The Dene men may be "naturally" violent because they view such violence around them everyday in the harsh environment in which they live. Animals kill each other for food; humans kill animals and are sometimes killed by animals for food: for some to live, some must die. Perhaps, then, for men to live, women must be subordinated. This is the meaning of the story of "She Who Delights" for Greenstockings, who identifies with the woman who is stolen and raped: "Wherever many men are, they can exist only within a certain violence, and they will try to break you again and again. If you were to live in delight and difference with one for long, you would have to kill all the other men in the world" (207-8). Greenstockings' comments on male violence encompass the British: "the log wall built by These English and Michel's groping fists have shown her what she has always known and should have remembered: they are all men, and there are too many of them" (207).

Furthermore, there seems to be an alignment of Michel's assault of Greenstockings with his acts of cannibalism, and the link between survival in the wild and male dominance points to the slippage between the conventional erotic plot and rape. Birdseye, in a story-vision, sees the fate of the Franklin expedition, and Michel's cannibalism: "It is always the strongest who most tenderly cares for you, until he kills you" (178). Michel's attitude towards the starving Europeans

seems echoed in his attitudes towards Greenstockings; it is about power and control. While the language of the love story would suggest that he who is most violent actually loves you and will care for you, here Wiebe posits that, in fact, the opposite is true.

There is, in Wiebe's narrative, always this fraught connection between violence and love; but there are moments in whichwhere love seems capable of existing with less violence, as between Keskarrah and Birdseye, for example, and sex can be pleasurable, as it seems to be between Hood and Greenstockings. Also, there are numerous references to the relationship between Greenstockings and her mother when Greenstockings was a baby, which again point to a love without violence: "Once those hands fondled Greenstockings until she cried in ecstasy, cried in ways the four men who have already fought and nearly killed themselves over her cannot find anywhere in the brief duration of their manly imagination" (29). And certainly Hood seems more gentle and loving than the other men. Keskerrah predicts that the Europeans will destroy everything, and Greenstockings replies "Hood didn't destroy me" (269).

Hood's gentleness, though, seems the exception rather than the rule in terms of how men treat women. Rather than, as in other texts, the European rapist being evil due to individual flaw, not cultural conditioning, here the opposite is true. Hood's gentleness is aberrant, not only in his culture, but in his gender. And this gentleness, for all the pleasure it brings Greenstockings for its difference from other men, is ultimately problematic in such a violent world. After Michel has assaulted her, she looks at Hood's weeping face, and thinks, "A man so gentle

and delicately perceptive and intense; and ultimately useless" (207). He cannot protect Greenstockings from the men who would rape her and take her away. Greenstockings' views of men reduce cultural and racial differences to nineteenth-century differences between gender; Native and European men are conflated in a patriarchal structure where (almost) all men are violent towards all women.

Greenstockings' attitudes towards sexualized violence is ambivalent, though. She seems, in part, to embrace the violence as part of love, and it is hard to reconcile Broadface's rape of her with her own subjectivity, her choice of making him her mate, although this may be out of the need for survival. Greenstockings is also capable of violence herself, and in her relationship with Broadface, the violence appears mutual, reciprocal: "And she took him. Or he her, neither could tell which in the whistling, fierce or gentle thunderstorms they rode out together" (73). Later, when she insults Broadface, he responds with violence, but she is too quick: "His hand found his knife, he would have instantly discovered something inside her, though not a son, if her copper skinning-knife had not already been between his legs" (73). Again, Wiebe brings to the fore here the proximity of sexuality and violence in a patriarchal setting, but resists making woman a passive victim. The contradictions of the love- story plot, with its subtext of force and violation, are exposed and unresolved.

I have suggested that the rapes in Canadian historical novels often emphasize a cultural allegory, but reading an allegory here becomes problematic. Sharpe notices the importance in reports of the Mutiny that there

were no depictions of Indian women being raped: "Because of its close association with her moral worth, the category of rape is reserved for English women alone" (34); the rape of the English woman symbolizes an attack on colonial influence, so it cannot be depicted as happening to Indian women. I have suggested that a similar symbolism occurs in Canadian representations of rapes of English women by Native men. In Wiebe's novel, however, Greenstockings, a Native woman, is the victim of rape. We cannot read the novel as a simple portrayal of colonial authority under attack, or even of white culture corrupting a Native one, since Greenstockings is attacked by *both* her own people and the Europeans. Nor can we reduce the rapes to an assertion of women's roles as victims, across cultures, since Greenstockings is so much more than rape victim, and strongly asserts her own subjectivity. As I argued earlier, this makes Wiebe's representation of Native peoples the most balanced of the novels I have considered so far. Greenstockings is a human being, a survivor, with complex desires and contradictory behaviours; she is not just a land to be conquered.

As I argued in Chapter Three, we can still read in the novel, and its representations of sexual communion as well as sexual violation, an allegory of interaction between European and Native cultures. The difference between this novel and most of the others in this chapter and the previous one is that Wiebe presents this interaction as complex: there are possibilities for peaceful exchange between the cultures, and there is also much about the interaction that is violent. Wiebe resists valourizing Native sexuality, without condemning it. This ambivalence I see as distinct from the ambivalence in the other texts that

supports the colonial project, in large part because of the ending of Wiebe's novel. While other novels might praise Natives for their natural nobility and/or condemn them for an innate savagery, only to banish them and usurp their authority over the land, Greenstockings asserts an independence, resists being defined in relation to either Native or European men, and refuses to be displaced.

Rape, as Tanner suggests, can represent a rupturing of identity and subjectivity. Arguably, rape occurs in so many Canadian historical novels because Canada, then and now, is a country whose boundaries of identity are unclear, unstable. The vulnerability of the women, to Europeans or Natives, suggests the vulnerability of the nation to outside influence. What the country needs, a few of these writers seem to suggest, is an affiliation with a strong and moral country (usually Britain) that will protect it. However, for some novelists, even the "homeland" has its own perils, and non-Native Canadians should develop their "own" sense of identity too. Thus, in Wacousta, Colonel De Haldimar's law and order and Wacousta's savagery need to be tempered by Frederick's gentleness. In the first two parts of The Story of Canada, it is the Scottish rather than English who can provide the "middle ground."

Representation of rape as a means for discounting indigenous and European authority points to the way that the sense of "Canadian" identity as engaged in a dialectic between two points – be they English and French, British and American, or European and Native – can have dangerous consequences for Native peoples. A "hybrid" identity, which even in contemporary nationalilsm is

sometimes posited as representing all Canadians, effaces Native difference from non-Native Canadians. Such a national hybrid identity, many of the novels posit, will contain an understanding of the landscape exhibited by Native women and some of the Native males, while avoiding both the Native male's "natural" violence and the "civilized" corruption of some British males. For contemporary authors, there may be a need, greater than ever under the attention postcolonialism has brought to the violence and oppression of Canadian history, to separate white Canadians from the colonial project and align them with a sense of "belonging" to this country. The authority and experience of the Native, historically not hybrid or experiencing hybridity distinctly (tribal hybridity perhaps, or, later, European-Native cultural hybridity from a different perspective), is displaced by the "Canadian" identity of the settler-invader.

While I have been analyzing rape as a cultural allegory, it is also important not to ignore what Tanner would call "empirical violence," that is, the actual experience of rape in the extra-textual world. The reader has an active part in reading, and by thinking of the rapes *only* as allegory, he or she might ignore its existence "outside" of the text. Although the rape of Greenstockings by Michel discourages such complicity by depicting the horrors of such attacks from the victim's perspective, most of the other novels' representations of rape, such as the rape of Clara by Wacousta, seem more inclined to titillate rather than horrify. The female rape victim is objectified by both rapist and rescuer or narrator, so that most of these texts ultimately do not interrogate the eroticization of violence against women.

The representations of Native peoples I have examined in this chapter and the previous one, with assistance from Goldie's text, are certainly not limited to the novels I have included in my analysis. The Native woman as romantic heroine, as object of fear and desire, is portrayed in novels such as Brian Moore's Blackrobe, Robert Kroetsch's Badlands, and Jacques Poulin's Volkswagen Blues. Each of the Native women in these texts is appealing but frightening to the male protagonists. Jack in Volkswagen Blues, for example, can feel La Grande Sauterelle's knife pressed against him while they lie in bed together; her sexuality is both appealing and threatening. As well, the threat of the Native male as rapist is repeated and critiqued in other novels. In Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic, when Ana encounters two Native men in the woods, her head is filled with stories of violence, but the men simply walk past her: "They had merely passed a white woman in the woods while she, she was sure to be killed" (42). Ana is haunted by the stereotype of Native male violence against white women, and feels embarrassed. As well, in George Bowering's Burning Water, the cultural rape equation is problematized by the rape of a Native man by a white man. The politics of gender are complicated somewhat, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter Seven, when the violation is done to a man, by a man. In any case, however the novels alter or adapt the motifs, it is clear that such issues are widespread throughout early and contemporary Canadian literature.

The use of the erotic plot to depict either Native men or women creates difficulties for nineteenth-century authors who are anxious about miscegenation.

The Native woman's devotion to the non-Native could be mistaken for a mutual affection. The rapes, or attempted rapes, of the white women by Native men might easily be read in the language of the love story; the racial antipathy of a white woman for a Native man might be read, initially, as a "natural" antipathy between man and woman that will eventually be overcome.

Writers of love-story plots in the nineteenth-century especially appear worried that readers might make such "mistakes." Thus, self-conscious comments on reading and genre occur in the texts. In Wacousta, for example, the narrator insists that the kiss between Oucanasta and Frederick is solely platonic. Here, the Native-white relationship must NOT *not* be read as sexual; while British order should be tempered by Frederick's kinder rule at the end of the novel, it cannot be destroyed by miscegenation. Similarly, in Matilda, readers are reminded of the specifications of genre when Matilda is rescued from the Indian by Captain Clifford: "For Matilda to have been rescued from a perilous situation by such a person, it will be readily admitted by the reader, whether male or female, to have added to the delight she must have felt on her deliverance" (48). Readers are reminded that the Indian's attempt at rape only exists to further glorify Clifford, and to bring about the love between Matilda and Clifford. The narrator addresses readers directly, emphasizing their own role in interpreting, in reading Matilda's feelings "correctly." As well, in An Algonquin Maiden, Edward is explicit about the fact that he has not had sex with Wanda, as much, it seems, for the reader's sake as for Helene's: "No, Helene, you have no right to look at me in that way. I never wronged her in the base brutish sense of the word – never in a

way that the spirit of my dead mother might not have witnessed" (215). The indigene, often associated with sexuality, must, in many early novels, never consummate his/her relationship with the white hero or heroine.

I have demonstrated how the Native is often sexualized and associated with the natural world (whether this association means a lack of inhibition, an ability to survive, or an embodiment of that which is unconscious or unknowable for the colonizer). This association can be presented alongside critiques of colonialism, but these critiques do not "liberate" the indigene; ultimately the white male will rule. I hope I have also made it clear that contemporary texts are not totally free of the typical stereotypes of the Indian. Goldie argues that it is impossible for non-Native authors to write outside of the standard images of the indigene: "It is my perception that the shape of the signifying process as it applies to indigenous peoples is formed by a certain semiotic field, a field that provides the boundaries within which the images of the indigene function" (9). Authors cannot escape the context of British imperialism, even now, because "Our image of the indigene has functioned [. . .] as a constant source for semiotic reproduction in which each textual image refers back to those offered before" (6). Even in a text such as The Discovery of Strangers, which in many ways troubles traditional representations of Natives and the love-story plot, Native peoples are associated with something primitive, preliterary, in the sensuality of Greenstockings and her silent communication with Hood, his freedom from the written word when with her, and his return to the state of an infant with its mother.

Often, too, the contemporary texts have a difficult time envisioning a future for Native peoples in Canada. The Afterlife of George Cartwright, while somewhat postmodern in its mixing of narrative voices and its disruption of a linear timeline, ultimately focuses on the redemption of the white man in a land where the Natives have all died. Furthermore, The Canadians and The Story of Canada, ignoring the postcolonial context available to them, use Canadian history to tell a story in much the same way that nineteenth-century texts did; these novels are interested in a particular version of the nation and its origins, and in providing an entertaining love story.

Whether one is examining the blurring between eroticism and rape, temptation and fear, nature and civilization, self and Other, or postmodernism and the nineteenth-century romance, Anne McClintock's comments on ambiguity ought to be noted: "If colonial texts reveal fissures and contradictions, the colonials themselves all too often succeeded in settling matters of indecision with a violent excess of militarized masculinity" (16). She also writes, "the staging of symbolic disorder by the privileged can merely preempt challenges by those who do not possess the power to stage ambiguity with comparable license or authority" (69). While McClintock's term is "ambiguity," I would suggest that these remarks are true of "ambivalence." Many of the authors whom I have examined, here and in Chapter Three, can be seen as operating from a position of privilege, where it is safe to trouble the constructed binaries of savage/civilization, Native/non-Native, because the power of the non-Native is not seriously threatened.

Notes

[1] Pilar Cuder-Domínguez notices this about Russell's novel in her essay "Colonial Canada's Forgotten Captivity Narratives," which I discuss later.

[2] The similarity to a scene in Wacousta is striking, and Huyghue may in fact be drawing on John Richardson's text.

[3] While elsewhere Russell's narrative is distinct from captivity narratives (see my discussion below of the national allegory), his religious sentiments are in line with some of these stories, which often feature testaments to the power of God (Derounian-Stodola viii). Cuder-Domínguez argues that the novel's happy ending is intended to prove "that a providential justice underlies even the most extraordinary events and the most awful misfortune" (18).

[4] In his own tale, Wacousta is portrayed as deeply passionate in his devotion to Clara Beverly, and exceptionally brave and strong in his scaling of the mountaintop to rescue her from her misanthropic father. His tale becomes tragic when he is betrayed by his best friend, and thus may create some sympathy in the reader.

CHAPTER FIVE

Bitches in the Bush: Violence, the Fallen Woman, and the Sin of Agency

I have stressed in previous chapters the idea of "separate spheres" in the Victorian period, that women were responsible for morality and spirituality as well as tending to the home, while men, in response, offered women financial and physical protection, with their sphere being public and political rather than private and domestic.

However, a concurrent set of beliefs about the nature of women ran counter to the ideology of the sexual contract, within the same time period. Despite the belief in women's morality, Victorian women in Canada (and elsewhere) also faced some very old traditions about the sinful nature of women. While the witch hunts of Europe and America were officially over by the nineteenth century, beliefs in the possibility of women's evil continued to proliferate. Karlene Faith, in Unruly Women: The Politics of Confinement and Resistance, views the nineteenth-century legislation that made women men's property as stemming, in part, from the witch hunts. While women were no longer executed for witchcraft, it was still believed that they needed "to be tamed of their wild natures and kept under surveillance" (Faith 21). Nina Auerbach notices similar ideas in the Victorian era: "Excluded as woman is from 'normative' maleness, she seems less an alien than man in the nonhuman range of the universe. Men are less her brothers than is the spectrum of creation's mutants" (66). Women seemed capable of demonic attributes or behaviour. Furthermore,

despite Victorian crises in religion, women had to contend with Biblical traditions that emphasized that the fall of mankind was due to the crime of a woman, who used her "feminine wiles" to tempt her husband to sin. Eve, perhaps under the long shadow of Milton's Paradise Lost as much as the Bible, continued (and still continues) to be an important figure in literature. Lilith, Adam's rebellious first wife, was also important. Lilith was eventually thrown out of Eden for wanting to be treated as Adam's equal (Humm); she was also believed to have given birth to a league of devils, and to be one of the devil's temptresses ("Lilith"). Although Lilith is not explicitly referenced in the Canadian novels under study here, as a symbol of male fears about women's power and demonic nature she probably influenced ideas about women in the Victorian era. Alan Humm notices, "Lilith enjoyed something of a revival in literature in the mid 19th century. Usually she represents the feminine dark side (the part that men subliminally fear)." Beside the figure of the moral matron, then, roamed woman as the embodiment of chaos, sexuality, and sin.

In this chapter, I want to momentarily depart from my discussion of the national allegory in order to provide a detailed consideration of this "other" side of femininity and its destabilizing of romantic notions of gender (I will consider this destabilizing in relation to nation in Chapter Six). While I have pointed out a number of virtuous virgins in Canadian literature, the evil seductress is also an important figure. In nineteenth-century literature and in contemporary literature set in the nineteenth century, the figure of the fallen woman as criminal rises up and challenges the image of sexual modesty endorsed by (if not privately

practised by) Queen Victoria. In novels such as The Golden Dog (187796), The Canadian Brothers (1840), Kamouraska (1970), and Alias Grace (1996), women commit murder, or seduce others – often their lovers – into murdering for them. In these acts of violence, the women raise questions about what is the "natural" state of femininity – sinful or virtuous, sexual or chaste?

Importantly, these acts of violence by women usually occur in conjunction with the love-story plot: in The Golden Dog, Angélique arranges the murder of the woman who is her rival for the Intendant's affections; in Kamouraska, Elisabeth's lover kills her abusive husband. In combining eroticism and violence, the novels often interrogate notions of the idealized heterosexual relationship. I suggested earlier, in my analysis of A Discovery of Strangers, how quickly love can descend into violence, and that also appears to be the case with these women. The love-story plot depicts the initial antagonism between the hero and heroine, but this eventually leads to love. In the novels in this chapter, love leads to aggression.

These women's acts of violence become especially important in relationship to issues of female agency. As I have iterated elsewhere, the fallen woman is often portrayed as a victim of forces she cannot control. Amanda Anderson argues that fallen women raise questions about the nature of all women and that, in fact, women's passive virtue, in Victorian ideology, may actually make them more vulnerable to falling – they are more susceptible to influence, and may do things for others that will damage themselves (37).

Anderson notices, in her discussion of John Stuart Mill, that women were sometimes represented as having "greater susceptibility, malleability, and artificiality" and were considered to be "too easily manufactured" (38). This element of artificiality in women, as a result of the roles they have been trained to fulfill in society, connects them to the fallen woman, who is also a performer:

> Frequently, the mere fact of her [the prostitute's] attenuated social agency, her inability to exert control over the circumstances that come to define her, generates the conviction that she is simply false and artificial. A link is made, in other words, between lacking freedom and being false: if one has no controlling self capable of orchestrating or influencing circumstances, then one is merely an artificial product. (61)

Although Anderson is writing specifically about prostitutes in Victorian literature and discourse, some of her comments apply to the female characters under study here, as their eroticism is often transgressive by nineteenth-century standards. All of the women involved in the murders, at some point before or after the fact, have sex outside of marriage – Matilda Montgomerie in The Canadian Brothers has sex with Colonel Forrester who later abandons her; in Kamouraska Elisabeth has an extra-marital affair with the local doctor (one possible exception to the pattern is Grace Marks, whose narrative is so deliberately uncertain that her sex life, as well as her degree of involvement in the murders, is difficult to pin down).

The women's transgressive sexuality raises an interesting question: could

violence be a response to the powerlessness a (fallen) woman feels? In Intimate Violence: Reading Rape and Torture in Twentieth-Century Fiction, Laura E. Tanner argues that the violator "appropriates the victim's subjectivity as an extension of his own power" while the victim is "a human being stripped of agency and mercilessly attached to a physical form that cannot be dissolved at will" (3). Canadian Victorian women were, in many senses, "attached to a physical form," in that they were defined and trapped by their own biology. Wendy Mitchinson, in her book about nineteenth-century Canadian women and the medical profession, notices, "Women, because of their bodies, were considered closer to nature than men and less able to escape its thrall" (31). Not only were women considered weaker, more vulnerable to disease, and trapped by their bodies in this way, but the very fact of their biological sex rendered them far less powerful than men in a society that was (and is) very much a patriarchy. The fallen woman, then, who has lost her morality through the loss of her virginity or through marital infidelity, is even more defined and trapped by the actions of her body; her sexuality defines her character, even as that character is presented as ruptured. Acts of violence may constitute vengeance, a way of regaining power for the fallen woman through resistance to the way her society has constructed her. If violence traps the victim in his body, then a woman attacking a man turns the sexual tables, doing to a man what men in many aspects of society do to women: he is reduced to a body that is defined and controlled by another.

The narratives are sometimes sympathetic in their treatment of these

violent protagonists, perhaps *because* they view the women as reacting against a male power that is unfair and even abusive. According to Helen Boritch in Fallen Women: Female Crime and Criminal Justice in Canada, contemporary Canadian women who kill are often killing lovers or husbands. Importantly, this is usually in response to prolonged physical, mental, and/or sexual abuse (221). While the female protagonists in the novels, with the exception of Elisabeth in Kamouraska, are not victims of spousal abuse, often the narratives suggest that their actions arise from a feeling of powerlessness in a social and political system dominated by males (including those males who are their erotic "partners"). In this way, the narratives become concerned with commenting on the constrictions placed upon women in a patriarchy, and how women are constructed by men.

At least at times, the female protagonists find that rather than losing control in their fallenness, they gain power. In being constructed as possessing a lack of coherent selfhood, they are able to manipulate and shift their identities in order to allow them to act. They demonstrate gendered identities as "performative," in the sense that Judith Butler uses the term in Gender Trouble: "Consider gender, for instance, as *a corporeal style*, an 'act,' as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where '*performative*' suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning" (139). These, women are, at times, able to manipulate this "dramatic and contingent construction" for their own ends. While these women may not entirely fit Butler's theory – it is unclear how much Butler allows for *conscious* agency and subversion, if gender is so deeply ingrained in individuals by society – the women do find the power Butler acknowledges can

occur in the slippage between the gendered ideal and the performance (141). They turn the negative "artificiality" of the fallen woman into a revelation of gender as constructed. While this is no substitute for active social and political power, it does allow the women some agency.

The novels under examination in this chapter set up female characters as fallen and alienated from their "true" selves in that they no longer qualify to occupy the domestic sphere where women have moral authority. At the same time, the authors set up an alternate "true" self for the woman – woman as natural sinner. In The Golden Dog, these constructions doubly condemn the protagonist– she cannot help but fall, yet she is all the more blameworthy for *choosing* to fall when she could be moral like some of the other women in the text. Here, as in the novels in the previous three chapters of this study, contradiction only serves the status quo.

In The Canadian Brothers, Kamouraska, and Alias Grace, though, I view the female protagonist as finding some agency through her "fragmentation." Her freedom from the feminine stereotype of morality, a key aspect of the romance, allows her a more dynamic identity; she subverts the gendered hierarchy of the romance and is presented as having access to "masculine" characteristics, such as inscrutability, sexual assertiveness, and strategic violence. In these cases, she is not simply confined to the alternate stereotype of the sinning woman or the *femme fatale* because she indirectly or directly critiques such stereotypes and is viewed by the narrative as making valid arguments against or resistances to the societal structures that would attempt to hold her at the mercy of her own

"nature;" in fact, her behaviour often reveals gendered identity itself as a construction.

William Kirby's The Golden Dog makes explicit references to Biblical narratives – as I argued in Chapter Two, Kirby parallels the fall of New France with the fall of mankind. Angélique des Meloises is a key figure in this narrative. As a beautiful woman who plots a murder in order to gain power for herself, her representation exposes an imprisoning contradiction about the nature of women as both inescapably immoral and yet possessed of free will.

One of Angélique's dominant characteristics, and one which aligns her with Eve and Lilith, is her ability to tempt men. This is figured almost immediately upon her introduction in the novel. Her beauty suggests "terrestrial witcheries like those great women of old who drew down the very gods from Olympus, and who in all ages have incited men to the noblest deeds, or tempted them to the greatest crimes" (23). As well, just as Eve convinces Adam to betray God, so does Angélique have this kind of power over her lover, Le Gardeur: "He would not have hesitated to betray the gate of heaven at her prayer" (164). Angélique is aware of her own sin, of her own abuse of Le Gardeur in using him to get information about the Intendant, whom she wants to marry, but she cannot conquer her aspirations and choose the moral path: "She felt assured that here was the one man God had made for her and she was cruelly sacrificing him to a false idol of ambition and vanity" (162). Amélie exclaims at one point, "What wonder that men are wicked when women tempt them to be so!" (537).

Angélique is not fulfilling her womanly role as moral gatekeeper in society.

The representation of Angélique emphasizes women's "natural" propensity for evil because they are more vulnerable to temptation by the devil than men. Faith points out that in the pre-Enlightenment era witches were thought to be sexual slaves to the Devil: "given natural female lust and a deceptive nature, and given that the Devil was male, women were better suited to this perverse activity than men. It was woman's unruly sexual character which engaged her in witchcraft" (16). This idea persists in Kirby's Victorian novel. As Angélique develops the idea to kill Caroline, Bigot's lover, Angélique's move towards evil is figured in sexual terms: "She would not be saved, and was lost! Her couch was surrounded with indefinite shapes of embryo evil" (167). She is giving birth to evil as Lilith gave birth to a league of devils. Though Angélique tries to fight off the thought of murder, she cannot:

> I let it touch me like a lover, and I neither withdraw my hand nor tremble! Tomorrow it will return for the last time, and stay with me! and I shall let it sleep on my pillow! The babe of sin will have been born, and waxed to a full Demon, and I shall yield myself up to his embraces! (244)

Angélique's seduction into violence is figured sexually, emphasizing the perversion (for Kirby) of her dark plot and rejection of moral heterosexuality with Le Gardeur.

Angélique is also explicitly connected to a purported witch, La Corriveau. La Corriveau's house is a gloomy stone structure, whose surroundings suggest

an unkempt garden, the antithesis of Eden:

> The pine forest touched it on one side, a brawling stream twisted itself like a live snake half round it on the other. A plot of green grass ill kept and deformed, with noxious weeds, dock, fennel, thistle and foul stramonium, was surrounded by a rough wall of loose stones, forming the lawn, such as it was [. . .]. (371)

Her garden, like Eden, is surrounded by a wall, but unlike Eden it contains a wilderness, and the wall is falling apart; her New World is corrupt, and the moral boundaries are constantly traversed. As well, the stream that twists "like a live snake" suggests La Corriveau's sinful nature, which is further emphasized by the fact that the house is "out of sight of the village church, almost out of hearing of its little bell" (371). Angélique eventually hires La Corriveau to kill Caroline. Thus, Angélique involves herself overtly in the dark arts, and after Caroline is dead, Cadet remarks, "is not Angélique a clever witch to bind François Bigot neck and heels in that way, after fairly outwitting and running him down?" (546). In her association with witchery, Angélique accesses a dark female power which threatens masculine political power.

Angélique's similarities to Eve and Lilith, her vulnerability to temptation, and her involvement with demonic forces, suggest that, for Kirby, the nature of woman is sinful; Angélique might be fallen even before she arranges to have Caroline murdered. Cadet, Bigot's right hand man, asserts, "Deceit is every woman's nature!" (542). It may be Angélique's womanly nature that leads her to sin.

However, Angélique may also be a product of her corrupt society. Bigot, as Intendant of New France, is a symbol of its corruption, and he is not entirely blameless in the death of Caroline. While Angélique certainly manipulates Bigot, he is toying with her as well. By not being straightforward, he might be viewed as contributing to Caroline's death. His refusal to propose to Angélique is a factor in her developing determination to murder Caroline, as the only way to achieve what she wants. As a woman in a male-dominated society, she can gain political power through only a few avenues, one of which is marriage. It might be difficult, then, for contemporary readers to condemn Angélique's ambition to marry Bigot.

Furthermore, Angélique's actions do allow her some resistance to Bigot and his masculine order, and she actually reverses, in some ways, the female-male parts in the love-story plot, but she does not triumph. Like many love-story heroes, Angélique is cold, but also capable of passion:[1] "She was cold and calculating under the warm passions of a voluptuous nature. Although many might believe they had won the favor, none felt sure they had gained the love of this fair capricious girl" (24). The motif is given a more sinister twist, however, in that Angélique's calculating helps her hide her involvement in Caroline's murder. Bigot remarks on her gaiety at a party the night of Caroline's death: "A girl like her could not be so gay last night with such a bloody purpose on her soul. Could she, think you?" (542). Angélique, like many fallen women, is associated with artificiality. This fracture between self and appearances, in this case, only emphasizes her sinfulness; she is conniving and deceitful, and while it provides her with some measure of power, it is not approved of by the narrative voice.

As well, like many love-story heroes, Angélique is ambitious, but unlike them she has to choose between ambition and love; because she is a woman she cannot have both, and she chooses ambition. Through La Corriveau, and through the death of Caroline, Angélique has penetrated Bigot's power. Bigot cannot expose Caroline's death and his suspicion of Angélique's involvement in it, because he must then reveal that he was hiding the girl from her father. In the killing of Caroline, her romantic rival, Angélique has attempted to get closer to Bigot and her own desired wealth and prestige. While she does not seem particularly interested in politics, she is certainly interested in the power, wealth, and prestige that can go with them, and it is these that she is attempting to claim. Thus, as a violent women she is masculinized, attempting to subvert gender relations and claim more power for herself, while at the same time she has become *too* feminine, demonstrating the nature of Eve.

In fact, despite Cadet's references to female nature, Kirby ultimately views Angélique as erring when she *chooses* aspiration over love. Angélique has the opportunity to marry Le Gardeur and give up her sinful ambitions, but she does not. The narrator's assertion that Angélique "*would not* be saved" (167; emphasis mine), and her own admission that she "let[s]" murderous thoughts caress her (244), suggests that she has some choice in the matter – that is, she does not have an inherently evil nature. As well, Amélie and her cousin Hélène prove that women can be virtuous, and even Caroline, seduced by Bigot, maintains an angelic aura around her in her constant prayers and innocent vulnerability to La Corriveau.

Angélique, as representative of female ambition and sexuality, is condemned by the narrative. While Amélie pays for the sins of her brother by closeting herself in a convent – a private, moral space – Angélique becomes the Intendant's mistress at the end of the novel and parades herself around New France, throwing parties and displaying her finery. Even though Angélique is allowed to prosper while Caroline and Amélie die young, Angélique's is a life of shame, and Amélie's is one the reader is clearly supposed to admire despite its tragedy. It is Angélique, who contributes to the fall of New France with her scheming and immorality, and it is she whom Kirby uses to emphasize that North America will not maintain its Edenic state under the influence of the corruption of the old world. While Kirby does not condemn all women as sinful by nature, his evocation of the demonic woman serves to reinforce gender stereotypes: women ought to be extra devout and resist the sin of their societies; women with public ambition ought to be the subject of scorn, as they threaten to cripple their nation; women are naturally moral, so their activities are most effective in the domestic sphere; women are naturally sinful, so they ought to be kept out of the public sphere. Such a blending of choice and fate, and of contradictory stereotypes, allows there to be blame for sin attributed to Angélique (*she* is responsible for her own errors, not the men around her) without her having too much agency (she could not help herself; women are naturally sinful), while encouraging women to live up the moral ideal exhibited by Amélie.

In his introduction to John Richardson's The Canadian Brothers (1840),

Donald Stephens argues that the novel is "neither a sentimental idyll about the world of one's youth, nor a nostalgic elegy for a prelapsarian world. It is, rather, a sombre tragedy about the fallen one" (lxx). The Canadian Brothers is the sequel to Wacousta (1832) and it continues that novel's preoccupation with the fall of humanity, exhibiting in this case an Eve who threatens to corrupt her lover. Matilda Montgomerie, an American villainess who is a descendant of Wacousta, entices her lover, Gerald Grantham, one of the Canadian brothers of the title, to sin. Matilda has already committed the sin of premarital sex, and she now wishes Gerald to murder the lover, Colonel Forrester, who has abandoned her. In return, she promises Gerald "possession" of her "every-varying, over-exciting" beauty (438).

Matilda seems, at times, to be a sinful woman figure. Gerald's brother Henry explicitly invokes the Biblical narrative and women's beauty when he compares Matilda to "a fair looking fruit which, when divided, proves to be rotten at the core" (209). Matilda is also, at one point, described as viper-like (404), perhaps connecting her with Satan's guise as snake in Eden. Moreover, as Adam is vulnerable to Eve because of her intense beauty, so is Gerald swayed by Matilda's appearance; in fact, he makes her into his god, gazing upon her figure "with an admiration little short of idolatry" (399). He is also unable to resist Matilda's temptations:

> [. . .] when the form of Matilda rose to his mental eye, remorse, conscience, every latent principal of virtue, dissolved away, and although he no longer sought to conceal from himself that what he

> meditated was crime of the blackest dye, his determination to secure entire possession of that beauty, even at the accursed price of blood, became but the more resolute and confirmed. (440)

Just as with the fall of mankind, Gerald's act could lead to mortality and damnation.

Gerald, however, does not realize that the man he is to murder is Colonel Forrester (to whom he owes his life) until the moment before he is to plunge the knife into him. And when he does realize it, he stops himself before he sins. Gerald proclaims himself "lost, degraded" (445), but Forrester eventually excuses him because he understands "the arts of the woman who seems to have lured you into the depths of crime" (445-6). The man is excused, because he has been tricked by a wily woman.

Because she is so clearly connected to negative female stereotypes, Matilda's representation seems designed to emphasize women's inherently sinful nature. Gerald is tempted to sin, but Matilda actually sins; Gerald is tempted to have sex with Matilda, and to kill Forrester, but Matilda actually has premarital sex, and she actually injures Forrester, though he survives. She also further damns herself by committing suicide. While there are other, less sinful women in the novel, Matilda is by far the most prominent female character, and thus the image of immoral femininity that she presents dominates the novel's gender ideology.

However, the narrative is at times more ambiguous about the nature of evil. Matilda might be the serpent, but so is Colonel Forrester. Matilda says that

the sight of his face quickly "became loathsome to me as the sight of some venomous reptile" (414). She also refers to him as "diabolical,", further connecting him to devilish forces (419). As well, though Matilda may be the snake at times, she is also the antidote to its poison. When Gerald is bitten by a snake on a hunting expedition, it is Matilda who sucks the poison out and makes and administers the herbal remedy that cures him.

In this way, Matilda may be a commentary on the society that damns her. As her grandfather Wacousta claims that Colonel De Haldimar's betrayal has made him into the monster he's become (111), so does Matilda point out Colonel Forrester's betrayal. The two were engaged, and Colonel Forrester had sex with her, but abandoned her when he caught her embracing Desborough; he could not believe her story that Desborough was her father. As Desborough was in disguise, Forrester thought he saw her in an erotic embrace with a slave; thus, Matilda claims to be "the victim of the most diabolical suspicion that ever haunted the breast of man" (419).[2] Not only that, but Forrester shared his suspicion with a colleague, who used the information to his advantage to try to elicit sexual favours of his own from Matilda (421). Colonel Forrester, a man who claims to be concerned with honour, seduces Matilda, abandons her, then slanders her. The ruling order, Matilda proves, is not immune to hypocrisy.

Part of this ruling order is the patriarchal system that values women's chastity even as it sets out to corrupt it. Matilda points out the plight of the fallen woman especially, and women generally. Matilda loves Forrester initially, and believes she can trust in him to care for her: "confiding in *his* honor, and in the

assurance that our union would take place immediately, I surrendered to him *mine*" (415). But he does not look out for her at all. In fact, that she has given herself to him only fuels his betrayal:

> I could not but be conscious that the very act of having yielded myself up to him, had armed my lover with the power to accuse me of infidelity, and the more I lingered on the want of generosity such a suspicion implied, the more rooted became my dislike, the more profound my contempt for him, who could thus repay so great a proof of confidingness and affection. (419)

While Matilda, in her society's eyes, may err in consenting to premarital sex with Forrester, she points out how much shame he should feel, in using evidence of her love against her. Rather than descending into self-hatred and misery, Matilda, the fallen woman, bristles with indignation and plots her revenge. She has been reduced, in Forrester's suspicions, to a desiring, amoral body, and so she would kill him, and reduce him to his body. She denies the helplessness of the fallen woman, and will not settle into stereotypes of female passivity (moral or otherwise); nor, in the justness of her complaint (if not her solution) can she be dismissed as merely a sinful woman.

In other ways, too, Matilda refutes the lack of agency attributed to the fallen woman. During their time together in the temple, Matilda "profiting by her knowledge of the past," performs a kind of strip tease in order to keep Gerald determined to kill for her: "There were moments when, his passion worked up to intensity by the ever-varying, over-exciting picture of that beauty, would have

anticipated the period when he was to become possessed of it forever" (438). Matilda, however, manipulates her status as fallen woman to further her own ends, and thus expresses a subjectivity which Anderson does not impute to the fallen woman: "on these occasions the American would assume an air of wounded dignity, sometimes of deep sorrow; and alluding to the manner in which her former confidence had been repaid, reproach him with a want of generosity, in seeking to make her past weakness a pretext for his present advances" (Richardson 438). Matilda "assumes" an air of virtue, but only so that she can keep Gerald under her control by resisting him, promising him an eventual reward in return for his own act of vice.

On the one hand, Matilda repeats the *femme fatale* stereotype, and the fact that she is "performing" may only demonstrate the artificiality of (fallen) women. On the other hand, Matilda is consciously using patriarchal images of the sinning woman in order to wield her own kind of power and strike back against the individual who has wronged and dishonoured her, and she therefore might be viewed as a subversive figure. In deliberately playing up the role of the fallen woman, she points to it as a construction rather than a "natural" category.

Matilda also demonstrates that the love-story heroine is also a construction. She eventually admits to Gerald that she was consciously performing the appearance of love in order to achieve her violent ends:

> Hitherto I have played a part, but the drama approaches to a close, and disguise of plot is no longer necessary. Gerald Grantham, you have been my dupe, – you came a convenient puppet to my hands,

> and as such I used you until the snapped wire proclaimed you no longer serviceable. (450)

Matilda, just as she earlier demonstrated her awareness of the "fallen woman" as a female role, here exhibits knowledge of the "love-story heroine," besotted with love for the hero, as a role. In putting on and taking off these roles she demonstrates that they are not inherent to women, but rather constructed, and she manipulates them in order to gain control over men.

Matilda is certainly not confined to the role of love-story heroine, though. Because, as sexually experienced, she is exempt from the idealized morality of the Victorian woman, and is thus free from the pressure to live up to it, she is able to slip in and out of different gendered roles. In fact, at times she appears to be more like some love-story heroes. Initially, she is cold to absolutely everyone, including Gerald, but this only further excites his feeling for her. He remarks upon her masculine bravery during a battle between the Canadians and Americans: "passively courageous she was to a degree I could not have supposed possible in woman. [. . .] I confess that her coolness astonished me, while it excited my warmest admiration" (156). Matilda is not, of course, entirely without feeling. One day she shoots Gerald a look that seems filled with passion (55), and from then on he is hers: "The moment before, discouraged by her apparent reserve, he had stood coldly by, but now startled into animation, he bent upon her an earnest and corresponding look" (54-55). Just as the love-story hero often allows himself to be emotional only in relation to the heroine (see Coward 192), so part of Matilda's special appeal for Gerald seems to be that her love is hard won, and that she

reveals her vulnerability and emotion only to him.

And while these “masculine” traits of Matilda’s make others suspicious (see 156), she is not the only participant in the gender switch. If Gerald worships Matilda for a time, and is not blamed for his attack of Forrester because he was seduced by Matilda, is not he, too, a ruptured being? He is so debased that he makes another human being his god, and he is too innocent and passive to blame for his own actions. Moreover, Gerald "had gazed on the witching beauty of the syren [sic], until judgement and reason had yielded the rein to passion" (403). He has forfeited “masculine” logic. While Gerald’s destabilized self might be intended only to stress Matilda’s role as villainess, it also demonstrates a possibility for resistance to reified constructions of identity; the normative masculine identity can also be ruptured, and ruptured by a woman.

There is a moment near the end of her narrative when it seems that Richardson might remove any possibility of Matilda's agency, but this is short-lived. When she and Gerald are imprisoned in the temple, after the attempted murder of Forrester, Gerald discovers that Matilda's grandmother is Ellen Halloway, the woman who cursed his family decades before, and that her grandfather is Wacousta, sworn enemy of his family. He realizes "that the wretched woman before him had been but the agent of Fate in effecting his destruction" (452). Matilda's actions are not her fault, but those of powers beyond her control. Matilda, however, spurns all ideas about God and fate; she spurns Gerald’s offer of prayers, and takes her fate into her hands in her own way when she commits suicide by poisoning herself. Up to the end of her life, Matilda is an

active, bold woman; she would rather kill herself than let her death be up to those with the law on their side.

However, this act of suicide means that, as with Wacousta, the marginalized figure does not come to permanent power. Matilda and Gerald both die but there is a redemption in Gerald's death that does not seem to be allowed to Matilda. Gerald claims to be relieved to die, and he has written out the details of his sins and gives them to Henry so he is, in a sense, purged of them. He dies too, speaking of God, having prayed for forgiveness, so he dies clean. Matilda, on the other hand, as Gerald points out, dies with the sin of suicide on her head as well as that of attempted murder, and with hate on her lips, having never turned to God in her last moments. Gerald tells Forrester's aide-de-camp the truth about Matilda's innocence regarding Forrester's accusation, but readers do not see Forrester receive this news or repent for his own wrongs against her.

Despite her end, Matilda, like her grandfather, serves an important role in critiquing the dominant order, and she is portrayed more sympathetically than, for example, Angélique in The Golden Dog. Gerald continues to believe Matilda's story, even after her death, and the aide-de-camp admits "she is indeed a much injured woman" (456); they have some sympathy for her, which suggests the author might expect readers to as well. Matilda struggles for agency against a colonial patriarchy, and exposes men's belittling and hypocritical views of women. Though Richardson ultimately removes her from society by having her commit suicide, her energy and her tragedy maintain resonance after the novel's end, and she perhaps gains more sympathy than either of the Grantham

brothers, and certainly more than Colonel Forrester, the man who betrayed her. There may be something in Matilda of what Auerbach calls the "transformative power" of the fallen woman (157). Whether Richardson intended this or not, her behaviour suggests the constructed nature of gender identity. More specifically, and I think this *is* intentional on Richardson's part, she exposes the hypocrisy of nineteenth-century ideals about male honour: Colonel Forrester is the cause and beneficiary of Matilda's fallenness, and yet he slanders her for being fallen.

Anne Hébert's Kamouraska (1970) is another novel that presents the figure of the sinning woman; however, while Hébert employs symbols and stereotypes of the protagonist's nineteenth-century Catholic society, she complicates them, making figures of goodness blur with those of immorality. Elisabeth, married to the abusive Antoine Tassy, convinces her lover, George Nelson, to kill her husband. George's exclamation after the murder – "It's that damned woman. She's ruined me" (247) – underlines Elisabeth's construction as an Eve figure. The connection between the murder and the Biblical fall is emphasized further when Elisabeth remembers her desire for the violent act: "The crime, crossing the threshold of my willing heart. Antoine Tassy's death, hungered after like a piece of fruit" (37).

Furthermore, Elisabeth and her maid, Aurélie, are also both explicitly connected to witchcraft. Aurélie is believed by many in the community to be a witch, and she claims to have the power to tell whether a newborn baby will live or die (59). Elisabeth is also connected to witchcraft. Despite her role as a

woman in a Catholic society that keeps her behaviour under strict surveillance, Elisabeth sees herself in a dream as master of an immense dark power: "A witch. I'm a witch. And I'm calling out, summoning up all the evil from men and beasts. Wherever it can be found" (128). George Nelson is one of these beasts (128), and in using him to kill Antoine, she summons up evil in him. Later, she aligns herself with the tempting woman, possibly Eve: "Yes, I'm the one. The one who pushed you to the ends of the earth" (248).

To some extent, George embodies a force that counteracts female witchcraft. As a doctor, he represents masculinist medical logic, and is overtly critical of Aurélie and her trade:

> Quackery, superstition . . . It's a scandal, that's what it is! We should keep those medicine men from going around killing people. Give everyone proper care whether they want it or not! Keep your girl Aurélie from doing her magic tricks on newborn babies! (118)

His objection to witchcraft is further emphasized when Aurélie fails to kill Antoine and George must do it himself: "The days of witches are over" (188). George's medical logic attempts to disperse the female power embodied in folklore and superstition.

However, George is also identified with the occult, specifically with Satan. Aurélie explicitly calls George the devil (192) and his black horse is a "dark, demonic beauty, like the devil himself" (167). George's relationship with Elisabeth, then, underlines the idea that women were more vulnerable to temptation than men. Barbara Godard connects Elisabeth's story with that of

Rose La Tulippe, a figure in Québécois legend (326). Just as Rose is seduced by a handsome stranger who rides a black horse, the devil in disguise, so does Elisabeth fall for such a figure. Felicia B. Sturzer also makes the connection between Elisabeth and the idea that women are vulnerable to sexual seduction by the devil: "As George Nelson, prince of the night on his black horse, becomes Satan, supreme manipulator and seducer, the witch-woman becomes the devil's helper, enticed by his evil power" (33).

However, Hébert is more self-conscious about her representations of women than Kirby. Like Richardson, Hébert critiques ideas about female nature as inherently virtuous or sinful through her protagonist's awareness of female roles. When Antoine is at his worst, Elisabeth attends church in Kamouraska, and revels in her martyrdom in front of the community:

> "Wonderful woman . . . Wonderful wife . . . Such a pleasant disposition . . . Such Christian resignation. . ."
>
> My head bowed low over my missal. I take a certain curious pleasure in my role as martyred wife and outraged princess. Over and over I repeat to myself the tender praises of the parishioners gathered in the little stone church. (87)

Elisabeth's society values female passivity and resignation in the face of physical and mental spousal abuse – the Victorian woman is a symbol of virtue, even in the face of intense suffering. Elisabeth plays this role to get what pleasure and power she can out of it, but Hébert also apprises readers of the oppressiveness of this role; a society that demands passivity in women makes them victims of

violence.

Elisabeth is also explicitly aware of the Victorian ideal of motherhood. Douglas L. Boudreau argues, "Elisabeth herself is able to answer how she threatens Victoria. She resembles the Queen too closely. Elisabeth Rolland née d'Aulnières, surrounded by her many children, is too much a copy of Victoria surrounded by her own, and it is this resemblance that the Queen cannot tolerate" (31). Elisabeth, imaginatively, calls upon her children to defend her against the charges of murder: "Eight little imps, eight boys and girls to take the stand in behalf of Elisabeth d'Aulnières. [. . .] Just let them loose and hear what a fuss they'll raise! The call of the blood in their spontaneous cries. Just watch the angel choir sprout horns if anyone points a finger at their mother" (13-14). Elisabeth uses her children as a bulwark against the accusations of Victorian law; her statements not only question the ideal of motherhood as virtuous – Elisabeth, mother of eight, has conspired in a murder – but she also simultaneously interrogates the Victorian view of children as innocent angels. Elisabeth finds her strength in the possibilities for dark power – her children are like Lilith's children, a league of devils protecting her. Elisabeth's self-consciousness about the proper roles of women reveals the gender ideal as a performance rather than as something inherent. While one could argue that her performance here only links her to the artificiality of the fallen woman, Elisabeth is a sympathetic character, and Hébert explicitly critiques the nineteenth-century French-Canadian society that constructs women in such limiting ways.

Like Judith Butler, Hébert stresses that gendered identities are not

inherent. Unlike Butler though, she does, in this narrative, put forth a view that particular characteristics are a "natural" part of all human beings. Kamouraska focuses on chaotic emotional forces and intense sexual desire as part of the animal aspect of both genders' human nature. Michèle Anderson asserts that Elisabeth's "journey into the past to discover her lost self includes erotic, naturistic experiences that liberate her, at least temporarily, from oppressive gender roles imposed by the 'civilized,' bourgeois society of nineteenth-century Quebec" (41). Hébert sets up a binary between animal sexual desire and civilized definitions of gender. While Elisabeth is connected with what her society would deem to be dark forces – witchcraft, sexual desire, chaotic emotion, violence – Hébert does not necessarily deem these things as evil. In fact, Elisabeth views sexuality as positive. Longing for George near the end of the novel she says, "I know nothing at all about him now. I live in an utter void. A desert of snow, chaste and sexless as hell itself" (195). Chastity becomes associated with hell and suffering, and sexuality, by implication, with heaven, rather than vice versa.

In fact, through this sexuality, and its rupturing of her reputation as the moral wife, Elisabeth finds a limited agency. She employs masculine power for her own uses. As a prelude to sex, George orders Elisabeth to leave the lamp on and take off all of her clothes: "Stand up straight. People can see us from the road. Isn't that what you want?" (156). Elisabeth feels she is "Obeying a voice [she] can't refuse" (156) and when they do have sex she notices "His sex, hard as a gun" (157). He is violently dominant. However, this scene seems to be about Elisabeth's desires as much as if not more than his. She wants them to be found

out because there would be a freedom in the scandal: "Let them point their fingers and accuse us. Both of us bound together in a single fate. Against the world. Utter totality of love and death" (156). Once again, the role of the fallen woman actually *allows* for agency and freedom from a restrictive society. As Michèle Anderson argues, "George's question, 'C'est ce que tu veux, n'est-ce pas?' and her silent assent imply that it is perhaps George who obeys *her* wish to make their affair public knowledge" (48). Anderson adds, "Elisabeth has chosen Nelson to father her child and to serve as her companion-in-arms against an enemy society" (48). Far from being a passive object of male sexual desire, Elisabeth is extremely active and desiring herself. While this is no substitute for sexual freedom and political agency, Elisabeth finds some resistance within the "identity" of fallen woman.

However, Hébert also rejects constricting ideas about gender by maintaining some ambiguity in her representations of animal nature. Elisabeth lives in a world where morality is uncertain, where desire can be delightful or dangerous, or both. At times, George is a devil, as I have already argued, but at other times he is represented as a Christ figure, as in Elisabeth's anxious fears of him becoming overwhelmed by his patients: "I'm sick, Doctor Nelson!. . . Please save me, Doctor Nelson! . . . Doctor Nelson, help me! . . ." (141). The scene echoes the New Testament narratives where the ill are constantly approaching Jesus to be healed (as in Mark 31:2). As well, at one point Elisabeth remembers George in a position like that of Christ: "Sitting on the ground, under the pines. With your body against a tree. As if nailed to a cross" (146). Through the

connection to Christ, Nelson might be viewed as (Elisabeth's) saviour, but also he demonstrates that the outsider, a prominent figure in Québécois literature, can be a force of good as well as evil; the outsider can be Christ travelling in strange lands, or Satan traversing the wall of the garden of Eden. In his identifications with both virtue and vice, the morality of Dr. Nelson and his act of murder become uncertain.

Moreover, while George is at times a representative of male medical logic, a counterforce to the witchcraft of Aurélie and Elisabeth, at other times he is a witch himself. Aurélie accuses him of "casting spells on women's breasts. The way some witches poison the water" (11). Antoine, too, is aligned with witchcraft and the demonic. Elisabeth's aunts are scandalized by his treatment of her: "Elisabeth has been bewitched. She's under his spell. The devil must be cast out" (97). Men, as well as women, are associated with the occult, with both positive and negative associations; the "Christian man vs. the Satanic woman" equation is troubled.

Importantly, too, there are times when the characters of Antoine and George, victim and murderer, start to metaphorically bleed into each other. The two men have been connected since childhood, schoolmates who would often play chess together. As adults, both lovers of Elisabeth, their identities begin, in her memories, to merge: "In which of my dreams did I call them both back? Not only my love, but the other one too. My husband. As if I couldn't call one without the other" (128-9). Elisabeth sees them converge even further as she imagines the events leading up to the Antoine's death:

> Between two men, bound to each other by an awesome, otherworldly mystery. What if each of them, both at once, were to wear the same fraternal face? Two men, with faces racked and transfigured by something strange and dreadful sweeping over them. The taste of death. (200).

Through the act of violence, the two men engage in a strange communion.

The point of this ambiguity regarding the men is to underline the uncertainty of morality, both men's and women's. Elisabeth's Catholic patriarchal society would surely condemn her if they could prove her involvement in the murder, but Hébert's stance is more uncertain. The bloody details of the murder, and the fact that Elisabeth is still haunted by it, suggest that the reader is encouraged to condemn the act. However, the novel gives Elisabeth's perspective, and she is the character with whom readers are meant to empathize with. Antoine has not only struck her on more than one occasion and committed various acts of infidelity, but he has also threatened to kill her. Faced with this perpetual abuse, and the promise of real love, Elisabeth acts in a way that readers might at least understand, if not condone. Even in the case of such an extremely abusive relationship, the possibility of Elisabeth receiving a divorce in nineteenth-century Quebec would have been almost non-existent. Thus, Elisabeth has to turn to another man for protection from an abusive husband; it is her only option, as the law will not help her. She would have been considered Antoine's property. Elisabeth's reactions might be understandable given her nearly powerless position in her marriage and in her society.

Elisabeth's fate is not a happy one – she is separated forever from George and ends up in a loveless marriage. She has become an exile: "And me. A stranger, a soul possessed, pretending I still belong to the land of the living . . ." (247). Hébert, however, critiques this marriage rather than presenting it as a just punishment for Elisabeth; Elisabeth's marriage to Monsieur Rolland is part of surviving in her oppressive society. She is not given the same censure as Angélique, and probably receives more empathy from the reader.

Thus, in her representation of gender, Hébert not only questions Victorian beliefs about female morality, but the ambiguities of morality itself, and the role of women in any male-dominated society. Of course, Hebert's themes still hold great significance for contemporary Canada where almost half of all the women who kill are killing husbands, usually as a response to abuse, where a woman is nine times more likely to be killed by her husband than by a stranger, and where the ideology of woman as man's possession is still a factor in causing spousal abuse (Boritch 34, 220, 232). In such a social situation the morality of murder is not a clean-cut issue. Hébert draws on traditional representations of the sinful woman, but in these her protagonist finds some promise of power; she summons her own devilish doctor to defeat her devilish abusive husband; her angelic children grow devil's horns to protect her. That which has previously been deemed negative shows its potential for positive power for women, while at the same time Hébert also asserts that men, too, sin, that they too can be associated with the demonic, and thus clear categories of gender and morality break down.

Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace, of all the novels under study here, is perhaps the most deliberately ambiguous about the nature of women, making pervasive use of Biblical imagery, but interrogating such imagery and how one might interpret it. In some ways, Grace is very much aligned with the Biblical fall. As a young, lower class, Irish servant, Grace is already somewhat exempt from the Victorian feminine ideal, but this distinction is deepened through her involvement in the murders of her employer, Mr. Kinnear, and his housekeeper, Nancy. For some of the characters, she is a sex-hungry murderer who entices men to their doom. This characterization sometimes goes beyond human evil to associate Grace with the demonic, with succubi or Satan himself. For example, McDermott claims that Grace is the one who talked him into killing Nancy by promising to have sex with him if he did so (396), and when they are on the run after the murders, she awakens by the side of the road to find him on top of her, and protests. He responds by asserting that she asked for it: "And he said he would not be made a fool of, and I was a damned slut and a demon, and Hell was too good for me, as I had led him on, and enticed him, and caused him to damn his own soul into the bargain" (403). Grace, in McDermott's version of things, is a demonic temptress, leading men to ruin. Jamie Walsh, who testifies against her at the trial, feels similarly: "He felt betrayed in love, because I'd gone off with McDermott; and from being an angel in his eyes, and fit to be idolized and worshipped, I was transformed to a demon, and he would do all in his power to destroy me" (433). Grace also takes on a vaguely demonic air at the end of the novel when she is placed under hypnosis by Dr. Jerome Dupont, a.k.a Jeremiah

the peddler. When Grace identifies herself as Mary Whitney, Dr. Simon Jordan attributes this to a multiple personality disorder. However, another possible interpretation is that Grace is actually possessed by the ghost of the dead girl, and it was she who completed the murders.

Importantly, though, McDermott's and Jamie's attitudes are presented through Grace, who (reliably or unreliably) paraphrases their words and attributes motives to their actions. Grace places the emphasis not on who she actually is, but on how Jamie and McDermott see her, and their own subjective interpretation of events. A similar emphasis on subjectivity happens with the hypnosis. There are those in the room who view Grace as being possessed, and Simon attributes Mary's presence to a psychological problem, but, readers might also interpret the whole thing as an act, staged by Grace and Jeremiah for the purpose of securing her freedom.

This flexibility of interpretation, in fact, is a key aspect of Grace's entire narrative, and of the novel generally. The degree of Grace's innocence, her motives, and the extent of her involvement in the murders is never entirely clear to readers or to Simon, and in this way Grace escapes categorization. Atwood, in "In Search of Alias Grace," explains how, in researching the novel, she discovered that there were multiple and often contradictory interpretations of events:

> For each story, there was a teller, but – as is true of all stories – there was also an audience; both were influenced by received climates of opinion, about politics, and also about criminality and its

> proper treatment, about the nature of women – their weakness and seductive qualities, for instance – and about insanity, in fact, about everything that had a bearing on the case. (1515)

Atwood places the emphasis on the subjectivity and intent of each of the accounts of the murders. She adds, "I am not one of those who believes there is no truth to be known; but I have to conclude that, although there undoubtedly was a truth – somebody did kill Nancy Montgomery – truth is sometimes unknowable, at least by us" (1515).

Grace's motives and innocence or culpability are demonstrated in the novel to be products of individual constructions. Grace appears to be conscious of such constructions and at times she undercuts their authority. During their first meeting, when Simon gives her an apple, she understands what he's getting at when he asks what it makes her think of: "The apple of the Tree of Knowledge, is what he means. Good and evil. Any child could guess it. But I will not oblige" (44). Instead she says she associates the apple with the sampler from her childhood – "A is for Apple"; when she does so, she moves out of Simon's world of text into a world of sewing which, as a man, he does not immediately understand. Thus, she manipulates his textual references, offering her own feminized interpretations, and keeps the discussion on her terms. She also tells the reader that she accepts the apple because "There's nothing bad in an apple" (42). While Simon is trying to fix the apple with a particular meaning, Grace's statement underlines that there is no meaning inherent to the apple; it means what she or Simon says it means. Thus, she simultaneously interrogates not only

the Biblical narrative of the fall, but also interpretation generally.

This becomes crucial to her own story, as she is constructed in a variety of ways by a variety of different sources, leaving her "real" self inaccessible: "there are always those that will supply you with speeches of their own, and put them right into your mouth for you too; and that sort are like the magicians who can throw their voice, at fairs and shows, and you are just their wooden doll" (351). Her use of the term "doll," a toy usually gendered female, emphasizes the fact that it is often women who are spoken for and constructed by others. Grace's comments also point to the fallen woman as false, having lost herself. The men around Grace may feel this is true of her, and of women generally. Grace, however, during the hypnosis, destabilizes the use of women as dolls as it is not clear whether she is actually hypnotized, or if Jeremiah is throwing his voice to impersonate Mary, or if Grace is consciously cooperating with him to put forth a certain version of events. She may have lost her stable identity, she may be fallen, or she may be actively disguising the "truth" for her own benefits.

Furthermore, Grace both upholds and subverts the Biblical narrative at the end of her first interview with Simon when she presses the apple to her forehead. In doing so, she emphasizes the Biblical connection between the forbidden fruit and knowledge. She thought earlier, "He thinks all he has to do is give me an apple, and then he can collect me" (45), and perhaps her gesture is supposed to tell Simon that she will accept the apple in exchange for the knowledge in her brain (whether she does share all the knowledge there throughout the course of the novel is uncertain). Importantly, though, Grace does not eat the apple in front

of Simon. Simon, in this scene, is aligned with Satan, not only because he encourages a woman to eat an apple, but also because he has earlier quoted lines of Satan's from the Book of Job (41) and Grace thinks, "He must mean that he has come to test me, although he's too late for that, as God has done a great deal of testing me already, and you would think he would be tired of it by now" (42). Grace's action of pressing the apple to her forehead, then, as much as it might be viewed as a sign of consent, is simultaneously a resistance, for, unlike Eve, she refuses to eat the fruit proffered to her by Simon/Satan. Rather than being seduced, she is asserting her own agency.

The question of agency is crucial to Grace's trial and the judgements her society makes about her – Grace's sentence is life imprisonment rather than death because her lawyer blamed youth and stupidity for Grace's hesitation to inform anyone of McDermott's murderous intents: "He said that I was little more than a child, [. . .] and I was very ignorant and uneducated, and illiterate, and little better than a halfwit; and very soft and pliable, and easily imposed upon" (434). Presumably, as a very young woman, she had less power, less agency than McDermott, and therefore could be talked into keeping quiet about the murders. On the other hand, as a beautiful woman, Grace is seen by others as having more agency than McDermott, capable of seducing him into sinning for her, using his natural masculine sex drive against him. An innkeeper near Mr. Kinnear's house tells Simon, "You'd never have guessed what she was plotting, under that smooth face," and adds, "It was her led [McDermott] on, and it was her put a noose around his neck for him too" (461). Grace's situation reveals Canadian-

Victorian views of women's agency: to be gullible, inexperienced, and innocent is to be viewed as not having control over one's life, but to be experienced and make active choices, as a woman, is to be criminalized and condemned.

Through Grace's emphasis on subjectivity, and the novel's review of the variety of perspectives on her and her case, Atwood emphasizes the way events and people, but especially women, are constructed based on the reader's own framework. Thus, Woman's identity is performative rather than inherent; Grace is ultimately inaccessible to those who can only try to read her into submission. Exploiting this inaccessibility, or, rather, constructing the self as nothing inherent, as Grace does consciously or Atwood does through Grace, is a woman's defense; keeping knowledge from men, rather than enticing them to it, as Eve did, becomes a mode of resistance.

Grace's inscrutability is particularly important in her relationship with Simon because it reverses the standard gender roles of the love story. Sally Shuttleworth, in her discussion of Charlotte Brontë's Villette, notices gendered power between the interrogating male doctor and his female patient: "The rhetoric of unveiling and penetrating the truth, so prevalent in nineteenth-century science, is here located as a discourse of gendered, social power: male science unveils female nature" (220). In Bronte's case, the heroine offers some resistance, and the same is true of Grace in Atwood's novel, as Simon attempts to penetrate Grace's mind. While Simon sees her as outwardly quite feminine, he also sees hints of a darker, more masculine side in her:

> Somewhere within herself – he's seen it, if only for a moment, that

> conscious, even cunning look in the corner of her eye – she knows she's concealing something from him. As she stitches away at her sewing, outwardly calm as a marble Madonna, she is all the while exerting her passive stubborn strength against him. (434)

Outwardly Grace is the embodiment of virtuous femininity, the Madonna, but Simon suspects that inwardly she is quite strong, active in her exertion even if that strength is "passive." In what he sees as her determination to keep something from him she presents a kind of masculinity. Rather than yielding to his masculine medical gaze, allowing herself to be exposed and read and penetrated, she resists him; she becomes his competitor, fighting against his attempts to read her, rather than a woman-child that he can conquer and protect. The (possibly) violent woman resists the stereotyped moral woman of the love-story plot.

Grace's resistance inverts the gender roles and accordingly feminizes Simon somewhat. His male medical logic starts to become undone by his passion. One night, he dreams of "the long fragrant hair of an unseen woman, which is twining around his neck. He struggles; he is being closely embraced; he can scarcely breathe. The sensation is painful and almost unbearably erotic, and he wakes with a jolt" (227). If the woman in the dream is Grace (her hair has appeared in other dreams of his, e.g., 422), then Simon, despite his attempts to pry open her mind, might also like Grace to have some power over him. He has come to associate her with the lower-class women of his youth who maintained power over him, based on age, despite class differences; in fact, his first kiss is

with one of these maids (218); she was in the position of power as she was experienced, and Simon did not know what to do when she began unbuttoning his shirt. Simon clearly takes some erotic pleasure in being dominated by women.

Other men have this same reaction to Grace; it seems to be part of the appeal of the "bad girl." Grace's guards enjoy their crude discussion of her sexuality all the more when it is tinged with references to her being violent. Speaking of Simon, they say "he'd better keep a sharp eye out or you'll have him flat on his back. Yes says the other, flat on his back in the cellar with his boots off and a bullet through his heart" (70). Later, pretending she has tried to run away, they recommend that she should have lifted her petticoats up around her neck in order to move faster: "you should've gone off like a ship in full sail, arse to the wind, we would've been smitten by your dazzling charms, knocked on the head like lambs at slaughter, struck by lightning we would've been" (71-2). Their references to female sexuality are always connected to references to violence against men, and this seems to enhance the guards' pleasure in the taunts, perhaps because it makes the comments more titillating.

In fact, the spectre of female violence and power over men may be raised just so that the men in the novels can enjoy subduing it and confirming their own power. Grace's guards can speak of her involvement in the murders and attempts to get away from them because they are in a position of great power over her; she cannot retaliate. They perhaps like to imagine her trying to get away just so they can further affirm the fact that she absolutely cannot; thus they

reify their own control over her. As well, Simon's attraction to Grace is based on the idea of subduing her: "There is passion in Grace somewhere, he is certain of it, although it would take some hunting for. And she'd be grateful to him, albeit reluctantly. Gratitude by itself does not enthral him, but he likes the idea of reluctance" (467). Simon wants some resistance from Grace, a passion he has to hunt for rather than one that is given too easily. It is the struggle that he finds erotic, his own power that would "enthral" him. The men want a fight, want violence from Grace, for, it seems, a woman too easily possessed is not worth having. The more effort they have to put forth in subduing her, the more their own masculine powers are confirmed. Thus, Simon is attracted to Grace because of the exotic brand of "murderess" which she carries, but he wants to domesticate this exoticness, see her sewing in the lamplight as his wife, and have her all to himself in bed even as she tells him the lurid details of her sex life with McDermott (467).

However, this attempted subduing of Grace is not necessarily only the work of the men; at times, she appears to crave such treatment. Although she feels a need to be "wide-eyed awake and watchful" in her discussions with Simon (78), Grace also feels different with him than she did telling her story in the courtroom. She experiences pleasure speaking to him, as he takes notes about her: “I feel as if he is drawing me; or not drawing me, drawing on me – drawing on my skin – not with the pencil he is using, but with an old-fashioned goose pen, and not with the quill end but with the feather end” (77-78). Simon is constructing, or attempting to construct, Grace and the events of her life as she speaks to him,

but rather than this being a constricting process, as with the newspapers and those at the trials, Grace enjoys what he is doing; being written by him even seems to contain a sexual pleasure for her. Simon, too, enjoys his power over her in a rather erotic way when, at one point during her story, "Her tone is so dejected that Simon feels a tender pity for her. He has an impulse to take her in his arms, to soothe her, to stroke her hair" (383). Here he imagines himself in the role of comforting father-lover, protecting and nurturing Grace, whom he pities as though she were a sad child. However, these "romantic" interactions during Grace's storytelling are complicated by the fact that Grace might feel pleasure telling Simon about her life because she can take "liberties," manipulating memories and events and personalities in a way that actually gives her power. His recognition of her, his desire to listen to her, gives her a sense of being consumed as well a sense of agency.[3]

Grace's relationship with Simon interrogates the standard roles of the heterosexual romance: as a result of not conforming, and thus not having to try to conform, to the Victorian ideal of the moral woman, Grace is able to move between the positions and characteristics traditionally associated with each gender, breaking down such categorizations. Moreover, while Grace's status as a "violent woman" is uncertain, her association with violence does evoke for those around her fears of female power. I would not suggest that the power Grace finds is revolutionary, and her story ends with her in what may be a loveless marriage, but she does locate some small degree of resistance in her association with violence and sexuality: "I was never a lady, Sir, and I've already

lost whatever reputation I ever had. I can say anything I like; or if I don't wish to, I needn't say anything at all" (103). Without the expectation of a gender ideal, Grace can avoid stereotypes altogether.

I have been suggesting in this dissertation how often representations of eroticism in the historical novel only help support the status quo, but here I have indicated where some resistance may be located. These violent, fallen women assert themselves because they are constructed as fractured. While Kirby's novel indicates that fallen woman are, of course, not always subversive figures, Richardson's novel demonstrates that, within nineteenth-century Canadian fiction, there might also be an awareness of the hypocrisy in some attitudes towards female sexuality and identity. Hébert and Atwood, although they write in the twentieth-century, interpret history to suggest that resistance to stereotypes of gender could be at work in small ways even before the burgeoning of the suffrage movement at the end of the nineteenth-century.

One of the reasons I see these novels as potentially subversive is because they critique the love-story plot more self-consciously and thoroughly than most of the other novels I have studied thus far. As I have iterated previously, in the traditional erotic plot, the man is in the position of power, although the woman supposedly gains some power through earning the man's love. In loving her, he promises to use his strength and power to protect and care for her; he becomes the loving father, with power over his child-wife, but he uses that power for benevolent purposes rather than oppression. The violent elements

of the Canadian historical fictions in this chapter invert these power relationships: the man becomes a thrall to the woman he loves, risking life and limb to earn the affection of someone who may be married to another, or who may treat him with contempt – she is a bitch-goddess rather than a child-woman.

Modleski argues that love stories intended for female readers may embody a female revenge fantasy: in the protagonist's suffering or illness, the previously cold male in her life also suffers, and realizes his love for her. The Canadian novels under study here might also be viewed as embodying a female revenge fantasy, but in a very different way. Rather than the woman proving her importance through victimhood and passivity, she renounces such roles, and actively seeks to hurt the men who wield power over her: Matilda attacks Forrester, who has hurt and slandered her; Angélique strikes back against Bigot, who toys with her romantically; Elisabeth Tassy has her lover kill the husband who beats her and threatens her life. These women, rather than destroying themselves to prove their importance, set about destroying the masculine other.

In some ways, the novels under study here provide an explicit critique of the conventional love story. They expose the violence associated with love; in these novels, male aggression is not love disguised; it is simply aggression: Antoine's anger bleeds into George's, Simon enacts sexual games of domination, Colonel Forrester maliciously abandons and slanders Matilda. In this way, the novels undercut views about the benign romance of heterosexuality, revealing a gender hierarchy that the heroines, with or without the approval of their authors, try to invert through violence of their own. Moreover, the women in these novels

consciously play romantic games in order to achieve their own ends, suggesting that the erotic passivity expected of nineteenth-century women and, at least in popular romance novels, twentieth-century women, is a social construction. That is, the women indirectly suggest that gender is performative, in Butler's sense, rather than essentialized. Kirby answers this possibility by grounding Angélique in the identity of the sinful woman, but the other authors let the female protagonists elude stable categorization.

In the contemporary novels, the love story is even more explicitly critiqued. Grace comments on the romantic delusions inspired by fiction near the end of Atwood's novel. When the Governor's daughter begins to cry with joy because Grace will have a happy ending "just like a book," Grace wonders "what books she'd been reading" (534). Here, Grace may be pointing out the fact that she is an unlikely heroine, as an accused murderess released from prison and setting out in the world happy only to have new clothes which make her look like "an ordinary person" (534). Moreover, Grace's "happily ever after" with Jamie Walsh is not quite that. She marries him because she has no other options, and she admits that "it is not what most girls imagine when young" (543). Rather than revealing Grace's criminal past, she and Jamie make up a simple story about the two of them being reunited childhood sweethearts: "That is a story easily accepted, and it has the advantage of being romantic, and of causing pain to no one" (546). In keeping with the rest of the novel, the conclusion shows Grace continuing to express her distance from the stories that others construct about her. Her happily ever after, the conclusion of the heterosexual love story, is a

practical means of survival, tainted with Jamie's odd habit of being aroused by begging for her forgiveness, and the fact that Grace's swelling stomach may be due to either a baby or a tumour.

Elisabeth's story in Kamouraska also acts as a critique of delusions about idealized heterosexuality. Amy Reid draws a parallel between Elisabeth and Madame Bovary: "both are women whose lives go awry when they attempt to live along the models of romantic fiction" (277). Reid points out (277) Elisabeth's training in romantic love through various texts: "Oh, the fables we tell. The ones about God, the ones about men. 'The Wedding-feast at Cana,' 'The Bride of Lamermoor,' 'Down by the crystal fountain, e'er shall I remember thee . . . ' Love. Beautiful love of song and story" (Hébert 65). Elisabeth's romantic ideas seem to be derived from her maiden aunts, who "Stop reading their favorite novels" when she and her mother move in (51), presumably to live vicariously through Elisabeth instead of fictional heroines. For example, Elisabeth remembers Aunt Angélique's reaction the first time Elisabeth menstruated:

> A deep, mysterious communion with all of womankind seems to hold a fabled, romantic fate in store for her. Is each and every wasted ovule of her sterile life about to be made fertile? Gallantly? By tender husbands? Tender lovers? Is mad passion and all its magic, somehow, old as she is, about to make her pregnant at last, with a hundred happy, blue-eyed babes? (51)

These innocent ideas about erotic love are, of course, starkly contrasted with Elisabeth's reality. The passage about "the fables we tell" is immediately followed

with Elisabeth's imprecation against Antoine for his infidelity. Quickly, "Beautiful love of song and story" becomes "Swine! Lord of the manor. Foul swine! I saw you in the street. And that whore, Mary Fletcher" (65). The misery of Elisabeth's married life contrasts sharply with the traditional love-story plot, especially by the time she and George are plotting Antoine's murder.

What is key in the two contemporary texts, and to some extent in Richardson's text, is that the protagonists or the authors demonstrate more than just self-consciousness about the romance's gender characterizations and love-story motifs – this self-consciousness, as I suggested in Chapters Three and Four, is present even in novels that employ the love-story plot unproblematically. The difference is that Hébert, Atwood, and Richardson also *critique* the love story, demonstrate its hypocrisy, illuminate the eroticized violence between men and women and how it is constructed. There are plenty of Canadian historical novels, especially contemporary ones, that are self-conscious about history and sometimes even racial relations, but many of these leave irony aside when it comes to the love story. Resistance to this aspect of the romance requires a thorough interrogation of the character types and plot motifs that literary tradition has made comfortably familiar and, thus, pleasurable.

Notes

[1] See, for examples of such traits in the romantic hero, Colonel Evelyn in Antoinette De Mirecourt (1864), or Jane Austen's Mr. Darcy in Pride and Prejudice (1813), who may be the inspiration for the former.

[2] Issues of race and slavery are crucial in the novel, and I will examine these in more detail in Chapter Five.

[3] Rachel Humphrey, Simon's landlady, shares a similarly ambiguous relationship with Simon. While they enact sexual scenes that place him in the role of dominant male, it is a dominance that she requests and which fulfills her desires, and outside of the bedroom, due to her illness (feigned or real), he serves as cook and servant to her. She also exploits the role of fallen woman, like Grace and Matilda Montgomerie, to serve her own ends (see 437).

CHAPTER SIX

Violent and Resistant Women: Politics and the National Allegory

I have explored in previous chapters the way the love-story plot often acts as an allegory for cultural relations in Canada, and this is also sometimes true in the case of the novels where violent women play a prominent role. While some of the novels in this chapter affirm the standard cultural and gendered hierarchies, a few of them interrogate conventional notions about the Canadian identity. National identity has always been a psychologically fraught issue for Canada and Canadian literature, and this may explain the violent elements in many of its historical novels. The national identity is always in doubt, but it becomes especially pertinent around times of crisis. This crisis occurs, for John Richardson, around the time of the Rebellions, or, for William Kirby and Gilbert Parker, with the development of the suffrage movement and the decline of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century. Wendy Mitchinson states that Victorian Canadians "believed that control was important in all fields" (106) and were "a self-satisfied lot, who feared challenges to and changes in their world" (39). Some Canadian historical novelists evoke past episodes of violence in order to help stabilize a sense of Canadian identity; that is, past crises are evoked so that their resolutions can help reify the ruling order.

Literary explorations of national violence are often linked to representations of female resistance. For writers such as William Kirby and Gilbert Parker, a need to reify anglophone rule exists alongside anxieties about

female power in the nineteenth century. Mitchinson suggests that, for early Canadians, "Gender role change suggested the decline of civilization as they knew it" (39). Some authors of Canadian historical novels use the national allegory, not as a love story, but as a means of villainizing women, as well as particular cultures and classes, who do not succumb to anglophone and patriarchal rule. What is apparent in some of the novels from the nineteenth century is an awareness of the changing roles of women during the Victorian period and an anxiety about the relationship between women and politics. Women who become too heavily involved in politics are often criticized by these narratives, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the novels were written during a period when the British Empire was ruled by a woman. Interestingly, anxieties about the proper place of women continue in some twentieth-century novels with a historical setting. Through their adherence to the love-story plot, they repeat the same stress on the importance of women's emotional, rather than political, lives.

The first set of novels I am going to examine – The Golden Dog, Seats of the Mighty, Blackrobe, and Kanata – exemplifies ambivalent attitudes towards women and politics through the figure of La Pompadour. I see these novels as allowing women, *through* rather than despite women's relegation to the domestic sphere, some small contribution to national politics. However, this allowance is present so that it can be carefully circumscribed; women's "political" contributions must be through and for personal and emotional means and effects, so that the masculinist, anglocentric vision of the Canadian nation is ultimately confirmed.

The second set of novels, however, interrogates the nineteenth-century view that, as McClintock states, women are the symbols of nation without having access to equal rights as its citizens (354). These novels do not overtly place women in politics, but they destabilize the standard romance equation of woman-as-nation, provoking a reassessment of the roles of women in social, political, and national categories. Just as, in the last chapter, Kamouraska, The Canadian Brothers, and Alias Grace troubled the gendered stereotypes of the love-story plot, here they also trouble stable ideas about nation. In this chapter, I am less concerned with the individual violence of Elisabeth, Matilda, and Grace and more concerned with their relationships to the violence of the 1837-8 Rebellions and, in Matilda's case, the War of 1812 as well; the women simultaneously evoke and defeat readings of them as figures in a national allegory. In the case of Alias Grace, especially, the protagonist gestures towards a performative notion of political identities.

La Pompadour takes on a great deal of significance in several Canadian historical novels. As the mistress of King Louis XV, La Pompadour wielded some influence over French politics by encouraging a French alliance with Austria, which involved the French in the Seven Years' War. Thus, she might be considered as not that different from the female protagonists of the Canadian novels addressed in this chapter; like them, she is associated with violence.

Representations of La Pompadour also indirectly bring to light one of the key conflicts in the nineteenth-century: that of woman's relationship to politics. In

an era where women were supposed to be relegated to the domestic sphere, the British empire was ruled by a woman. Auerbach notices that in the Victorian era

> woman ruled both the Palace and the home while hovering simultaneously in the darkness without. Assuming the power of the ruler as well as the menace of the oppressed, woman was at the center of her age's myth at the same time as she was excluded from its institutions. (188-89)

The authors portray La Pompadour, the usurping ambitious mistress of France, perhaps as a contrast to the image of their own era's divinely appointed, chastely matron, Queen Victoria. Victoria is a woman involved in politics, obviously, but she adheres to feminine stereotypes of virtue and maternality. At the same time, though, the contradiction of the political woman appears to generate a great deal of anxiety in these texts, which allow woman some minor role in politics, while also carefully setting out, in order to combat "the menace of the oppressed," ideas about what women should and should not be.

Kirby's and Parker's representations of La Pompadour, and of the violent women who model themselves on her, might also be due to the fact that the suffrage movement in Canada was growing at the times of the novels' publications; the unauthorized edition of The Golden Dog came out in 1877, and The Seats of the Mighty was published in 1896. Catherine Cleverdon points out that Canadian women may have attended American women's rights conventions as early as the 1850s (16), and Veronica Strong-Boag notices that woman's rights associations were present in Canada by the 1870s (94). Thus, even

though women were not granted the right to vote federally in Canada until 1918, the women's suffrage movement was gaining momentum while Kirby was writing his novel and certainly in full swing by the time Parker published his. The negative representations of La Pompadour might be responses to anxieties about growing female political power.

In The Golden Dog, for example, Angélique is clearly trying to model herself upon the infamous Marquise and is ultimately condemned by the narrative for doing so. She styles her hair as La Pompadour does (154), and she shares her ambition: "If women rule France by a right more divine than Kings, no woman has a better right than I!" (157-58). The "right" of women to which Angélique refers is presumably that of a beautiful woman to have influence over men, and thus gain power and wealth. At the end of the novel, she appears to have succeeded: just as La Pompadour is the king's mistress, Angélique becomes Bigot's mistress, "imitating as far as she was able the splendor and the guilt of La Pompadour, and making the Palace of Bigot as corrupt, if not as brilliant, as that of Versailles" (674-75).

La Pompadour also makes an appearance in The Seats of the Mighty. Although not explicitly connected in the novel to La Pompadour, Madame Cournal would seem to be her Canadian counterpart. La Pompadour is the king's mistress, and as such has influence over the affairs of France, while Madame Cournal is Bigot's mistress and as such has influence over the affairs of New France. For example, although Bigot's friends warn him that his situation in Quebec is precarious, he stays partly due to the encouragement of Madame

Cournal (209). Doltaire remarks that women "are of consequence to man, but of no consequence in state matters," but his next statement proves just how much power they do have: "When they meddle there we have La Pompadour and war with England, and Captain Moray in the Bastille of New France" (231). La Pompadour keeps the protagonist, Robert Moray, in prison because she wants important letters which he refuses to give her, but there is also a suggestion that his imprisonment has something to do with the fact that Bigot is jealous of Madame Cournal's is attraction to Moray. Doltaire tells Alixe Duvarney that Bigot wishes Moray dead "for no other reason than that Madame Cournal has spoken nice words for the good-looking captain" (140).

As I have suggested, the novels may indicate a response to the burgeoning suffrage movement in Canada. In 1870, Queen Victoria wrote," I am most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Women's Rights', with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feelings and propriety" ("Excerpts"). As Kirby was a Tory, openly against responsible government ("Author's Biography"), and since Parker acted as a British Conservative MP (Parker, "Literature), it is not difficult to imagine that the two of them might have agreed with their Queen and been opposed to women's suffrage. Angélique and Madame Cournal raise questions about the categorization of women. In their ambition and practice of sex outside of marriage, the women infringe upon areas traditionally assigned to men.

Their resort to violence furthers this, especially since the weapons used

are somewhat phallic in shape: Madame Cournal uses a dagger when she attacks Doltaire out of indignation that he has removed her lover, Bigot, from power, and there is a phallic power in her act of violence, not only because violence is usually not attributed to women, but also because her actions are implicitly connected to government. In thrusting her phallic weapon into Doltaire's body she asserts her own determination to have a say in the male realm of politics. While, in The Golden Dog, Angélique does not kill Caroline herself, La Corriveau ensures the success of her violent endeavour with a stiletto. Again, the short sharp weapon suggests a phallus, an association further developed by the fact that La Corriveau must reach her victim by descending through dark, damp, yonic passageways until she reaches a door leading to a large chamber; her murder requires penetration of Bigot's property, and thus she feminizes him with her actions.

In this violence, Angélique, La Corriveau, and Madame Cournal may reflect one of the arguments that suffragists had to fight, that the vote would unsex women (Cleverdon 6), an opinion that Victoria herself put forth: "Were women to 'unsex' themselves by claiming equality with men, they would become the most hateful, heathen and disgusting of beings and would surely perish without male protection" ("Excerpts"). Angélique's and Madame Cournal's desire to have political and economic power figures them as masculine in some respects. Furthermore, what influence they do wield over politics is "hateful" and "heathen[ish]" because it is violent, ambitious, and immorally sexual.

Alixe and Amélie, the romantic heroines of The Seats of the Mighty and

The Golden Dog respectively, are not *entirely* dissimilar from La Pompadour in their limited affiliations with politics. Amélie's actions at the end of the novel do not affect the private sphere alone. When her brother murders the Bourgeois Philibert, head of the Golden Dog trading post, Amélie responds with deep shame, breaking off her engagement with Philibert's son and retiring to a convent. Amélie here is thinking of the honour of her family. She does not become a nun simply to escape her own personal anguish, but to repent for the family as a whole, speaking of "this blood that lies on the threshold of our house" (631). Her feelings of shame, for an act that she did not commit herself, speak to the family's public responsibilities and image as one of the noble families of New France. As a noble woman, her marriage means a great deal to continuing the line of her family; her choice to enter a convent and form a marriage with Christ is no less political – she will atone for the shame brought upon the "house" by her brother.

Alixe is perhaps more overtly like La Pompadour. She uses her influence with Bigot and the Governor to try to save Robert's life, and thus "meddles" in state affairs. She tells Robert during one of their stolen visits, "'I see how, if God had not given me something here' – she placed her hand upon her heart – 'that saves me, I might be like Madame Cournal, and far worse, far worse than she. For I love power – I do love it; I can see that!'" (193). Doltaire, too, sees that Alixe is her politically astuteness. On one occasion, when she convinces Doltaire to have Robert shot like a gentleman rather than hanged like a criminal, Doltaire agrees with her, criticizing "Bigot's hate and the Governor's conceit" and

exclaiming, "here is a girl, a young girl just freed from pinafores, who teaches them the laws of nations!" (141). And as Angélique is "a born sovereign of men" (23), so does Doltaire feel that Alixe was born "to be the admired of princes, a moving, powerful figure to influence great men" (422).

However, there are critical differences between Alixe and Amélie on the one hand and Angélique, Madame Cournal, and La Pompadour on the other, beyond the obvious fact that the first two women do not resort to violence to achieve their ends. Although Alixe flirts with the devil (in the form of Doltaire), she is more like Madame Jamond, the Parisian dancer she imitates, in that she is "a woman sinned against, not sinning" (282). Alixe and Amélie walk careful lines in the narratives – they are victims of the corrupt men around them, without actually falling. They are selfless, without this selflessness leading to their manipulation by others. That is, they find power in virtue, without becoming so powerful that they threaten masculinity in any lasting way. Alixe's power is excused because it is directed at a fitting end for a heroine: marriage to the heroic man who loves her. Amélie's is directed at recovering the moral stance of her family, so she does not entirely quit women's traditional realm.

In fact, one can see, in the behaviour of both Alixe and Amélie, an adherence to anti-feminist ideals put forth during the Victorian era by the Queen herself: "We women are not made for governing, and if we are good women, we must dislike these masculine occupations. There are times which force one to take interest in them, and I do, of course intensely" ("Excerpts"). While Alixe and Amélie are involved in public life for a while, this is only temporary – a necessary

reaction to a corrupt regime that celebrates debauchery and inverts gender relations; that is, they must deal with the evil men on their own terms.

Moreover, the actions of both women do have political significance, but they align them with the new English order. It is significant that when Amélie and her cousin Héloise arrive at the convent, they are greeted by the Mother Superior, Mère Esther, who "in look, temperament, as well as birth, [is] English, although in language and ideas wholly French of the best type" (637). The conflation of French and English in the figure with whom the girls will spend the rest of their lives anticipates the novel's end, where the people of New France give "their allegiance loyally and unreservedly to England" (672). While Angélique aligns herself with the old French order, Amélie gives herself to penance under the English Mère Esther, as her people give themselves to England.

Likewise, Madame Cournal aligns herself with Bigot and his decadence and corruption, but Bigot is eventually defeated in New France; Alixe, on the other hand, in aligning herself with Robert, a symbol of British virtue, is allowed to survive and continue as part of the new regime; she is virtuous, but her virtue is spurred by her love of a virtuous man, which gives her the power to resist Doltaire. Thus, the woman who does not, in the end, upset her confinement to the private sphere, because she makes politics about her own moral rightness and supports the anglophones, is allowed to prosper: "If these things," she tells Robert, "and fighting all these wicked men, to make Monsieur Doltaire help me to save you, have schooled to action some worse parts of me, there is yet in me that which shall never be brought low, never be dragged to the level of Versailles

or the Château Bigot – never!" (204). For both Kirby and Parker, France and New France place too much value on women's sexuality, especially outside of marriage, and allow fallen women too much influence over government; women take on the roles of men, and the gender hierarchy is threatened. Alixe, in her political manoeuvring, also takes on a certain masculinity, but it is only temporary, and it is directed at moral and personal ends.

Angélique and Madame Cournal are contrasted with Amélie and Alixe, two women who are also intelligent and who react to public life, but maintain traditional female virtues, and desire no long term political power for themselves. In fact, Alixe explicitly rejects Doltaire's offer of marriage even though he uses an argument of public good to persuade her: "You would be a patriot? Then shut out forever this English captain from your heart, and open its doors to me" (420). Alixe's decision to be with Robert is as much a political move as if she had married Doltaire, but, crucially, politics is not her *intent*. As McClintock states, women are often the symbols of nation, without having equal rights as citizens (354). Alixe sides with the English, and thus survives, as French-Canada must do to also survive. Thus, the author suggests that women's "political" role should only be in the private sphere; she should influence her husband (a legal husband, not a lover), and she should do so only in a moral, private manner; she should not seek to make political decisions herself, as La Pompadour does. Queen Victoria employs the God-given right to rule, couching power behind traditional gender roles, while La Pompadour's "right," as Angélique points out, is a sexual one. The crime to which Angélique's ambitions lead, and the final image

of Madame Cournal, crouching over Doltaire's wounded body and "staring at him as in a kind of dream" (439), suggests that women with political power, especially that received through purely sexual rather than moral means, are somehow perverse, even threatening their own sanity, and that such involvement on their part should be discouraged.

By the 1980's, however, the representation of La Pompadour in Canadian historical fiction had changed somewhat. As I have mentioned before, few contemporary canonical historical novelists have returned to the Seven Years War, but this event is a prominent feature of some non-canonical literature, and it is these that feature La Pompadour. She is again portrayed as "a very clever and very ambitious woman" (Wall 106), but this time with admiration rather than disdain. In Blackrobe, Robert E. Wall presents her as an astute politician, fully versed in foreign affairs, understanding the military strategies necessary to defend France and its vast empire (108-09). She is also pragmatic, suffering from no romantic delusions: "She would use her charms as long as the King found them charming. As soon as he began to lose interest, she would find for him the most beautiful women in France – and the stupidest. She would control him through them" (106). She is contrasted with the somewhat dowdy French Queen, who objects to any kind of upsetting conversation about world affairs, lives in hope that the King will one day love her, and spends her time painting awful works of art. The illegitimate lover is valued above the legitimate wife, and her lack of romanticism – versus that of Angélique and Madame Cournal – is

portrayed more favourably. In Kanata, La Pompadour tells the heroine, "French women know the difference between love and usefulness. If one is careful, one can have both. The trick is not to confuse them" (170). There is not the same disdain for her sinfulness that there is in the earlier novels. The series of which Kanata is a part also does not condemn female violence the way the early novels do. At the beginning of the sequel, Janet uses a shotgun to help defend her home from raiding Mohawks, and later murders the man who raped her and her friend. Her violence in these cases is portrayed as a just action.

However, La Pompadour in Kanata is contrasted with the heroine, Janet, in terms of their attitudes about relying on men financially. This is clear in response to the Marquise's suggestion that Janet become the mistress, and perhaps even the wife, of some rich Italian:

> She looked upon Madame de Pompadour with some admiration, but she found Madame's ideas foreign to her – they went against the grain of her own desires.
>
> "I should like to be independent," Janet answered. "I have not found much security or honor among men." (169)

For the authors, Victoria's era is over, so that even La Pompadour's decadence is still viewed as too limiting for women.

Although Janet desires this independence, she still wants marriage. Because both Blackrobe and Kanata are historical *romances*, they do, despite their admiration for and fascination with La Pompadour, suggest that she looks over a very important aspect of life: love. She is not portrayed as a sinning

woman, or criticized for her ambition per se, but rather because her ambition comes without love (even though she says a woman can have both). For these authors, sex outside of marriage is no sin, but sex without love is denying oneself the greatest of pleasures. In Blackrobe, La Pompadour may be similar to Manya, the Polish princess with whom the protagonist falls in love. Manya rejects Stephen for a marriage which will bring her money and power, and is treated brutally by her husband (317). Thus, both Manya and La Pompadour shun possibilities for loving marriages for ambition and material comfort, but when her husband dies, Manya is once again penniless, so her aspirations got her nowhere.

Moreover, while Janet does represent female independence in some ways, Kanata ends with her reunited with her early love, Mathew, and the sequel to the novel sees her as Mathew's wife, giving birth to many children. So while Janet asserts her independence in the face of a feeling of being used by the wrong sorts of men, she certainly does not have any interest in public power the way La Pompadour does, and it would seem that the novel ultimately supports conventional heterosexual relationships when both the man and woman are "honourable." In this way, the novel is not that different from its nineteenth-century counterparts; true love and marriage should ultimately be the woman's goal. Thus, La Pompadour, as a figure of female ambition, sexuality, and female influence in the public sphere, is in all the novels held up as a symbol of how women should not be. She takes on too much power, and becomes unsexed, ignoring love and virtue.

The next three novels I will examine are all engaged in one way or another with the 1837-8 Rebellions in Canada. Through a dialogue with this event, Kamouraska, The Canadian Brothers, and Alias Grace examine shifting Canadian ideas about imperialism, democracy, and Canada's relationship with Britain and the US. As I demonstrated in my last chapter, the women in these novels shift back and forth between feminine and masculine stereotypes; here, I will demonstrate how their shifting contributes to ideas of the Canadian nation as unstable. That is, they resist the notions of national unity put forth at the end of many historical romances.

In Anne Hébert's Kamouraska, the representation of French-Canadians as the defeated or reformed enemy of English-Canadians is seriously interrogated. The murder of Antoine Tassy takes place on January 31st, 1839, just a few months after the rebellion led by Robert Nelson in Lower Canada. Moreover, Elisabeth grew up in Sorel, and returns there after her marriage to Antoine becomes dangerously abusive, and Sorel is not far from a number of the sites of the Rebellions.[1] Hébert does not explicitly link Elisabeth with the French-Canadian *Patriotes*, but Elisabeth does share certain qualities with them. Like them, she seeks to overturn the ruling order in the form of her seigneur husband.

Elisabeth's relationship with Nelson, though, both evokes and complicates a nationalist reading of the text in relation to the Rebellions. As in the nineteenth-century romances, a francophone woman becomes erotically involved with an anglophone man, but the results are quite different. A comparison of Rosanna

Leprohon's Antoinette de Mirecourt and Kamouraska, even though the former is not set during the Rebellions, is important in reading the latter novel's love-story plot in relation to national events and ideologies. Colonel Evelyn, in his relationship with Antoinette, presents the possibility for peace between the French and English in a post-conquest Canada – the English will protect the French without oppressing them. George Nelson's cultural significance in his historical era, though, is more complicated. He presents some possibility for a partnership with the English, but also the possible violence of English rule, just as Elisabeth, in her love for and suspicion of George, also presents shifting loyalties and responses to nation. Rather than the critique of the La Pompadour figure present in the other novels, the allegory here is much more ambiguous.

On the one hand, George might be viewed as providing support for the French-Canadians in their struggles for freedom. His relationship to his Loyalist parents, when they ship him and his siblings off to Canada, suggests an American relationship to Britain: "Turned out of your father's house. His house with its white columns, its colonial façade" (125). Although his parents' intent here is to solidify connections to Britain by sending their children to a British colony, George's alienation from the "colonial façade" of his father's house is more suggestive of the American alienation from Britain. As well, as a doctor, he represents ideals about earning rather than inheriting one's living. Thus, in his murder of Antoine, he might represent the American influence on the Rebellions; he fights to free Elisabeth from tyranny; similarly, the *Patriotes* fought to free Quebec from class tyranny from both British and French-Canadian land holders

(Conrad 412). After the murder of Antoine, George escapes to the US; likewise after the defeat of the uprising in December 1837, the *Patriote* leaders similarly fled to the US (Conrad 416).

However, Nelson also might be read as an anglophone oppressor. Despite his alienation from his Loyalist parents, and his immersion in French-Canadian culture and religion, behind this immersion is his parents' intent to keep their children loyal to the Queen; they were willing to do "Anything, just so long as they keep their allegiance to the British crown" (125). George's role as a representative of British-Canadians is also stressed in the motifs Hébert's novel shares with many nineteenth-century English-French romances. A comparison of Kamouraska with Rosanna Leprohon's Antoinette De Mirecourt, for example, highlights how Hébert may be drawing on this text, or at least love-story motifs of the nineteenth-century romances, but presenting nation more ambiguously. Like Antoinette, Elisabeth's first husband is attractive and charming, but eventually reveals himself to be abusive; both Major Sternfield and Antoine manipulate their wives with threats and jealousy. The two women bond with new lovers, Evelyn and George, as a result of sleighing accidents: Evelyn admires Antoinette's bravery in the crisis, and when Elisabeth and George's sleigh overturns their passion is also given free rein (135).

However, Hébert takes many of the motifs of Leprohon's text and presents them in a much darker manner. Evelyn is a virtuous man, and his anger towards women is melted by Antoinette's love, but Nelson's virtue is questioned by the narrative; his love of Elisabeth *makes* him angry, bringing out his violence rather

than dissipating it. In fact, the accident with the horses in Kamouraska is brought on by Nelson's anger at Antoine as Elisabeth whispers to him the details of her abuse. George takes his anger out on the horse when he "Grabs the whip and brings it smashing down across the horse's back" (134). McClintock argues that, in colonial history, the whip as phallus "symbolizes male mastery over two dimensions: the realm of sexuality and the realm of labour" (80). She adds, "in the precarious accession to masculinity, the whip marks the boundaries between women and men and between men and animals, boundaries all the more imprecise for having so often to be reinscribed" (80). George's ferocity with the horses inscribes his power over the animals, and at the same time, as a reaction against Antoine, it also indicates George's own desire to master Elisabeth sexually, to steal her away from her husband. Rather than subduing the horses, though, George's "mastery" excites them, just as Elisabeth, in her own way, is attracted to his anger, wanting to appropriate it to fulfill her own desire for sexual and emotional freedom.

I would suggest that Hébert foregrounds the violence inherent in conventional love stories and the national allegory. After the sleigh overturns, George first "covers the horse with one of the blankets" (135). Only then does he move towards Elisabeth, and when he does so it is not to offer his assistance but rather to embrace her and send them both rolling down the embankment. It is then, too, that one of them, Elisabeth cannot remember who, begins to think about murdering Antoine. The encounter between Elisabeth and George not only brings to the fore the sexual element of the motif of sleighing accident, but also

its violence. Even though Evelyn loses control of the horses, he reinstates power when he shoots them. And even though he cares for Antoinette's safety, he eventually, as I argued in Chapter Two, establishes his power over her in their marriage.

While Elisabeth does eventually call George "Murderer. Stranger," she also stresses that she still loves him, and cannot bear the thought of him being with another woman (248). Elisabeth's simultaneous love and suspicion of George – who is both American freedom-fighter and British oppressor – is crucial in terms of reading the text as a commentary on Quebec society. Like Colonel Evelyn, George is an anglophone who wins over a French-Canadian woman, in this case murdering her connection to the old French order (Antoine); thus George might be read as reifying anglophone power in French Canada. The fact that Antoine and George were childhood colleagues emphasizes this; as schoolmates, their games of chess might represent the long history of conflict between France and Britain. In fact, the relationship between the erotic and political becomes explicit when Elisabeth imagines George wanting to bring back "The law of the victor and the vanquished" and embodying a "frenzied yearning" to "Possess this woman. Possess the earth" (126). There are echoes here of the goals of the British empire in its hunger for land and wealth, and the traditional figuration of women as land to be conquered.

Whether we read George as American or British, Elisabeth's sexual transgression has consequences for her Québécois society. Faith argues that in nineteenth-century Canada, "It was rationalized that strict monogamy on the part

of women was essential to knowing correct descent of blood lines and male inheritance" (31). The policing of women's sexuality perhaps becomes even more important in Quebec, where, for a conquered people, insularity becomes a strategy for cultural survival. Like Blanche in Canadians of Old, it is Elisabeth's duty as a French-Canadian woman not to subject herself to an English man, but to keep the blood lines pure. While Elisabeth's crime is figured as an offence against the Queen, it is perhaps also an offence against her society; through her pregnant body, she allows the community to be penetrated by an outsider.

Despite her rebellion against a seigneur in the form of her husband, Elisabeth's own cultural significance in relation to George is sometimes uncertain. While George offers protection from those who would disobey French-Canadian Catholic ideals – as Antoine disobeys them in his philandering, drinking, suicide attempts, and so on – ultimately Elisabeth is not so sure who her oppressor is: "What if, in some mysterious way, my husband's mask were to spread itself over the conqueror's features?" (239). At other times, though, she would adore her "conqueror": "Let the Queen have every patriot hanged if that's her pleasure. But not my love. Let him live, him alone" (40). Her construction here can be interpreted in two ways. She may be identifying George as a patriot, but would have him excepted from the hangings the others receive, or she may be suggesting that she cares not for the *Patriotes*, but only for George, who is not one. Here, she distinguishes herself form the rebel cause.

Similarly, too, Elisabeth straddles a number of other divisions in Quebec society. She identifies with Aurélie and envies her lower-class freedom, yet she

uses her wealth and influence as an upper-class woman to manipulate Aurélie into attempting murder for her; she promises Aurélie beautiful clothes and other luxuries in exchange for the crime. Thus, Elisabeth benefits from the class structure, even though she undercuts it when she desires to leave her wealthy seigneur husband for a doctor who lives in a house in the woods. In her second marriage, long after the murder, she enjoys status as Madame Rolland, with a big house and lots of children, yet this life imprisons her, and she longs for her anglophone lover. In fact, when she and George are plotting the murder, she sees *herself* as "the malicious and sinister stranger" (127). Just as George is American and British, saviour and sinner, rescuer and conqueror, so is Elisabeth respectable wife and dangerous murderess, victim and victor, lower class and upper class, Québécois and stranger. While in Alias Grace Atwood makes explicit the way others read Grace, Hébert, through Elisabeth, puts more emphasis on the continuously shifting and contradictory aspects of all subjectivities; Elisabeth reads and presents *herself* in contradictory ways; she acknowledges her own fragmented self, her own struggles with whom she is supposed to be and whom she wants to be. For her, as a woman, whose roles are restricted, the gap between these two states becomes particularly wide.

Thus, it is difficult to read the national allegory in Kamouraska, as the characters straddle borders and escape clear signification. In Antoinette De Mirecourt, Evelyn is Britain, Antoinette is New France, but George and Elisabeth slip in and out of these categories. Douglas L. Boudreau argues that Nelson is eventually erased from the text because he supplants aspects of Quebec society

– in his medical practice and in his affair with Antoine's wife – and thus he must be removed from the community: "It is the threat of assimilation, uniquely represented by the *Anglais* and representable by no Other in French-Canadian literature, that is rejected, purged, in the novels of Anne Hébert" (316). This is, however, only one interpretation. Antoine is portrayed as such a nasty human being that it is difficult not to empathize with George and see justice in his acts of violence. As anglophone, George may signify a rescuer rather than an oppressor; he would save Quebec from a stifling class system which gives power to francophone as well as anglophone upper classes. While in Antoinette De Mirecourt, the anglophone lover is either cruel conqueror or benign oppressor, in Kamouraska Hébert shows how male power makes both characteristics possible in the same man, and this reflects both the partnership and oppressive possibilities of anglophone-francophone relations. It is tempting to read Kamouraska as a straightforward narrative on the precarious position of women under patriarchal nations, French or English, that require competition, conquest and violence. However, Elisabeth's own ability to find some power through the violence of George Nelson, and through her fractured selfhood, also interrogates this interpretation.

Hébert's novel also has resonance with contemporary Quebec society. Published shortly after the Quiet Revolution of 1960-66, Kamouraska highlights several issues relevant to that process – a rebellion against old social structures, the oppressive sense of insularity, the clash between religious ideals and practical reality, and the enmity of anglophone-francophone relations, sometimes

leading to violence (Bélanger). Thus, the novel demonstrates ambiguous attitudes towards English Canada – it can be a partner for Quebec or an enemy. As Robin Mathews notices, "when the Québécois turned upon their religious leaders and upon the symbols of materialist oppression, they were left with only two fundamental choices: independence and closely guarded self-sufficiency or economic partnership with the U.S. and significantly loosened ties with English Canada" (107). Mathews sees Quebec as moving towards the latter. At the same time, of course, as an anglophone nation, the U.S. also presents the threat of assimilation. Thus, the same issues of insider/outsider and cultural preservation are as important in contemporary Quebec society as they were in the time period Hébert presents. Rather than idealizing the conquest of Quebec through a traditional love story, or simply reversing that plot line, Hébert presents love and violence as inherent to both individual and national relationships, and she presents no straightforward ideology about either. Her text is neither about revolution nor submission, but a world where identity – gendered or national or cultural – is never stable or monologic.

In The Canadian Brothers, Matilda Montgomerie comes to represent her nation, the United States, and its relationship to Canada during both the War of 1812 and, less explicitly, the Rebellions in Canada in 1837-8, which occurred just a few years before the novel was published. At the same time, because, as I argued in Chapter Five, Matilda's identity is constantly shifting from romantic heroine, to fallen woman, to would-be murderess, the national allegory she is a

part of is also problematized.

Matilda is often referred to as simply "The American," especially in her interactions with Gerald. This is important because Gerald, as the novel's title indicates, is a representative of Canada, and the war is presented as a test of Canadian fidelity to Britain and resistance to American republicanism. When, at the beginning of the novel, Gerald is absent from his post, there is some speculation about his American sympathies, but these are quickly disproved when he captures an American ship. Gerald and Matilda's erotic relationship uses the "marriage metaphor" of many other nineteenth-century Canadian romances, with each character representing his or her country, but the results of this relationship are very different: Matilda and Gerald are eventually emotionally alienated from each other, and then die. Through Gerald's moral degradation and then death, Richardson stresses the need for distinction between Canada and the US. As Douglas Ivison argues, "Engagement with the Americans can only lead to the destruction of Gerald's understanding of self, and The Canadian Brothers is clearly a warning about the dangerous temptations presented by the United States" (171).

The "temptations" offered by the US might include democracy. The people behind the Rebellions in both Upper and Lower Canada were influenced by the democratic ideals espoused in the United States (Conrad 412-24), and after the initial rebellion in Upper Canada failed, the exiled leaders were responsible for several further skirmishes in Canada "with the aid of quite numerous American sympathizers" (Kerr 51). It is possible that, as a veteran of the War of 1812, and

in the face of such lower-class threats to the Canadian social system, Richardson was inspired to write a novel that would argue for the value of Canada as closely tied to Britain and maintaining an identity separate from the US.

Richardson's strategy is to point out the *lack* of democracy in the US. Daniel Coleman, in an essay on loyalist literature, notices that in novels such as Richardson's, "The Canadian brother's enlightened attitude towards Africans is presented in the allegory as support for the loyalist claim that true liberty can be found only under the British constitution" (144). By the War of 1812 the Emancipation Act had (in theory at least) freed most of the slaves in Upper Canada,[2] and the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was in effect throughout the British colonies. Matilda, on the other hand, lives on an estate with several slaves, and her adopted uncle asserts racist ideas in his justification for the Americans dispossessing the Natives of their land and slaughtering them when they retaliate: "The uneducated negro is, from infancy and long custom, doomed to slavery, wherefore should the copper coloured Indian be more free? [. . .] I would merely show that, incapable of benefitting by the advantages of the soil they inherit, they should learn to yield it with a good grace to those who can" (78-79). Natives also receive poor treatment at the hands of the Americans: Tecumseh, after the defeat of Commodore Barclay on Lake Erie, sees in that downfall "the destruction of all his hopes of retrieving his race from the hated thraldom of American tyranny and American usurpation" (431). Jeremiah Desborough, who literally consumes Native peoples (382), may be a horrific symbol of his country's treatment of them. While Major Montgomerie points out

the British have not always been kind to the Natives, Colonel D'Egville argues that this is all in the past, and that of late the British have been conciliatory in their treatment of the Natives (87). There is a long tradition of Canadians believing they have historically treated Natives better than Americans have, because the goal of genocide in Canada has not been quite so overtly expressed. Richardson's novel supports this dream of Canada as a nation of diplomats and peacemakers, while at the same time asserting white superiority; there is a vague sense that British-Canadians will be able to resist the Americans in the way that other (perhaps lesser, in Richardson's mind) races cannot.

While Coleman argues that the white Canadians in the novel are presented as virtuously acting "on behalf of" Natives and Africans (144), the oppression of these peoples also becomes a sign for the possible fate of Canada generally when Gerald exclaims to Matilda at one point, "how devotedly I could be your slave for ever" (251). The racializing of eroticism here (and the eroticizing of racism) suggests that, for Richardson, Gerald is degraded in his attempts to unite with Matilda, and this "Canadian brother" would be enslaved to the Americans in such a union as much as Natives and African-Americans are. The point is furthered when Henry notices that his brother "had been fascinated by [Matilda's] beauty, in a manner which showed her conquest to be complete" (222). Coleman argues that Matilda represents a feminine/American threat to the moral brotherhood of the British-Canadian garrison (141-42, 147), and certainly, Gerald's relationship with Matilda, because it "unnaturally" reverses the gender hierarchy – man becomes slave to woman, man becomes conquered – further

indicates the unnaturalness of Canadian union with or subjugation to Americans.

In making British-Canadians' themselves potential victims of immoral American ambition, Richardson draws attention away their from own roles as oppressors of non-white Canadians. We have here another example of Alan Lawson's "settler-invader." Lawson states, "National identity is a form of identity politics: it is formulated as a strategy of resistance toward a dominant culture" (30). While previously, for Canada and other nations, this dominant culture was Great Britain, more recently it has shifted to "the globalizing tendency of the international politics, popular culture, and academic politics of the United States" (30). In Chapter Four, I demonstrated how some of the authors differentiated Canada from Britain in order to mask white Canadians' involvement in colonization. Here, Richardson anticipates the shift Lawson notices and presents Canada as a minority culture struggling against the US, distracting Canadians from their own roles as oppressors.[3]

The Canadians in the novel eventually defeat the US, and it is a moral as well as a military triumph. Like the other nineteenth-century romances, The Canadian Brothers uses the gender hierarchy to reinforce a cultural hierarchy. Gerald might have chosen for his wife his kinder, gentler cousin, Gertrude. In his seduction by Matilda, and the chaos that follows, Richardson emphasizes the dangers of mixing cultures, as he does in Wacousta when Frederick De Haldimar declines an erotic relationship with Oucanasta in favour of a marriage to his cousin Madeline; Frederick makes the right choice, but Gerald errs. The typical gender motifs of the love story are changed; rather than the anglophone

Canadian male finding morality and love in the French-Canadian female, here the female is an Other who must remain outside of the borders, a demonic temptress rather than an angel.

Just as Matilda dies at the end of her narrative, so the Americans must be rejected and destroyed. Richardson arranges his narrative so that the Battle of Queenston Heights comes in the last chapter (although this battle actually happened earlier in the war), thus emphasizing Canadian victory and American death. While the "Canadian Brothers" of the title have died by the end of the novel, Canada appears to have triumphed. The battle at Queenston Heights saw only one hundred of Brock's men killed versus thirteen hundred American attackers (Conrad 408). Richardson portrays the defeated Americans as cowardly, in contrast to the heroic General Brock and the brothers; the Americans are "dismayed" and "waver," "flying in despair" and "yielding to the panic which had seized them" (470-71). Matilda dies in sin, and her American brethren similarly die without honour, practically driven to insanity by their losses, shorn of dignity. While the last pages of the novel depict Desborough's "triumph" in bearing Henry Grantham over the precipice, this sight helps spur the British-Canadians onto victory. Readers are left with a vision of "the mangled bodies of the Americans" down the cliff side, falling to where "the sunbeam never yet penetrated" (473). The last sentence tells readers, "The picked and whitened bones may be seen, shining through the deep gloom that envelopes every part of the abyss, even to this day" (473).

However, Matilda as a symbol of the US is sometimes more problematic,

because she criticizes both Canada and the US. Not only does she point out the dishonourable actions of a high-ranking, supposedly "honourable" American man, Colonel Forrester, but she also critiques the war of which he and Gerald are both a part. She taunts Gerald for being unable to commit the murder of Forrester though he kills as a soldier, an action she views as "the worst of murders, for you but do the duty of a hireling slayer. In cold blood, and for a stipend, do you put an end to the fair existence of him who never injured you in thought or deed, and whom under other circumstances, you would perhaps have taken to your heart in friendship" (411). When Gerald argues that his profession is approved of by God and man, but the kind of murder she asks for is sanctioned by neither, Matilda retorts with skill:

> Worldly policy and social interests alone have drawn the distinction, making the one a crime, the other a virtue; but tell me not that an all wise and just God sanctions or approves the slaying of his creatures because they perish, not singly at the will of one man, but in thousands and tens of thousands at the will of another. (411)

While Coleman views Matilda's sense of justice as "explicitly coded as American" (135), her critique here targets male-dominated governments, both American and British-Canadian ones, for the flawed reasoning that distinguishes war from murder. In this sense, Matilda seems to operate outside of the national allegory. In criticizing both the United States and Canada for their roles in the war, she becomes more than just a representative of the former.

Although the narrative voice critiques Matilda at times, it does not entirely

refute her social criticism. Coleman views Matilda as the feminine enemy of the novel's loyalist and fraternal perspective, but the narrative also provides some justification for her critique of patriarchal war. The friendly discourse between Major Montgomerie and Colonel D'Egville, and Gerald and Colonel Forrester, portrays war as occasionally 'civilized' and polite. However, there are also passages in the novel which support Matilda's ideas about the horror of war, presenting a bloodier aspect of Canadian history. During one of the battles, Gerald's fire kills several officers, and in the room where they were destroyed, the walls are "completely bespotted with blood and brains, scarcely yet dry any where [sic], and in several places dripping to the floor" (207). The bodies in the gorge at Queenston Heights are "crushed and mangled in a manner to render them scarcely recognizable even as human beings" (470). Richardson's vivid imagery forces the reader to see the horrors of the war alongside its glories.

The difficulty that Matilda creates is that her role as "proto-feminist" contrasts with her role as symbol of the American nation. As I argued in Chapter Five, Matilda's critique of the patriarchy is a mode of resistance, but this resistance is problematized if she is read in the national allegory, for in her role as American slave-owner she benefits from the white patriarchal order she criticizes. As with its precursor, Wacousta, readerly sympathies do not know where to settle in the novel. Matilda is one moment the conqueror, and another moment the victim; Gerald is one moment the honourable Canadian paragon of masculinity, the next an alcoholic driven nearly insane by his love for Matilda. Richardson, in Wacousta, manages to make the title character, a vengeful

murderer, somewhat sympathetic when Wacousta is given the chance to tell his own side of the story, and provides the reasons behind his awful transformation. Something similar happens to Matilda; her ability to critique the dominant order which has victimized her makes her an appealing character despite, or because of, her violence.

For all of Richardson's attempts to set her up as an American, Matilda resists this designation through her enactment of gender. She problematizes the ideology that configures woman-as-nation because she critiques the patriarchal vision that imposes the symbol of nation upon her. As a result, she inadvertently foregrounds the complicated position of settler women in a nation; on the one hand, as a white woman in the United States she enjoys certain privileges as a slave owner with a large estate, while as *woman* she is on the fringes of power, and thus must seek agency in a destabilizing of the very nation that allows her racial power.

Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace, like the previous two novels, is also concerned with the Rebellions and Canada-US relations. The novel places the emphasis, as with Grace's gendered identity, on how her national affiliations are interpreted rather than fixing them in a particular way. Grace is able to shift back and forth across national and social boundaries.

Grace's lawyer, Mr. Mackenzie, in his conversation with Dr. Simon Jordan, notices that Grace's conviction and sentencing were connected to political events and class struggles at the time of the murders, which took place only a few years

after the Rebellions:

> If you've read back over the newspapers, you'll have noticed that those which supported Mr. [William Lyon] Mackenzie and his cause were the only ones to say a good word for Grace. The others were all for hanging her, and William Lyon Mackenzie as well, and anyone else thought to harbour republican sentiments. (446)

The newspapers constructed and "read" Grace's actions based on political sympathies; they chose to present her as rebel hero or criminal. Grace and McDermott may have murdered an upper-class man, thus they were made into Rebellious figures and, because the Rebellions were assigned different values and meanings depending on one's perspective, Grace and McDermott were praised or disdained for the murder.

Grace is also "read" by her guards, who impute their own meaning to the Rebellions when they employ republican ideas to sexually harass Grace:

> I'll thank you not to take liberties, I say, pulling away. I'm all for liberties myself, says the one, being a republican at heart, having no use for the Queen of England except what Nature intended [. . .] and what I say is, no man is better than the next, and it's share and share alike and none preferred; and once you've given it out to one of us, why then, the others must all take their turns like true democrats, and why should that little runt McDermott be allowed to enjoy what is denied to his betters? (284)

The desire for democracy, a force behind the Rebellions, becomes a justification

for the maintenance, rather than the destruction, of hierarchy. The obliteration of the Queen's rule, of the rule of a woman, reifies traditional gender roles, with women's only purpose being to sexually serve men. Grace's role as a symbol of democracy is likewise used to make her the shared property of all men. Likewise, republicanism only allows society's "betters" to appropriate what "belongs" to the poor.

There is evidence, despite these interpretations of Grace in relation to the Rebellions, that she could be read oppositely. Her father, for example, is British and an Orangeman, and she herself is Protestant, which distances her from most of the Irish in Canada at the time; furthermore, her supposed "paramour" James McDermott is connected to the Glengarry Light Infantry which helped put down the Rebellion. Grace could also be read on either side of the Rebellions because she crosses class boundaries, not just in the power reversals that occur when Kinnear is murdered, but in more subtle ways too. Kinnear says, for example, that Grace could pass for an upper-class lady (332), and she dresses in Nancy's much nicer clothes when she and McDermott are running away in order to pass for such. This may be what makes her so terrifying to some contingents of the press, and part of what makes Jamie's observation that she's wearing Nancy's dress at the trial so horrible; like Nancy, Grace attempts to transcend her lower-class role through clothing. McClintock notices that "What one can call sumptuary panic (boundary panic over clothing) erupts most intensely during periods of social turbulence" (174). Grace's clothing takes on special significance because it enacts the threatened class distinctions of the Rebellions.

Importantly, Grace herself recognizes the variety of interpretations inferred from the murders and the Rebellions, and self-consciously imagines how she and McDermott might have posited their own interpretation to their benefit. Grace and McDermott were arrested in an American tavern, and she believes the men there might have rescued them from the police "if McDermott had thought to shout out that he was a revolutionary or a republican, or some such, and he had his rights, and down with the British; because there was still considerable high feelings then, on the side of Mr. William Lyon Mackenzie and the Rebellion, and there were those in the States that wanted to invade Canada" (424-25). Just as Grace demonstrates an awareness of the constructed nature of the roles of women, here she demonstrates an awareness of the constructed and unstable nature of political ideals and identities, and the way they can be manipulated for a variety of disparate causes.

In the light of the Rebellions, Grace's story takes on special significance regarding relations between Canada and the US. Following the tradition I have been delineating using eroticism as national allegory in Canadian historical novels, one might be tempted to read Simon and Grace as representatives of their nations. The temptation is increased given the prolonged dialogue between them that Atwood sets up as the centre of the novel, and given Atwood's recurring critical interest in defining the Canadian ethos. Simon might be viewed as representing the United States, as he is from there and returns there at the novel's end in order to fight in the Civil War. His interest in the Kinnear murders and his somewhat sympathetic feeling (at least at times) towards Grace might

represent American sympathies with the Rebellion. The erotic tension between Grace and Simon could be a metaphor for the Canadian flirtation with democracy. However, their erotic impulses are not part of a conventional love story, and their relationship presents a gendered and national power struggle without resolving such a struggle in a happy, loving union. Simon is in a position of power over her; he is "free" while she is imprisoned; he is the doctor and she is the patient. Grace comments that there were Americans at the time of the murders who wanted to invade Canada and, similarly, the language Simon uses to describe Grace suggests his desire for penetration and conquest rather than partnership. He refers to her, at different times, as a nut, an oyster, and a clam that he would like to pry open (60, 152, 367); these food metaphors simultaneously suggest consumption as well as vaginal entry. Grace, however, eludes him. Her word play, her refusal to reveal everything, simultaneously calls him over and pushes him away. In some ways, her resistance can be viewed as supporting the national allegory; Canada is attracted to American ideas, but will not be fully subsumed by them.

However, the narrative also resists a national allegory. Simon may possess a particular need to categorize Grace (as guilty or innocent, sane or insane, sexual victim or seductress) partly because his own class, gender, and national identities are so uncertain. His family is upper class by birth, but poor; he is a man, and should have power over women, but he is manipulated by Mrs. Humphrey, Dora, Grace, his mother, and, eventually it seems, Faith Cartwright. He is from the US, but spends time in Canada interviewing Grace, and has

travelled widely in Europe. The shifting nature of Simon's identity is emphasized in his fate at the novel's end: he receives a head injury in the Civil War and loses much of his recent memory. This emblem of the war reminds readers that, especially at this point in history, the United States itself was not a coherent nation, unstable in its own identities.

Moreover, certainly Grace's major characterization is that she is not easily encapsulated in categories, and this includes national ones. This first becomes evident in Grace's relationship with Jeremiah the peddler. Jeremiah is himself a boundary crosser, slipping back and forth between Canada and the US with ease, and transforming himself from Jeremiah the peddler to Dr. Jerome DuPont to Mr. Gerald Bridges. He suggests, early on, to Grace, "You are one of us" (180). She interprets this to mean that she is "homeless, and a wanderer" (180), although it might also suggest that she too crosses all sorts of boundaries, geographical and otherwise.

For example, Grace is an Irish emigrant, a Canadian and, at the end of the novel, an American. She passes back and forth between Canada and the United States, the first time when she and McDermott are on the run, then when they are captured, and then when she returns to the US again after she is pardoned. Her fleeing to the US in disguise, of course, connects her to William Lyon Mackenzie, who also crossed to the US in disguise after the Rebellion failed. Both Mackenzie's and Grace's boundary-crossing here suggests that the two countries are not quite so distinct; the border between Canada and the United States can be traversed, physically and ideologically. Jeremiah, in fact, notices

very little difference between the two countries:

> In many ways it is the same as here, he said. There are rogues and scoundrels everywhere, but they use a different sort of language to excuse themselves; and there they pay a great lip service to democracy, just as here they rant on about the right order of society, and loyalty to the Queen; though the poor man is poor on every shore. But when you cross over the border, it is like passing through air, you wouldn't know you'd done it; as the trees on both sides of it are the same. (315-16)

Despite upper-class fears of "republican ideas" in Canada, Jeremiah's point seems to be that there is still very much a hierarchy in the US, just as there is in Canada. Democracy is not much of a threat to the ruling order; white men of some income will remain in charge.

Grace is unstable as a character, a boundary crosser, and it is difficult to view her as a solid representation of Canada, or of the lower classes, or of the Irish. However, at the same time, the anxiety around defining Grace, and the inability of those around her to do so, perhaps only makes her an apt representation of Canada. Like Canadian national identity, in some critics' readings, she is constantly shifting, constantly evading categorization. Rather than, as with Matilda, Grace's challenging of gendered identity likewise challenging the national allegory, Grace's fluidity may actually contribute to the latter (although with very different effects than those in some historical romances) because of contemporary notions of Canada as particularly multiple and unstable

in its identifications. While some would define Canada against the United States, the histories of the two countries are inevitably tied, with Canadian reformists moving back and forth across the borders, just like the immigrants who come from Britain and Europe.

Furthermore, the possibility of Grace's involvement in an act of heinous violence suggests a difficulty in presenting Canadian history; those who would define Canadian ideals might see them as gesturing towards the country as wholly benevolent, the ideal Northrop Frye calls the "peaceable kingdom" ("Conclusion" 249). However, the oppression of the lower classes, the negative treatment of immigrants and women, and violent incidents like the Rebellions suggest that there is a darker side to Canadian history too; the ideal of peaceful unity, scrutinized more closely, reveals the oppression and subordination such unity requires. The fissures and conflicts are already there in Canadian history; Grace's shifting identities are not necessarily reconcilable with each other.

Each of the violent women I have evoked in this chapter resists, in some way, the relegation of women to the sphere of domesticity, emotionality, and morality. The violent women in the first section are strongly criticized by the narratives for this resistance. Their more moral counterparts are allowed some small role in politics, but this is portrayed as a kind of "last resort," a necessity brought about by a corrupt regime where men are not doing their political jobs properly, but allowing women of "loose" morals to influence them. Angélique and Madame Cournal are portrayed in such a way that they do not escape, even

though or because they are violent, their significance as symbols of nation. In this case, though, they are affiliated with the *wrong* nation – France rather than Britain. Their moral counterparts associate themselves, by the end of each novel, with Britain, because their innate morality makes them choose the "right" nation for their allegiance. For both the immoral and the moral women, national allegiances are associated with sexuality, extra-marital affairs in the first case, and retirement to a convent and loving marriage in the second. The sexuality of these women indicates the morality or lack thereof of their national allegiances.

In the second set of novels, as the women both evoke and resist a reading of their eroticism as national allegory, the interactions between feminist and postcolonial readings become complex, especially in regard to the issue of agency. I suggested, in Chapter Five, that Matilda, Elisabeth, and Grace find some degree of agency through their supposed lack of agency; that is, in their construction as fallen women, they are freed from the restrictive norm of female morality, and thus locate and manipulate their own presentations of identity in a way that suggests a performative rather than an essentialized notion of gender. This performativity is also apparent, to some extent, in their national affiliations. While the women in the first section of this chapter represent stable notions of the Canadian nation – as anglophone and moral and dominated by men, rather than francophone and corrupt and dominated by women – this second set of novels problematizes nation. Kamouraska apparently draws on several of the motifs of the French-English romances of the nineteenth-century, while at the same time resisting such allegories. Appealing as George Nelson might be as

anglophone saviour, Hébert also constructs him as dangerous, violent, and harsh in his treatment of Elisabeth. In the case of Matilda Montgomerie, my feminist reading of her in Chapter Five likewise disables the national allegory that Richardson puts forth in several ways in the novel. The narrative construction of Matilda as a fair critic of both the Canadian and American governments, dominated as they are by men, resists any reading of her as simply a symbol of American corruption. Grace Marks, more consciously than the other two women, imagines a political affiliation for herself when she postulates that she and McDermott might have received assistance in escaping if they had called themselves Rebels. She seems to recognize, in this passage, the way that political affiliations can be constructed for a variety of purposes. She also evokes in her relationship with Simon a temptation to read her allegorically, but she resists this in her multiple national affiliations.

The issues both sets of women raise are those of ambiguity and agency. As I have frequently argued in this dissertation, *ambivalence* can simply be used in literature to reify the dominant order: cultural, gendered, racial. This appears to be the case with the texts which examine British-French relations in Canada; they suggest women are both inherently virtuous and inherently sinful, keepers of the nation but disastrous if given an opportunity to make political decisions. They establish, through the women, a representation of Canada as stable, anglophone and masculine. On the other hand, the novels which examine French- or English-Canadian relations with Americans employ more *ambiguous* notions of both gender and nation. I realize that ambivalence and ambiguity can be related, but

here I see ambivalence as categorizing groups of people in contradictory ways, while ambiguity resists categorization, breaking down the distinctions between categories. The distinction between ambivalence and ambiguity might be a direct result of the difference in the power structure. Faced with an alien cultural minority, the English put forth ambivalent ideas about the French and women in order to contain them in imprisoning contradictions. Faced with the greater, "outside" power of the US, the strategy of some Canadians is to construct *themselves* in such a way as to avoid the categorization imposed on the country. To be categorized, is to be dead, stable, trapped.

The difficulty is with Matilda Montgomerie, an American who also resists categorization as simply "American." Richardson here exhibits, on the one hand, an anxiety about the US as a place where identities are fractured: Canada must maintain a coherent and moral identity in order to survive. The problem is that Richardson's narrative seems to have so much sympathy for its "fractured" heroine, that it ends up endorsing, from a feminist perspective, the same lack of stable identity it wants to resist on the national level. The notion of the United States, not as the dominant and coherent Other, but as fractured and divided itself, in fact provides a way for envisioning nation altogether: it is not merely that Canada can avoid categorization, but it can recognize the fractures in the United States as well, and view all nations, not just Canada, as constructed.

It is this destabilizing of nation generally that might avoid using nationalism as a distraction from white Canadians' oppression of others. If Canadian nationhood is not posited as a resistance to a dominant Other, but as, like *all* nations,

inherently shifting and unstable, then there is space for the voices of minority cultures, races, and sexualities. The novels in the second section of this chapter challenge the gendered and national stereotypes of the historical romance. McClintock argues, "Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to national agency" (354). Matilda, Elisabeth, and Grace do not gain access to any pragmatic political power, but they all resist being reduced to simple national symbols. The erotic allegory might still be an allegory, but it is one where unstable categories of gender reflect only unstable categories of nation.

Notes

[1] These include St. Denis, St. Charles, St. Eustache, Odelltown, and Moore's Corners.

[2] The Emancipation Act of Upper Canada stipulated that any slave under six years of age in Canada in 1793 could be kept until the slave was twenty-five years of age, and all slaves over that age had to be given their freedom within six years. By the War of 1812, then, there would be few legal slaves left in Upper Canada. Thus, although Gerald has an old Black "servant" named Sambo, who has been in long service to the family, he is probably not technically a slave, unless he is kept illegally by the Granthams. However, there may have been little distinction between the conditions and treatment of a slave and a Black servant at this point in history.

[3] Coleman also employs Lawson's essay, but in a slightly different manner, suggesting that the brothers' affiliation with Natives distinguishes them from their less wilderness-savvy British comrades, as well as from the greediness of the Americans (144-45).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Lost in Reflection: Queering the National Allegory

Narcissus is a particularly useful figure in discussions of Canadian literature because so much of it appears to be concerned with the national self, and much Canadian criticism is interested in finding the national identity reflected in the national literature; that is, Canada itself might be called narcissistic in its obsession with selfhood. More importantly, though, the connection between Narcissus and homosexuality is especially relevant in those Canadian novels that depict intense, same-sex relationships (whether those relationships are explicitly sexual or not) alongside narratives of national history. Narcissus "is said to aspire to that which is the same" but he is "continually destroying the political safety promised by sameness" (Bruhm 178); his homoerotic desire for himself makes him different from mainstream heteronormative society. The love-story plot in Canadian historical novels is also tied to negotiations of gendered and cultural similarity and difference. Often, the erotic partners, to serve as an allegory for the nation, must be different, but not too different. For example, in some nineteenth-century narratives, the couples involve characters of different genders, sexes, and cultures, but not different races – the man can be English and the woman can be French, but they must both be European rather than Native, for example. However, when both characters are of the same sex, as in some Canadian novels, cultural politics become more complicated. Can a French man be subordinated to an English man the way a French woman can, to demonstrate

anglophone rule in Canada? When the national allegory is homosexual rather than heterosexual, the sexual hierarchy cannot be as easily used to enforce a racial or cultural hierarchy; thus, homoeroticism in the Canadian historical novels in this chapter is either repudiated, to enforce the heterosexual nation, or celebrated as a new envisioning of cultural relations and as a disruption of the national allegory.

Peter Dickinson, in Here is Queer, demonstrates the way that discourses of nation and discourses of sexuality are "enmeshed" (29). He notes that "the Canadian literary canon seems to have no trouble incorporating homosexuality into its rarefied textual precincts, so long, that is, as it functions primarily as a means of re-eroticizing readers' fundamentally heterosexual love for their country" (5). He wonders though "what happens when (homo)sexual *dissidence* is used to signal a somewhat more *ambivalent* attachment to the idea of nationhood" (5).[1] Dickinson suggests that the interplay of sexual dissidence and national ambivalence in, for example, the works of Timothy Findley, "displaces ideas of fixed meaning – especially regarding the commodification/conflation of identities" (7). Like Dickinson, I am interested in the representation of "dissident" sexualities in Canada, but I find that homosexuality in the contemporary novels under study here may contribute to a destabilizing of national myth, while they set up stable, if celebratory, notions of homosexual identity. That is, novels which interrogate categories of national identity are not always interrogative of the romance and its love-story motifs. They sometimes simply transfer the motifs and character types of the heterosexual romance into a homosexual framework, and

this in itself is only a limited kind of subversion.

In Reflecting Narcissus: A Queer Aesthetic, Steven Bruhm notices the myriad of ways that Narcissus has been employed by critics and authors across time to depict and define homosexuality. Bruhm points to the fact that some writers and theorists have used Freud's definition of homosexuality as narcissistic to repudiate and oppress homosexuals and thus enforce heteronormativity. Other writers, Bruhm notices, have explored Narcissus as a positive figure for homosexual identity, one that creates a liberation from the distinction between self and other and from compulsory heterosexuality.

Freud writes that the homosexual, rather than desiring his mother as the heterosexual does, identifies with her desire, and places another man in the role he occupied with regards to her; through another man, he loves himself as his mother loved him. Homo-Narcissus (Bruhm's phrase) has never learned to "properly" transfer his desire to another of the opposite sex; his desire for a man is actually a Narcissistic desire for the self. Thus, Freud's homosexual is regressive, or underdeveloped. Bruhm explains that in a heteronormative society, the homosexual man's desire for self makes him an Other to those who "correctly" desire those who are not self.

Drawing on the work of feminist theorists, Bruhm aligns homosexuality with society's abject:

> As Butler argues, Freudian theory makes clear that gender identity is formulated around the threat of injury and castration: the male

> fears he will be castrated, the female fears she will not. Thus, adopting a sexed subject-position requires the repudiation of unacceptable desires, the banishing of them to the unconscious where their presence as threat (their status as abject, in Julia Kristeva's language) is continually necessary for the constitution of the subjectivity that repudiates them. (14)

Homosexuality itself, as a traditionally repudiated desire, becomes associated with that which must be denied in order to constitute the heteronormative subject. Thus, the narcissistic homosexual is always rejected, but the societal need to reject him or her also suggests that s/he is never entirely eradicated; in fact, the continued presence of homosexuality as a threat is necessary for the composition of heterosexuality.[2]

Bruhm also points out ways in which Narcissus has been configured more positively by queer theorists to legitimate or celebrate homosexuality. He states that these configurations usually employ either a “universalizing” or a “minoritizing” model (11). Sometimes, queer Narcissus subverts the dominant sexual culture by proving that "we're all queer here" (Bruhm 9). Narcissism is, in fact, a part of all desire; we are all seeking a validation of self in the love of another (Bruhm 6). Some queer theorists, too, point out that heteronormative culture, in using Narcissistic homosexuality as that against which heterosexuality is defined, is itself employing narcissism, desiring its own definitive image (see Bruhm's discussion of Michael Warner, p. 8).

On the other end of the theoretical spectrum are queer theorists who posit

the particularity of Narcissus, who see in Narcissus a more specifically homosexual identity. Earl Jackson, for example, reads in Freud's explanation of narcissism "the gay man's joy of surrendering masculine patriarchal entitlement in order to engage a pleasure that is outside the patriarchal, a pleasure accessible only to the narcissistic subject, not the anaclitic one" (Bruhm 10). The danger in such thinking, Bruhm argues, is its essentializing impulse. Jackson's "is a theory produced by and located in homosexual men only. The minority speaks from the margins yet continually fortifies the boundaries that ghettoize it" (11).

Bruhm's study is limited to male homosexuality because he sees Narcissus as less useful in a discussion of lesbianism. The lesbian, in Freud's theorizing, "is not narcissistic enough" (Bruhm 19) because in desiring a woman she identifies with her father rather than with the mother's love for the child (her own self). However, I feel that Narcissus, as a figure attracted to sameness and concerned with the self, is still useful in discussing lesbian identity. Theorists concerned with links between female eroticism and writing by women, such as Hélène Cixous and Adrienne Rich, have emphasized the importance of the mother-daughter bodily bond in infancy for the development of a female identity. Cixous especially suggests a "return" to this pre-Symbolic space of nurturing as a means of reconnecting with the repressed female body:

> There always remains in woman that force which produces/is produced by the other – in particular, the other woman. *In* her, matrix, cradler; herself giver as her mother and child. [. . .] It is necessary and sufficient that the best of herself be given to woman

> by another woman for her to be able to love herself and return in love the body that was 'born' to her. (2045)

While Cixous is writing about female identity generally rather than homosexuality specifically (she argues later on the same page "We are all Lesbians"), her emphasis on female bodily exchange is certainly homoerotic, and she re-writes the Freudian development of the child's sexuality in relation to the parents, emphasizing here the "intense pleasure" in the daughter's relation to the mother (2045). The desire for sameness and selfhood represented by the daughter's desire for the mother's love of her, suggests that Narcissus might be a useful figure in discussions of female as well as male homosexuality.

Narcissus is perhaps more explicitly evoked in relation to women by Luce Irigaray in "The Looking Glass, from the Other Side" when the character Alice expresses how her self-image is determined by those around her, many of them men: "either I don't have any 'self,' or else I have a multitude of 'selves' appropriated by them, for them, according to their needs or desires" (17). Alice recognizes the importance of "pushing through to the other side" of the mirror (17), beyond the projections of others. The "narcisissm" here belongs not to the woman in the mirror, but to those around her, who configure her image in relation to themselves. As I will demonstrate later, I view Daphne Marlatt's novel Ana Historic as attempting (not always successfully) to locate a positive narcissisism for woman, an image of woman that is for herself, and that creates female community and configures female homosexuality without commodifying it. Marlatt also, perhaps drawing on Cixous, explores the development of her protagonist's

gendered identity and same-sex desire through Annie's reactions to both her biological mother and her somewhat "parental" female lover.

Narcissus, while often employed in cultural history to oppress homosexuality and define categories of identity, is also capable of pushing past such categories, and I see the authors in the latter half of this chapter attempting to employ Narcissus for such a purpose. Bruhm sees homo-Narcissus as he who is repudiated and who repudiates: "As Narcissus rejects Echo and the boys who want him, he rejects not only the dictate to desire another (a socially prescribed and approved other) but also the drive to stabilize a range of binarisms upon which gender in Western culture is founded" (15). These binarisms include, for Bruhm, solipsism versus communality, madness versus sanity, and self-obsession versus democracy (15). Thus, homo-Narcissus is a giddy figure, occupying both sides of multiple binaries and rejecting binaries all together. This, for Bruhm, is what makes Narcissus a subversive figure, but I would qualify his argument as I am employing it here. Narcissus can be subversive, in that some of the novelists depict homosexual discovery of selfhood as celebratory and as a clear part of the Imperial Self. Other narratives, though, although they evince an anxiety about the latter, ultimately depict what they view as the necessary exorcism of homoeroticism from Canadian colonial society. Their inclusion of and seeming ambivalence towards homoeroticism are resolved in the latter's defeat. I recognize the danger of employing Narcissus as a figure in my own criticism might be viewed as threatening to repeat such homophobic associations, but the authors in this chapter appear to be, in their writing, aware of and employing

Narcissus, whether they are re-writing and re-claiming him or exploiting his associations to stigmitize homosexuality. Thus, I do not feel I can avoid Narcissus myself. My aim is to gesture towards Narcissus' ability to destabilize the very categories he has been used to reify, while also demonstrating how often configurations of him, even when employed positively, can at times essentialize rather than open up identities.

While Bruhm examines Narcissus in a number of different literary contexts, the approach of employing homosexuality as a signifier for a variety of attitudes towards selfhood and desire seems particularly pertinent to Canadian literature (which Bruhm does not deal with). Canadian literature, in what might be called a narcissistic exploration of the national self, has often been concerned with mirrors and couples: the two Reginald Mortons and two Clara Beverleys in John Richardson's Wacousta, the "two solitudes" in Hugh McLennan's novel of that title, the "double hook" phenomenon explored by Sheila Watson. Bruhm points out that sometimes Narcissus reflects the homosociality of heterosexual culture, proving that the distinction between the homosocial and the homosexual is not finite, and this conflation can be transferred to relationships between different cultures. For example, Bruhm notices that during the McCarthy era in the US, there was both a desire for and a fear of sameness as equality between people became both a western political goal (democracy) and at the same time an object of western political suspicion (communism) (140). I see similar anxieties in Canadian literature. There is a fear of difference and a desire for difference – for example, a fear (for non-Natives especially) of Native-English

unions but a desire for French-English unions in Canada; there is a fear of sameness and a desire for sameness – in the above contexts, both partners cannot be of the same sex (or even both French), but they must both be of European descent.

Moreover, in Canadian literature doubling is sometimes represented in same-sex desire; that is, the doubling of biological sex. In the novels I have studied in previous chapters, *heterosexuality* serves as a narrative means of exploring the national self, but the same is often true of both male and female homosexuality in literature. While in Canadian historical romances, gender difference often stands for cultural difference, a combining of different qualities and resources to make the nation strong, the question of similarity and difference becomes more complicated when the novels present instances of homoeroticism. As Bruhm points out, Freud tends to reduce all difference to that of biological sex, the only difference upon which desire is hinged; this same limitation is sometimes employed in the Canadian novels under study here: the absence of sexual difference is used to define the homosexual as deviant, even incestuous – too much similarity creates sterility, lack of reproduction, evil perversions. The homosexual is the narcissistic and deviant Other who must be destroyed in order to allow for the survival of the nation and its "cooperative" cultures represented in the historical heterosexual romance. At the same time, there is some ambivalence here, in that the authors also, in defining the homosexual as Other, indicate how the homosexual is often part of British colonialism and imperialism, even if this part must be expunged (that is, the

novels evince a heterosexual narcissism, using homosexuality only to define a particular version of Canadian selfhood). In other novels the authors focus on differences that are related to but not synonymous with gender – culture, experience, personality traits – as creating a complementary union. Homosexuality can be a revelation of a "true" or new personal self, or a deconstruction of an old self, and becomes enacted in a love story that draws on the conventional heterosexual love story, even if the novels also destabilize essentialized notions of national/colonial/imperial identity. Thus, in Canadian literature, homosexuality might be portrayed as negatively or positively narcissistic, as condemning the selfish cultural Other, or narcissistically used by the dominant culture to define itself. Authors explore connections between homosexuality and national history and identity, with varied intentions and results, in Wacousta, The Golden Dog, Seats of the Mighty, Blackrobe, Burning Water, and Ana Historic.

In Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction, Terry Goldie points out the difficulties and ambiguities of writing queer criticism. He notices that homosexual readings are often based upon hints of homosexuality in the texts, and these hints can seem like reliance on stereotypes: "Usually, the hidden homosexuality is recognized not through implied sexual acts but through signifiers of homosexuality, which often seem like homosexual stereotypes. The homophobic tendencies of such a process are obvious" (4). For example, such queer readings may rely on stereotypes of gender inversion: the gay man is not

"masculine" enough, the lesbian not "feminine" enough. Goldie posits a different way of reading, saying of works done by gay critics, "Perhaps these studies are not of writing by homosexuals or which depict homosexuals; they are of books which the gay critic chooses to analyze in a certain way" (13).[3]

These issues are my concerns as well. In beginning to write about the homosexual love story in historical novels, I grappled with how to define "homosexual." There are novels under study here, such as those composed in the nineteenth century, where no overt sexuality of any kind is depicted, due to conventions of the period and place. Even if these novels' representations of desire were more explicit, it seems likewise limiting to define sexuality only by who puts or does not put what into whom and where.

In Between Men, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that the homosocial and the homosexual exist on a continuum that is interrupted by patriarchal homophobia. Likewise, given Adrienne Rich's theory of the "lesbian continuum" (1774), female homosociality and homosexuality are not necessarily easily distinguished from each other. How I plan to proceed, then, is to refrain from setting up a concrete binary of homosociality vs. homosexuality. Although in some cases the authors present behaviours as explicitly sexual, and name desire as explicitly homosexual, other authors are much more indirect, representing instead emotionally intense same-sex "friendships." Historians might remind us that same-sex friendships in the nineteenth century could be articulated in the language of erotic attachment; young girls especially might write letters to each other that sounded very much like professions of erotic love; this did not, though,

as Neil Miller points out, necessarily denote the practice of or even the desire for genital eroticism (57). However, given the spectrum of feelings, sexual and otherwise, that literary critics and psychologists discover in opposite sex friendships, I am not going to assume that same-sex friendships of the era were *necessarily* devoid of eroticism either.

To distinguish the analysis in this chapter from that in Chapter Two, I would say that the difference is that same-sex interactions here are often, in the novels, set against opposite-sex interactions. The instances of same-sex interactions I cite in Chapter Two support the national patriarchy: men bond over the exchange of women. In the cases here, though, same-sex interactions threaten to disrupt rather than support the patriarchal nation. At times, homosexuality may be a natural and/or healthy category that deserves social recognition and provides a necessary critique of heteronormative culture and history; at other times, homosexuality threatens the development or maintenance of a peaceful and orderly society.

I. Transgressions and Attempted Repressions: Homoeroticism as Threat

First, sometimes the homosexual in Canadian historical novels is defined as Other in order to legitimate or preserve the heterosexual self, especially, although not exclusively, in the nineteenth-century novels. Long before "homosexual" was ever clinically constituted as an identity, men in Canada who practiced what one would today define as homosexual behaviours were being persecuted. In The Regulation of Desire, a history of sexualities in Canada, Gary

Kinsman demonstrates that men were sentenced to death for sodomy as early as the 1640s, and even in 1838 the Inspector-General of Upper Canada was forced to resign over charges of sodomy. Later, the 1892 Criminal Code "included 'gross indecency,' referring to all sexual acts between men not already covered under 'buggery'" (Kinsman 113). While women's homosexuality was not criminalized in the same way, by the end of the nineteenth century, women who loved women were certainly objects of suspicion. It seems that female homosexuality became deviant when women themselves started to gain power and challenge the patriarchy. Miller insists that by the twentieth century, "the only places where they [lesbians] could survive were in artistic or bohemian pockets, where social rules were relaxed and unconventionality was prized" (Miller 63). Lesbians no doubt did "survive" outside of such pockets, but Miller's point here is that there were few other places where women would be openly accepted, rather than condemned, for making other women the erotic centres of their lives.

Anne McClintock provides one explanation for the persecution of homosexuals in the nineteenth century: in an imperial context concerned with peopling the empire, there was a special disgrace for "nonproductive men" such as homosexuals (47). Even in the early twentieth century, Theodore Roosevelt pronounced, "The woman who flinches from childbirth stands on a par with the soldier who drops his rifle and runs in battle" (qutd. in Kinsman 63). The nation (American, British, or Canadian) depended upon sexual reproduction, and thus the homosexual was not just a sexual deviant, but a traitor.

Interestingly, Kinsman puts forth an argument that is rather similar to the

argument put forth by Nancy Armstrong in Desire and Domestic Fiction with respect to gender. Armstrong stresses that, in the nineteenth century, a gendered identity began to replace a class identity that was reliant upon one's birth. Kinsman, similarly, states that in the same time period

> The blood and kinship ties of feudalism were transformed into the norms of 'heterosexual' love and attraction, shifting the emphasis in the regulation of sexuality from marriage and kinship networks to sexuality and sexual identity themselves. (55)

Both critics point to a nineteenth-century shift in an understanding of identity from a hereditary one to an individual one, based on middle-class ideals about sexuality and gender roles. Women and men who did not perform their gender roles "correctly" were the objects of concern, and sometimes scorn (the fallen woman, for example). Thus Kinsman and Armstrong point to the way that sexual orientation was viewed as an aspect of gender identity, even before "homosexual" was established as a clinical category of identity. In the nineteenth century, sexual desire for one of the same sex would have contradicted gender ideals, so men and women who expressed same-sex desire were (at least officially) condemned. The critique of homosexual behaviours helped solidify a heteronormative and patriarchal society: not "doing" (to use Judith Butler's verb) one's gender correctly left one vulnerable to accusations of what was defined at the time as a sexual perversion.[4]

It is this pattern of condemnation that some of the Canadian novels repeat: those engaging in sexual activities with members of the same sex

represent a corruption in the culture, something that must be cut out in order for the heteronormative nation to survive. In the case of Canadian history, it is frequently the decadent French who are associated with a devious and deviant homoerotic sexuality. The homosexual-as-Narcissus represents an unhealthy, even atheistic obsession with self rather than a love of others. At the same time, elements of homoeroticism appear present in the English colonial self, and such eroticism, alongside French decadence, must be overcome by anglophone heterosexuality in order for the nation to survive and blossom.

Moreover, these novels which define the homosexual as Other often portray those who exhibit homosexuality as failing to conform to gender ideals in other ways – the man who likes men too much is too feminine, the woman who likes women too much is too masculine. This supposed deviance can even criminalize the homosexual, making him or her the novel's villain. Tania Modleski, in her study of Gothic novels written for women, points out how often the man who seems to be gentle, who is perhaps not manly enough, turns out to be the villain, while it is the sometimes violent hero who turns out to be capable of unconditional love (80). Bridget Fowler also notices that popular romance novels have often used homosexuals as villains, even as late as the 1980s (34). Thus, failed gender portrayals become associated with evil, and in the Canadian novels under study here, this failed portrayal and evil nature are associated with same-sex relationships.

Two early Canadian texts that present the homoerotic are John

Richardson's Wacousta (1832) and William Kirby's The Golden Dog (1877). Several critics have already examined homoeroticism in Wacousta. Dickinson, Goldie, and John Moss all discuss the Charles De Haldimar-Sir Everard Valletort-Clara De Haldimar triangle, noticing how Everard begins to love Clara before he has even met her, through the appearance and manner of her brother, indicating that the two men, and British culture, are not entirely heterosexual. Wacousta himself suggests something similar, and Goldie indicates that Wacousta's threat of intrusion is both hetero- and homoerotic: heteroerotic in his ravishing of Ellen Halloway and Clara De Haldimar, and homoerotic in his penetration of the garrison walls (36-37). Oucanasta, like Wacousta, troubles distinctions between hetero- and homoeroticism because she disrupts the stability of gender identity. If one defines homosexuality only by the biological sex of the participants (and defining desire as such is somewhat reductive), then Oucanasta's rescue of Madeline from Michillimackinac is a homoerotic moment. And yet, the eroticism of the moment seems to derive at least partly from the fact that Oucanasta is dressed as and, in her role as rescuer, has assumed the actions of a man, which at least at tinges the homoeroticism with heteroeroticism. Despite such complicated moments, though, the end of the novel institutes a clear disavowal of the homoerotic. Clara dies, interrupting her homoerotic triangle with Valletort and Charles (who both die too); Madeline marries Frederick and Oucanasta remains single.

The Golden Dog (1877) presents homoeroticism as affiliated with the cultural Other. Selfish and vain, Angélique des Meloises appears to exemplify the

homoerotic narcissist. Determined to conquer Bigot, she sets about getting rid of Caroline, her rival, and enlists the help of La Corriveau. Their first meeting is a sinister parody of love at first sight (381). Eventually, the two women exchange one vaginal symbol for another: Angélique gives La Corriveau a silken purse filled with gold (385), and the witch presents Angélique with a small casket of poison (388). This exchange seals the women in a sort of evil marriage, with Angélique turning towards a wicked female bond rather than a loving marriage with Le Gardeur. Such a relationship and its outcome (murder), strengthens the conclusions I arrived at in Chapters Five and Six, that Kirby's narrative presents the French as erring in allowing women too much power. Female-female bonds are especially dangerous, and actually contribute to the immorality, and thus the failed continuance, of French rule in Canada.

There is more to be said about both of these novels, but I would like to devote a greater amount of space to two novels that have each received less critical attention: Robert E. Wall's Blackrobe (1981) and Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty (1896). I have chosen Blackrobe because it so clearly demonstrates the way that homophobia persists in *contemporary* literature. Parker's novel, on the other hand, deserves detailed focus because, although it ends in a way that supports the status quo, it complicates representations of sexuality and nation in a manner that sets up my analysis of the two contemporary novels in the second section of this chapter.

Despite Wacousta's heteronormative ending, and its publication at a time

when homosexuality in Canada could be punished with death (see Kinsman 99-100), that novel is actually more ambiguous, and less condemning of homoeroticism as abject, than some contemporary works. A clear example of the homosexual as the Other is Robert E. Wall's Blackrobe (1981). In other chapters of this dissertation, I have pointed out how Wall's text stands as an unfortunate tribute to the fact that negative stereotypes of Natives and women continue to fester in the twentieth century. Similarly, Wall's text represents homosexuals as evil, selfish, and foreign Others.

Bruhm writes that the "descriptive power" of the term narcissism "deftly hinges sexual object-choice to ethical mettle, using 'narcissism' to conflate homosexuality with egoism and selfishness and with self-delusion and excessive introspection" (2). These negative characteristics of homosexuality are explicitly present in Blackrobe in the character of Father Lalonde, the priest assigned to the main Oneida village, Kanowalohale. He is assisted by the protagonist, Stephen Nowell, a priest-in-training. Lalonde's selfishness is apparent when he refuses to visit Stephen while the latter is close to dying from smallpox, but soon his selfishness and manipulation are portrayed alongside, and thus become associated with, homosexual desire. One night, Stephen wakes up to find Father Lalonde drunkenly stroking Stephen's genitals and preparing to perform oral sex. Lalonde's actions are presented in predatory terms. Lalonde fondles Stephen while Stephen is asleep and unable to resist; and Stephen is referred to throughout the scene as "the boy," stressing his youth and lack of power in comparison to the man who is supposed to be his spiritual mentor. Upon waking,

Stephen emphasizes his unwillingness to participate in such sexual activity and asserts his clear heterosexuality (180). Lalonde is further villainized when his reaction is to resort to blackmail. Stephen's friend Socono is sentenced to death by the Mohawks, and Lalonde had earlier promised to speak to the chief to try to stay the execution. Now he threatens, "A little kindness to me now and I might be more persuasive with Skenandon tomorrow" (181). Lalonde attempts to exchange sexual favours for a man's life. Lalonde is the only character in the novel to express explicitly sexual desire for someone of the same sex, and it is emblematic of the novel's stance on homosexuality that he is portrayed as evil, selfish, vengeful, and weak. Furthermore, he stands in contrast to Stephen, who is clearly attracted to women, and who expresses his gender through strength, cleverness, honesty, and selflessness.

The connection between homosexuality and corruption is further established through Lalonde's torture of Karl, Stephen's best friend. While the narrative never explicitly states that Karl's torture is of a sexual nature, he is a victim of Lalonde's desire for vengeance on Stephen, the boy who rejected his sexual advances and left him to the torturous "caresses" of the Oneida while Stephen escaped. Lalonde's indignation at Stephen's rejections of him suggests that Lalonde's vengeance is at least partially sexually motivated. When Karl is discovered in the basement of the house where Lalonde has been residing, he is tied up and naked, and his rescuers' disgust at Karl's torture becomes aligned with disgust at hints of homosexuality; one of the men present remarks, "I don't believe that one man could do this to another" (348). Lalonde also remarks, as

Stephen tries to take Karl away, that Stephen could provide him with greater "entertainment" than Karl (349), and that, without Stephen, "all [he] had to play with was this dumb lummox" (349), comments which again seem to link homosexual desire and violence. Furthermore, it is significant that Stephen marks Karl's recovery from the torture by Karl's renewed sexual interest in women (352). Health and normalcy are connected to heterosexuality, and ill-health and inhumanity with homosexuality.

Lalonde is the villain, but he may represent ideas about the heterosexual Self, including anxieties about the patriarchy and homosociality. Lalonde, as a priest, is part of a community of men, who (supposedly) abstain from sexuality. This men-only community is strange to the Native characters. Molly, wondering why Stephen is not married, assumes, to Stephen's horror, that he and Lalonde are lovers (148). Such an all-male community may also be suspect for the novel's author, who seems to see it as fuelling same-sex desire. The priests' community creates such anxiety, perhaps, because close bonds between men are a part of heterosexual life outside of the priesthood too; in that world, though, the bonds are mediated by the exchange of women. When no women are present to define masculine bonds, homosociality can more easily slide into homosexuality. Karl's torture is carried on in the basement of the priests' residence, suggesting the sinister homosexual possibilities simmering beneath the surface of relationships between men. The fear of the homosexual Other, then, is based on a fear that homoeroticism is an element of the heterosexual self.

Generally, though, particular kinds of sexuality correspond with particular

nations in Blackrobe: the French are represented in Canada by Lalonde and other corrupt Jesuits, and the anglophone Canadian is represented by Stephen Nowell. Dickinson notices a connection between homosexuality and a non-British nationality in the figure of Oscar Wilde, son of an Irish nationalist poet. That is, in the views of his time, "a certain 'tendency' towards 'deviancy' is already inherent in Wilde's blood" (42). While homosexuality may be a threatening part of the heterosexual Self, the novel also sets up some clear distinctions between the two, using a series of oppositions between appearances and reality. Stephen is virtuous and thinks of the well-being of others; Lalonde thinks only of himself, though as a priest he *appears* to be thinking of the spiritual well-being of others. Stephen is loving and loyal; Lalonde is only concerned with physical pleasure and power. Sedgwick, in The Epistemology of the Closet, points out the way homosexuals have been condemned for revealing their sexuality, and also condemned for keeping it a secret. Lalonde commits both of these sins: he pretends to be a selfless, chaste priest but thus does not reveal his desires and is a hypocrite; he reveals his desires to Stephen, and becomes the object of the other's disgust. What this means in terms of Wall's vision of the Canadian nation is that, as in numerous nineteenth-century novels, the French come to represent a debauched and duplicitous way of life and thus they cannot continue to rule Canada for the country's own good.

Lalonde, as homosexual, perhaps acts as a commentary not only on France's debauchery under La Pompadour, but on its lack of indigenization. The French stay inward-looking, the Jesuits concerned with politics at home in

France. While Stephen finds lovers and friends among Native peoples, the Jesuits put themselves in an authoritative position that does not really try to understand or respect Native people. The difference between the characters is evident as Stephen and Lalonde travel to Kanowalohale: "Stephen had taken to smearing his exposed skin with bear grease, provided by the Indians, which helped to ward off the mosquitoes. But Lalonde could not stand the smell and the thought of grease on his skin set it crawling" (142). The Native man who travels with them praises Stephen as a man of sense, and Lalonde as a fool (144). Stephen adapts, receives the approval of the Native characters and thus is somewhat indigenized, while Lalonde resists the new world and its ways for reasons of vanity. Because they are too ethnocentric, the French are eventually defeated in the New World, and it is Stephen, who connects with people from a variety of cultures, who is a symbol of Canada under anglophone rule, the only Canada possible in the novel's historical narrative.

Interestingly, there is also an implied link in the novel between anxieties about Native culture and miscegenation and anxieties about homosexuality. When Stephen objects to his advances, Lalonde remarks on Stephen's relationship with Molly Brant: "Don't get so high and mighty with me, boy. I'm sure the Mohawk girl and you did as much and more" (181). Lalonde's comment connects male-male desire with European-Native desire – each does not conform to standards of heteronormativity. Furthermore, later, Lalonde's torture of Karl is connected to the Mohawk's "caress" of Lalonde. When Karl is found he is suffering from bruises and burns, and Lalonde reveals his motives when he

tells Stephen, "Do you know what those red devils did to me because of you, you filthy swine?" (349). Lalonde does to Karl what the Mohawks did to him; the cruel homosexual becomes paralleled with the cruel Indian. There is too much sexual similarity in one case, and too much racial difference in the other for the unions to be acceptable in the context of Canadian attitudes. Thus, both ways of life are rejected by the novel's narrative; the anglophone hero, Stephen Nowell, cannot totally succumb to either; he rejects Lalonde right away, and eventually rejects Molly, his Native lover, and her way of life as well.

While it values alliances with Natives on some level, the novel is ultimately about a Canada of anglophone European descent. It employs the motif of selfish homosexuality as the symbol of a corrupt France, and loving and selfless heterosexuality as the symbol of anglophone Canada. Stephen, in a sequel to the novel, marries a woman of European descent, and starts a family with her. Of all the novels in this chapter, Blackrobe gives the most explicit and harshest condemnation of homosexuals (perhaps partly because nineteenth-century authors in Canada did not write explicitly about homosexual behaviour), but Wall's novel also stands as proof, if one needed any, that literary homophobia was still surviving at the end of the twentieth century.

Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty (1896) presents the homosexual as Other, but, like Wacousta, it also presents the homoerotic as part of the British imperial self. In fact, all of the homoerotic interactions in the novel involve the anglophone protagonist, Robert Moray. The fact that each of Robert's "partners"

is French or French-Canadian may signal again the French as sexually debauched. However, Robert's own attraction to these French men suggest that England is not entirely without homoeroticism, or an attraction to certain aspects of French culture.

Anxieties about such issues were crucial at the time the novel was published. McClintock notices that at the end of the nineteenth century, "Masculinity itself was under contest, with the discovery of the Cleveland male brothel in 1889, the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895 and the pathologizing of homosexuality" (282). Such a crisis was not confined to England; as Kinsman reminds readers, Wilde's visit to Canada in the 1880s brought its own anxieties for the colony, and "Newspaper coverage of Wilde's trip reflects an ambiguous and hostile response to a (pre-homo) English dandy" (123). Kinsman also cites a book by C.S. Clark, published one year after The Seats of the Mighty, that condemns the scandalous sexual activities taking place in Toronto: "If saintly Canadians run away with the idea that there are no sinners of Oscar Wilde's type in Canada, my regard for the truth impels me to undeceive them. Consult some of the bellboys of the large hotels in Canada's leading cities . . . and find out what they can tell from their own experiences" (qtd. in Kinsman 126).

Such condemnations of homosexuality are at least partly attributable to cultural and racial anxieties. Kinsman notes that at the end of the nineteenth-century, "There was [. . .] official concern about 'race suicide' as the birth rate among Anglo-Saxons in Ontario dramatically declined; it was feared that Anglo-Saxon stock was being submerged by 'inferior races' through immigration and a

higher birth rate among Irish-Canadian and French-Canadian Catholics" (110). For officials and some citizens, being suspicious about close same-sex bonds was part of ensuring the continuance of a moral, pure, white anglophone race in Canada. For Parker, attempting to "blame" homoeroticism on the French may have been a way of defusing anxieties about both the French-Catholic birth-rate and homoeroticism among the anglophone population. I have noted that, according to Dickinson, the nineteenth-century media connected Wilde's homosexuality with Wilde's "'othered' nationality identity (i.e., not British)" (42). Parker makes similar connections between nationality and sexuality in his representation of Doltaire, even as the novel, paradoxically, makes the anglophone protagonist the homoerotic centre.

One of the first instances of homoeroticism in the novel is in the interactions between Robert and Juste Duvarney, the brother of Robert's beloved. While Sir Everard Valletort in Wacousta falls in love with Clara De Haldimar through her brother, Robert's initial description of Juste emphasizes that he finds the brother attractive because of his similarity to Alixe. In a perilous situation in Bigot's palace, Robert takes comfort in the sight of Juste: "in one pale face, with dark brilliant eyes, I saw the looks of my flower of the world: the colour of her hair in his, the clearness of the brow, the poise of the head – how handsome he was!" (47). However, soon the line between Robert's attraction to Alixe, as expressed through attraction to her brother, and attraction to her brother for his own sake, becomes rather unclear. Robert describes the first time he saw Juste:

> I loved the look of his face, like that of a young Apollo, open, sweet, and bold, all his body having the epic strength of life. I wished that I might have him near me as a comrade, for out of my hard experience I could teach him much, and out of his youth he could soften my blunt nature, by comradeship making flexuous the hard and ungenial. (47)

The unifying of young and old, hard and soft, puts Robert's desire for Juste in conventional erotic terms; his heterosexual language of differences united is aimed at another man. Bruhm points out that some psychoanalytic critics state that the homosexual, like the heterosexual, desires differences rather than similarities; it is just that these differences are not those of biological sex. That may be the case here; Robert finds in Juste a softness and inexperience that is attractive to him. This makes Robert's attraction somewhat ambivalent: he is attracted to qualities in Juste that are conventionally feminine, and therefore different, but Juste is clearly male, a potential comrade-in-arms.

Furthermore, while Robert is in prison, he is visited by Alixe, who is disguised in her brother's uniform. The distinction between homosexual and heterosexual becomes complicated when the distinction between brother and sister, male and female, becomes flexible. Marjorie Garber argues that "The presence of the transvestite, in a text, in a culture, signals a category crisis elsewhere" (125). By "category crisis," she means, "a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another" (125). The Seats of

the Mighty, set as it is during a war, is of course aware of the fluctuations of power and roles that can take place during such a time. More importantly, however, Alixe's cross-dressing suggests the "crisis in masculinity" at the end of the nineteenth century. Her ability to "pass" as a man indicates, perhaps, women's movement outside the domestic sphere and into the workforce (see Kinsman 109-11) and their struggle to manifest a political presence too. Robert's desire for Juste indicates a similar anxiety; homoeroticism and heteroeroticism cease being simple categories if a particular gender identity can be enacted by one of either sex.

Early on in the novel, there is also a suggestion of homoeroticism in Robert's feelings towards his rival, Doltaire. Though he disapproves of Doltaire's amorality, he is fascinated by him:

> I have never known a man who interested me so much – never one so varied, and so uncommon in his nature. I marvelled at the pith and depth of his observations; for, though I agreed not with him once in ten times, I loved his great reflective cleverness and his fine penetration – singular gifts in a man of action. (17)

Robert also notices Doltaire's "shapely legs" (17), and understands his attractiveness to women, particularly the appeal he must hold for Alixe, even as Robert fears for her morality: "How could she withstand the charm of his keen knowledge of the world, the fascination of his temperament, the alluring eloquence of his frank wickedness?" (156). Doltaire is like some conventional love-story heroes – attractive, experienced, dangerous, and enigmatic. In fact,

Robert understands Doltaire's attractiveness so well that there are moments when he seems to view himself in Alixe's place as Doltaire's object of desire. Just as Alixe puts on a brave face in her interactions with Doltaire in order to try to manipulate him into freeing Robert, so Robert also pretends to be other than he is: "It was all a game: why should I not accept advances at my enemy's hands, and match dissimulation with dissimulation" (167). In fact, "dissimulation" seems to be a part of Robert and Doltaire's relationship from the beginning of the novel. Though they are romantic rivals and national enemies, they engage in a verbal sparring that is like flirting. As in the love-story plot, the lines between violence and sexuality become blurred, and the interaction involves a certain amount of dishonesty, each character speaking carefully, although playfully, not letting real motives be too obvious. This play of surface and truth, as I suggested in my analysis of Blackrobe, is also key in negative theorizing about homosexuality – the homosexual has something to hide, something to reveal. Doltaire and Robert seem to be walking this line, revealing and refusing to reveal simultaneously.

The duplicitous behaviour of the characters also puts the critic in a place where she must "read" the characters as homosexuals read each other, looking for signs of that same-sex eroticism. Parker's writing not only implicates British imperialism in homoeroticism, but also his own readers, who in reading "signs" of homosexuality become engaged in a "cruising" of the text, at the same time that Parker seems to want to make sure that all signs of homoeroticism are eradicated by the end of the novel. This “reading,” though, is not necessarily counterproductive to such an aim. Goldie points out homosexuals can be “read”

by non-homosexuals for homophobic purposes (8), and Bruhm, drawing on Lee Edelman, notices that homosexual men were “read” during the Cold War as feminine precisely so that they could be identified and controlled (117-18).

The eroticism of Robert's and Doltaire's power relations are emphasized through a similar motif of the gaze. During the ceremony where Alixe is chastised by the Church for her marriage to Robert, a Protestant, Robert remains hidden in an alcove observing the whole scene. He notices Doltaire: "He was graver than I had ever seen him, and was dressed scrupulously in black, with a little white lace showing at the wrists and neck. A handsomer figure it would be hard to see; and I hated him for it, and wondered what new devilry was in his mind" (399). Initially, Doltaire is the object of Robert's gaze, leaving Robert the masculine privilege of staring rather than being stared at, assessing Doltaire. Doltaire is feminized: like a woman he is assessed for his attractiveness, but the male gaze is also suspicious of what it cannot see on the surface. However, Robert quickly becomes afraid that his position of power cannot be maintained when Doltaire begins to look around himself: "He seemed to sweep the church with a glance. Nothing could have escaped that swift, searching look. His eyes were even raised to where I was, so that I involuntarily drew back, though I knew he could not see me" (399). Doltaire's power, his gaze, is so penetrating, that Robert fears it will reach him, feminize him perhaps as he has tried to feminize Doltaire.

Robert's wondering about the "devilry" in Doltaire's mind points to another motif of homosexuality in the novel. Doltaire is attractively dangerous, and this danger often equates him with a Gothic romantic hero, so much so that he

becomes affiliated with the devil. As Gaile McGregor posits, "in tones strikingly reminiscent of the gothic heroine, [Robert] exclaims repeatedly upon the magnetic attraction exerted by Doltaire's fascinating and repellent satanic personality" (136). Thus, Doltaire stands in relation to both Alixe and Robert as an erotic hero, and Parker is both drawing on and undercutting traditional motifs of the love story. Doltaire, as the spectre of homosexuality *and* a romantic hero, becomes the fearful Other, but an Other who both disgusts and attracts. That is, the homosexual as Other here does not receive the same disgusted repudiation that is apparent in Blackrobe; there is some ambivalence.

Robert repeatedly views Doltaire as a temptation for Alixe, but Robert's language stresses, again, that he is almost in Alixe's place, tempted himself. Near the end of the novel, Doltaire tries one last time to woo Alixe while Robert watches from a hiding place and notes, “I felt it; he possessed her like some spirit; and I understood it, for the devilish golden beauty of his voice was like music” (422). Doltaire's devilish nature comes to represent not only his tempting heterosexual appeal for Alixe, but a homosexual one for Robert, as Robert's language moves from describing Doltaire's power over Alixe to his effect on Robert himself.

The motif of Doltaire as a tempting devil in relation to Robert is further developed by the fact that during the above scene Robert is hidden behind a portrait of the Virgin Mary. He sees Doltaire and Alixe interact through holes cut out of the Virgin's eyes. Throughout the scene, Alixe glances at the Virgin, searching for spiritual mettle and unaware that Robert is behind it, and Doltaire

follows her glance, enjoying her struggle. Once again, although Robert gazes, he also becomes the object of the gazes of both Alixe and Doltaire. His "disguise," is feminine, representing, perhaps, the possibility of his homoerotic desire for Doltaire, and Doltaire's power over him, as feminizing him.

At the same time, that Robert is also here the object of Alixe's gaze suggests the spiritual nature of their love. Alixe looks to a Virgin, hidden behind which is her lover is hidden. She looks to the image of another woman (Mary) for strength against a heterosexual tempter (Doltaire). Given Alixe's own probable virginity, she may be looking at an image of herself, narcissistically, calling on chaste femininity to resist unchaste masculinity. There is something of the female homoerotic here, but it is complicated by the fact that behind this image of chaste femininity stands her husband. What Parker is trying to do here, I think, is to attribute to Alixe and Robert's love a spiritual element. Though their marriage is condemned by the Church, their love is moral and pure – they commune, although unknowingly, through an image of the Virgin, and thus stand in marked contrast to Doltaire as devil.[5] Robert and Alixe both eventually resist Doltaire, choosing love over ambition, and uniting in an honest and moral heterosexuality that is practically and paradoxically asexual. Alixe, in her final rejection of Doltaire, proclaims, "We go from morality to higher things, not from higher things to morality. Pure love is a high thing; yours was not high" (427). Immoral homo- and heterosexuality stand in contrast to virtuous heterosexuality.

In many ways, homoeroticism becomes an aspect of France through Doltaire, who spends much time expounding on the characteristics of his nation,

of which he is a prime example. The French are atheistic and selfish and stylish. Doltaire's self-absorption, and his meticulous attention to his appearance, associate him, and the French, with the stereotype of the narcissistic homosexual. For Parker, the French men spend too much time on their intrigues with each other rather than in cultivating the love of a moral woman.

However, the focus on Robert's desire suggests that the homoerotic is also an aspect of the British imperial self, which is only seeing its own reflection in the French characters. In terms of the national allegory, this can work in two ways. On the one hand, a war between two patriarchal nations is bound to be homoerotic. Sedgwick, paraphrasing the attitude of a particular literary character, points to the similarities between love and violence, heterosexual and homosexual desire: "What I feel toward the woman whose self I wish to erase is not hatred; it is love. What I feel toward the man I love to dream about is not love; it is hatred" (Between Men 189). While Robert hates Doltaire, and stabs Juste, he also expresses desire for each of these men; he wishes, as a British man, to have power over these Frenchmen, perhaps because he admires each of them so much. His homosocial relationship with each cannot be distinguished from homoeroticism, for identification bleeds into desire. In a war, it is the men who admire each other's skill, it is the men who wish to penetrate each other. When Robert has to kill his jailer/friend Gabord, he is devastated: "I knelt beside him and lifted up his head. His eyes were glazing fast. 'Gabord! Gabord!' I called, grief-stricken, for that work was the worst I ever did in this world" (456). Likewise, he mourns Juste, also killed in battle: "almost at my feet, stretched out as I had

seen him lie in the Palace courtyard two years before, I beheld Juste Duvarney. But now he was beyond all friendship and reconciliation – forever!" (457).

Despite his hatred for Doltaire, Robert treats him with respect and even affection when he comes upon Doltaire's corpse after the fall of Quebec:

> The flag of France covered his broken body, but his face was untouched – as it had been in life, haunting, fascinating, though the shifting lights were gone, the fine eyes closed. A noble peace hid all that was sardonic; not even Gabord would now have called him 'Master Devil.' I covered up his face and left him there – peasant and prince – candles burning at his head and feet, and the star of Louis on his shattered breast; and I saw him no more. (465)

Like his country, Doltaire has been defeated, and Robert can now afford to look on both with nostalgia.

There is a sense in the novel of having to destroy those who, under other circumstances, you would have loved; it is like killing an aspect of the self. But the deaths of Doltaire, Juste, and Gabord, as well as that of Robert's friend Voban, all indicate not only the destruction of French rule in Canada, but also the destruction of the homoerotic: every man that Robert had any strong bond with is killed. Thus, the novel emphasizes that homosocial boundaries must be clear, but at the same time it evinces anxiety that they are not; woman must be the love object.

As well, the novel's homoeroticism suggests that there is something in the French nation, queer though it is, that has a certain appeal for the British-

Canadians. Doltaire's devil-may-care attitude is attractive in itself, as is his worldliness – there is something very romantic about the French way of life as he presents it, versus that of the English. He accuses the English, "you have no imagination, no passion, no temperament, no poetry" (232). In fact, Robert is scared that Alixe might be seduced by the capricious French way of life. Alixe contains the best parts of French-Canadian society, and can promise to rejuvenate British society's dullness, but Robert fears there is something in her that answers to Doltaire: "She would love the picturesque in life, though her own tastes were so simple and fine. Imagination would beset her path with dangers; it would be to her, with her beauty, a fatal gift, a danger to herself and others" (156). France, characterized by a lack of boundaries, must be exorcized from Canada, and Britain must rule. Thus, at the end of the novel Alixe is married to Robert, and most of the French men are injured or dead.

II. Subversions and Liberations?: Homosexuality and Self-Discovery

While British and Canadian law in the nineteenth century officially condemned homosexual behaviours, homosexuality existed, often without punishment, even in official offices and contexts. The navy has almost become a stereotype now of a hotbed of homosexual behaviours, but homosexuality existed other places too, as Kinsman points out, such as in logging camps, or on the frontier (101-02). Homosexuality can be historically viewed as a functioning part of the Imperial Self, but rather than being condemned as part of the Self, homosexuality in some novels gets tied to critiques of nationalism and national

histories that focus only on heterosexuality. As well, in transposing some of the elements of the traditional love story and the historical novel into the context of a homosexual relationship, some contemporary Canadian authors attempt to parody the nation's injunction to procreate.

Novels such as Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic and George Bowering's Burning Water, present homosexuality as positive and liberating, rather than selfish and limiting, a connection to one's individual and sexual self. It can be a return to an old identity that has been repressed, or a construction of a new one. In these two novels, homosexual identity interacts with other aspects of gender and nation in unpredictable ways. While these novels are not always revolutionary in their representations of homosexuality, they do explore the complexities and instabilities of personal and national identity through such representations.

In Post-National Arguments, Frank Davey posits that Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic (1988) is disengaged from, rather than critical of, nation: "For the pre-Oedipal space it both dreams of and realizes as the 'home' of women is yet another utopian plenitude, eternal, natural, before (or at least aside from) the symbolic realm of language and thus apart from the social and political clashes and negotiations that the symbolic enables" (208). For Davey, the novel, with its longing for a pre-linguistic state, dreams of a space outside of society, outside of nation. Heather Zwicker makes the opposite argument. Zwicker firmly grounds the novel in discourses of nation, arguing that Marlatt works from within the

traditional comic romance plot of nation – a nation propagating itself through marriage – to refute it with a lesbian perspective: "Marlatt's female characters, who marry (sort of) and reproduce (but not conventionally), resist the compulsory heterosexism of the comic nation from within" (166). Marlatt draws on a number of the conventional motifs of the heterosexual love-story plot, which Zwicker sees as part of Marlatt's ploy to undo this plot. The end of the novel, with the presentation of an erotic relationship between the protagonist, Annie, and her friend Zoe, is for Zwicker a subversive re-telling of the heterosexual national allegory: "Such a plot remains comic, but the substitution of lesbian for straight sexuality makes it a parodic rewriting of the continuist national narrative" (Zwicker 167). Zwicker argues that Marlatt must work from within national paradigms in order to weaken them.

My own position regarding the novel is somewhere between Davey and Zwicker. I agree with Zwicker that the novel is not, finally, outside of national politics; instead, it demonstrates lesbianism and nationalism interacting in ways that trouble narratives of national history. While Zwicker cites examples of Marlatt's attempts to fruitfully fragment language and identity, I also see Marlatt, as Davey does, as drawing on motifs of a unitary identity; lesbianism in the novel comes to represent a desire for a wholeness of self, and an unproblematic female utopia. As well, Marlatt's use of the love-story motifs of the national romance becomes problematic in places because of the nature of parody; it is sometimes difficult, in imitation, to distinguish criticism from homage. Marlatt employs a number of love-story motifs in the relationship between Annie and

Zoe, some of which seem to repeat rather than undermine heteronormative values regarding women.

Although the narrator insists “this is not a roman / ce, it doesn’t deal with heroes” (67), Zoe repeats the mysterious authority of the love-story hero. She is rather enigmatic in her interactions with Annie, seeming to know more than she says. Annie remarks, "her gravity puzzles me" and "she is so secretive about what she does she tells me almost nothing about it" (59). Zoe is even harsh in her assertiveness: "i distrust women who smile too much" (58). Annie, trying to please, wonders, "do i smile too much?" (58). The heroine is uncertain, feels exposed and judged, while the "hero" is aggressive, in control and contained. Davey notices that "Zoe is presented as chthonic and oracular" and "Her characteristic speech of terse questions, riddles, and admonitions [. . .] marks her as superbly confident, as commanding knowledge Annie can only dimly imagine" (203). The heroine takes on a child-like role; Annie is uncertain and inexperienced, while Zoe appears to be exactly the opposite. Annie eventually comes to learn about herself, her own desires, through Zoe; Zoe represents Annie's coming to this knowledge, this return to something whole or natural even. I do not deny that the portrayal of these love-story motifs in a lesbian context is somewhat subversive; the authoritative male lover is played here by a woman, which undermines the patriarchal appropriation of intelligence and reserve as masculine rather than feminine traits; Zoe is both creative and wise, reserved and loving. However, changing the sex of the love object does not entirely undo all of the confining and essentializing dangers of the love story. In fact, Davey

views Annie's attraction to Zoe and movement away from patriarchal relationships and structures as simply "the replacement of one monological authority by another" (203).

Zoe and Annie's relationship is also similar to conventional love stories in its idealized, intense sexuality. It is not unusual, in contemporary popular romance novels, for the heroine to have been previously rejected by a man who felt she was too cold sexually; it is the hero who is able to see the "truth" about her, and entice her passion to the surface. This is clearly repeated with Annie and Zoe. Their lovemaking is intense: "we go up the stairs, we enter a room that is alive with the smell of her. bleeding and soft. her on my tongue. she trembles violently on my lips" (152). This stands in marked contrast to the sexual foreplay between Annie and her husband: "want to?" (59). Such a casual question is actually supposed to forestall sex: "neither of us really 'wants to' and neither of us will admit it" (60). The contrast between the two relationships highlights the valuing of the new lover that is common to contemporary popular romances.

One might argue that the lesbian ending is more complicated than Davey has it, in his reference to Zoe as a "monological authority," because Annie's discovery of knowledge and desire occurs alongside a splintering of identity; Marlatt's language is purposefully fractured, bodies and identities and readers and writer are blurred right through to the end of the novel. However, a simultaneous splintering and unifying of the female self, through the motif of sexuality, is in itself a staple of the love story. In sex a woman is stereotypically perceived as penetrated, but through sex (and love) she gains her power; the

man's desire for her gives her power over him, and this power contributes to a greater sense of self. A similar process happens in Ana Historic, where Annie gains a sense of self through a crossing of sexual boundaries.

At the beginning of the novel, Annie's search for self is configured in references to echoes: "it was the sound of her own voice had woken her, heard like an echo asking,/ who's there?" (9). This is perhaps an allusion to the story of Echo and Narcissus, given the novel's emphasis on mirrors, mirror images, and identity. Later in the text, Annie remembers her mother's morning beauty ritual: "there was the look you gave yourself, the look you looked (like) in the mirror. making up someone who was not you but someone you might be" (56). Like Irigaray's Alice, Annie's mother feels the pressure of outside expectations as she tries to "make up for the gap" between how she looks and "how [she] ought to look" (56). Here, female "narcissism" is conceived negatively, as oppressive and imposed. Later, Annie feels similar pressures at the "Princess Pool" where she and her friend Donna display their bathing-suited bodies for the boys: "mirror images of ourselves, we posed in the water" (82). When they move out of sight of the boys, though, they are able to talk and move more freely. Swimming wildly, Annie and Donna almost literally drown with (in?) each other. The eroticism of the near-drowning (83) suggests a "breaking through" of the girls' mirror images, while simultaneously evoking another mirroring, and another erotic drowning, that of Narcissus in his own image. The two girls, locked in an embrace, "mirror" each other's biological sex, but at the same time Annie experiences a new sense of herself, as evincing homoerotic desire. Marlatt, I think, is re-appropriating

Narcissus, turning homoerotic self-discovery into “sheer jubilation” (83).

However, even though such portrayals of homoeroticism de-stabilize some aspects of homophobic discourse, the fact that Annie comes to herself through eroticism repeats a love-story motif. That is, the mirror image of women is not broken, but replaced with an altered version. In Annie’s experiences with Donna and Zoe, women are relegated, as they have often been in western society, to the domestic realm of eroticism and emotion. The end of the novel idealizes erotic love, as romances do, as a crucial state for women to obtain. Marlatt "marries" off her protagonist, in a sense, because that is a fitting end for a heroine. Women’s private relationships are presented as enough of a political endeavour without them actually gaining real political power. We do not, as Davey might point out, see Annie and Zoe lobbying parliament to protect the rights of lesbians, or some such political activity.

The novel's ending voices a desire for the unity of women – not only in the blended bodies of Annie and Zoe, but in the circle of women who help Jeannie Alexander give birth to her son, and Zoe's roommates who fold flyers together at the kitchen table, and the encompassing of the female author and narrator with readers. However, this desire for female unity is also problematic. As a reader, I am "with" Annie throughout the novel in her struggles with gender identity, but I cannot feel that a lesbian relationship solves these troubles for her (or me). Women who would define themselves as lesbian still have to live in a world with men. As Davey points out, outside of Zoe's room, "the patriarchal order still stands" (209). The failure to take into account men at the novel's end can

actually undermine the novel's political stance. In this respect, Zwicker's thesis is problematic for me. The utopian erotic ending, divorced from a social context, and rooted in a more "natural world," is one of the conventions of the romance noticed by Northrop Frye. This ending, for me, weakens the novel's politics. In this case, Marlatt's efforts to work from within the dominant paradigm actually work against her and her otherwise usefully radical feminist novel by distancing her from practical feminist issues.

The romance and its ending are also important in the history Annie is writing about Ana Richards, a nineteenth-century Canadian school teacher whose story "mirrors" Annie's in some respect. Annie considers the possibility of Ana developing an erotic relationship with Birdie/Bridie Stewart, about whom little is known except that she owned a piano. Ana's story is important because it not only interrogates conventional narratives of history by presenting same-sex desire in nineteenth-century Canada, but it also depicts a single woman trying to resist enacting a love-story plot, the narrative of the schoolteacher in the wild courted by and eventually marrying a handsome man. We see Ana's struggles, as Annie writes her, about giving up the possibility of becoming Birdie's "travelling companion" in order to marry Ben Springer?: "what if that life should close in on her like the lid of a hope chest? if she should shrivel and die inside, constricted by the narrow range of what was acceptable for Mrs. Springer?" (146). Annie never fully explores a relationship between Ana and Bridie. Homosexual desire is possible for Ana, but not a homosexual relationship (a public one, at least). Her society is even more restrictive than Annie's in that

respect. It is Annie, who feels she has been hiding behind Ana in her own lesbian desires, who gets to express them in the way that Ana cannot. As I have argued, though, the depiction of Annie's lesbian relationship is limited because it is so idealized; in some ways it is less subversive than the *possibility* of lesbianism between Ana and Birdie. What we get at the end of Ana Historic are two variations on the same motif: with Annie and Zoe, lesbianism exists outside of any social-political context, and with Ana and Birdie, lesbianism can barely exist at all.

My other difficulty with the novel's ending is that it essentializes female and lesbian identity. Throughout the novel, lesbianism is portrayed as a return to a "truer" self. Zwicker quotes Biddy Martin on this issue: "Many . . . coming-out stories are tautological insofar as they describe a process of coming to know something that has always been true, a truth to which the author has returned" (qutd. in Zwicker 171). Zwicker argues that Marlatt resists this creation of a unitary identity in the fragmentation of writing, as at the novel's end: "we give place, giving words, giving birth, to each other – she and me. you." Zwicker posits, "The undifferentiated 'we' that would fix 'lesbian' as a relationship of identity must here 'give place' to a distinct 'she and me,' which cannot solidify into a Self and Other because it instantly becomes an ambiguously signifying 'you'" (172).

However, Marlatt draws on a unified sense of a lesbian and female identity throughout the novel. The Zoe seems to have been expecting Annie when she shows up at Zoe's home to express her feelings, suggests an inevitability in their

relationship and Annie's lesbian identity; she has 'come home' in a sense. Furthermore, Annie's and Zoe's names – the A and the Z – suggest the beginning and the end meeting, a return. One sees here a conventional romantic ending, where identity, once lost, is now found.

Women in the novel are essentialized in other ways. The editors of This Elusive Land: Women and the Canadian Environment, notice the way that "For some eco-feminists, Western philosophical systems of hierarchical dualism have organized a world in which women are subordinated to men, emotion to reason, body to mind, and nature to culture" so that "women share a degraded social position with nonhuman nature; both are 'resources' for male exploitation" (xiii). There are hints of this in the novel, where Marlatt reverses the value of such hierarchies, so that women might locate power through an affiliation with nature. The female characters struggle to be at home in their own bodies, and Annie tries to institute a return to the connectedness with nature that she felt as a child:

> the Old Wood, moulted and softened with years of needle drift, tea brown, and the cedar stump hollow in the middle where they nestled in a womb, exchanging what if's, digging further with their fingers, sniffing the odour of tree matter become a stain upon their hands like dried blood. (12)

As Davey notes, "the 'Old Wood' is marked by semantically 'feminine' attributes" (204). Nature is associated with the female body, the girls digging into the womb-tree with fingers and smelling of blood, an image suggesting same-sex female eroticism. This connection between lesbianism and nature is emphasized later on

when Annie discovers two women parked in the woods embracing each other. Eventually, though, the girls are alienated from the woods as part of their inauguration into conventional gender roles. Annie addresses her dead mother: "you would never admit it wasn't 'fair' that girls weren't allowed to do the things boys did. escape the house, 'home-free' – not home, but free in the woods to run" (13). According to the logic of the text, girls develop (hetero)sexually, they become alienated from the natural world, lose their innocence and their connectedness out of simultaneous need for approval from and fear of men: "what if the boys...what if the men tried to bulldoze their woods? so what could *we* do?" (12).

Annie eventually returns to a sense of female community associated with childhood, "when i was she who did not feel separated or split" (11). As Davey notices, at the end of the novel, while Annie spends time with Zoe and her roommates, Annie finds an eco-feminism: "i wanted to listen, as I used to listen in the woods to the quiet interplay of wind, trees, rain, creeping things under the leaves – this world of connection" (151). This 'naturalizing' of female community, and even of Annie's sexual relationship with Zoe, associated with a "dark river" and the moon, essentializes female identity as connected to and respectful of the environment. It erases all acknowledgement of differences between lesbians, differences between women, and overlooks women's involvement – as farmers, gardeners, as contemporary women who work on construction crews, and so on – in conquering and even destroying the natural world.

This same problem of essentializing occurs in the portrayals of

motherhood in the novel. Marlatt strives to develop the process of what Hélène Cixous calls "writing in white ink"; Annie expresses herself in fragmented language, in language that is always a play on itself and also always rooted in describing the physical world, especially the female body. That is, Annie attempts to return to a Lacanian pre-Symbolic space where mother and child communicate without the realm of language. The lesbian eroticism in Zoe and Annie's interaction reflects this "return"; their bodies become language, vaginas become mouths: "we give place, giving words, giving birth, to each other" (n. pag). As Davey puts it, "In Annie's own case, through imagination she can recover the pre-Oedipal mother by constructing Zoe as the new guarantor of unity who can make good all previous loss" (208).

Through the novel that she is writing, Annie reconnects with several other mothers, including her mother Ina, whom she engages in an imaginary dialogue. Annie also connects with Ana Richards, a national foremother, rescuing her from a historical narrative that wrote her off to marry Ben Springer, or, as Zoe says, "wrote her *in*. listed her as belonging" (134); to be a woman and not married is to be monstrous, an aberration. Annie re-writes Ana and history, hinting at a lesbian relationship between Ana and Bridie Stewart instead. Annie may also be connecting to Eve, the original foremother, as Annie's memories of an uncorrupted woodland near her mother's garden suggest; this time, though, it is Eve who has access to language and naming and the power that goes with it. Thus, Annie's writing connects to, creates other female bodies.

This "return" of the woman-child to the mother incorporates homosexuality

in the novel into the paradigm of narcissism, a way of returning to the time when the child was certain she had all of the mother's love. While this narcissism could be viewed as connecting Marlatt's novel to a tradition of the homosexual as selfish, Ana Historic is clearly trying to portray this interest in selfhood much more positively. Women have been alienated from their own selves, their own bodies, by patriarchal demands, and these bodies are reclaimed in the novel. As well, this desire for an originary lesbian identity makes homosexuality a norm rather than an aberration. Lesbianism, and intimate connections between women generally, become "natural," standing in marked contrast to male-female relations, which are presented as constructed and oppressive.

However, rooting a female identity in the natural world not only essentializes and erases differences between women, it also repeats a patriarchal definition of women. For some feminist ecologists, “any political stance that relies on women’s ‘difference’ to carve out an ecological politics runs into the danger of reinforcing, rather than challenging, patriarchal and colonialist ideas of gender and nature” (Hessing et al iv). Marlatt’s text does not interrogate the affiliation of women with a chaotic natural world. As well, the novel, in equating a liberated female identity with lesbianism universalizes homosexuality among women. Lesbianism is not about lesbianism as much as it is about all women, maybe even all readers. What Zwicker views as the specificity of the "she and me" in the novel's final passage, seems lost in the universalizing "you" that follows. A universal lesbian identity threatens to stop being lesbian. Marlatt, here, seems in danger of repeating the same technique that non-Native writers

have often used in their representations of Natives. Through the Native, non-Natives are indigenized; and thus we are all Native-Canadians, connected to the landscape. Through a lesbian relationship/reading, all women are "lesbianized," (re)connected to the natural world: "her country she has come into, the country of her body" (127). The varied and specific experiences of lesbians become lost in this universalizing thrust.

With specific regard to the novel's connection to nation, Davey and Zwicker take very different stances. For Zwicker, the novel is inherently connected to ideas of nationhood: "Ana and Annie stand for two historical moments in Canada's national subjectivity. Whereas Ana, in her valorization of Romantic sensibilities, articulates the utopic hopes for the new nation, Annie's multiply fractured subjectivity voices the anxious uncertainty of Canada's postcolonial status" (172-73). However, what if one reads Annie as creating unity rather than fracturing identity, as Davey does?: "In the novel's final pages the narrative discourse of Ana Historic establishes no ironic distance from Annie, but instead continues to identify itself with both her utopian claims and her passionate homogenizing of Canada's social, economic, linguistic, and regional difference as 'patriarchal' oppression" (Davey 209). For Davey, the novel ultimately operates outside of national politics because of its universalizing feminism.

On the one hand, I take Davey's point. The novel does seem to move outside of national boundaries in its final pages, heading towards a more transcendent identity. On the other hand, the novel seems so political in other

ways. Annie attempts to create a different kind of national reproduction, an "imagined community" created through words which are created through female bodies. Marlatt points towards a physical and metaphysical restructuring of nation and national history. As Zwicker suggests, Marlatt's novel does seem to be a re-writing of the Canadian historical romance, and even if this re-writing is not always subversive, it does root the novel in national politics to some extent. Annie remembers her mother in the Vancouver public library, "heading immediately for the shelf of historical novels, family history with its lurid stretches shaping the destiny of a nation. consoled by this, that the familial, the mundane, could actually have historic proportions?" (16). This more personal kind of history influences Annie's re-writing of national history, opening up spaces for voices and experiences that have been left out of the "official" record.

Although national political action is not explicitly portrayed in the novel the writing itself is frank in its brave portrayal of same-sex desire, and that can be a political act in and of itself. At the same time, I cannot help but feel that there is a danger of losing a representation of a lesbian identity in the utopian, universalizing ending. However, perhaps this lesbian identity is akin to feminist identity the way Linda Hutcheon describes the latter in "Circling the Downspout of Empire"; such an identity, which has never been strong and whole, must be unified before it can undergo a postmodern shattering.

Like Marlatt's novel, George Bowering's Burning Water explores the interaction between homosexual identities, national narratives, and self-

exploration/narcissism. The novel's explorer protagonist, George Vancouver, is obsessed with his own being. His homosexual relationship with a Spaniard, Don Juan Franciso de la Bodega y Quadra, points both to a means of connecting to another (more authentic?) version of his own personal self, as well as a means of reaching beyond his rigid imperial self to have meaningful contact with another human being. In the relationship between the two men, there is some reflection, too, of an idealized national romance, a possibility for loving and understanding relations between cultures and men. However, this possibility, personally and nationally, is only fleeting. While Vancouver, as in a romance, transcends the social world at the end of the novel, at the same time, the final passage is ambiguous enough to suggest a lack of clear identity. Like Ana Historic, Bowering's novel draws on motifs of romance and its love story, but avoids the former novel's erotic utopian ending. As in some of the other novels I have studied in this chapter, in Burning Water homosexuality is viewed as an inherent part of the imperial self, so it cannot be totally enacted as Other. At the same time, it is not always viewed favourably by the characters. Homosexuality in the novel is presented as neither totally abject nor totally solipsistic.

At times, homosexuality is affiliated with cultural Otherness through the French. When Vancouver tells Quadra he would like to "face the French fact" – that is, fight the French – with Quadra, Quadra remarks, in reference to their lovemaking, "There is a line of reasoning that would claim you have met the French fact in the past hour" (72). However, this comment by Quadra also implicates Vancouver, representative of the British in the new world, in

homosexuality. Later on, two Native men, noticing that there are no women with the British sailors, assume that the men have sex with each other. One of them comments, "Maybe when men fuck men all the time they learn the lore that takes them great distances on wingèd homes filled with useful objects made of iron" (148). Kinsman, in his chapter "Buggery and the Royal Navy" points out that homosexual activity, though punishable by death, would not have been uncommon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries among male-dominated atmospheres, such as on military and other types of ships, and Bowering's narrative reflects this. The narrator remarks that Vancouver is "no *naif* in the ways of life aboard naval ships away from port. The hundred men one might find on board a nation's warship may as well, for the long-term isolation from the lights of home, be inmates of one of that nation's prisons" (72). Thus, homosexuality is part of the British self, and therefore cannot be totally demonized as it is in novels where only the French behave homoerotically. There even appears to be some tolerance of homosexuality, if nobody is too open about it.

However, the representation of homosexuality also serves the novel's critique of imperialism, as when a sailor from Vancouver's crew rapes a dying Native man. J.A. Wainwright views this act as representative "of the cultural sodomy taking place on a daily basis" in North America at the time (91). The British are exploiting the Natives every chance they get, and so sex between men in this case is configured as the inhuman degradation of the unwilling sodomized male by the sodomizer; the act is made particularly disgusting in the

narrative because the victim is dead or dying as the act is being carried out. What is more heinous, is that the act seems to be approved of by those in authority. Peter Puget, the head of the landing party, assumes that when his sailor disappears after the dying man that "the missing brave was being justifiably roughed up a little by the missing marine" (120), and Puget only sends men out to look for him when he becomes worried about the marine's safety. Furthermore, that the marine receives any punishment seems only to be due to the strict religious views of the men who find him: "Unfortunately for the first marine, both of these latter two were serious Wesleyans" (120). The implication is that less religious sailors might not have reported the fact, or expected the sailor to be punished.

It is also not clear how much of the official disapproval of the act comes from the fact that the warrior might have been dead, and how much from the homosexual nature of the activity. Vancouver, the narrator tells us, is upset with the marine's lack of discipline, and the fact that he has "transgressed the laws of both civilized human society and the Almighty" (120). Given Vancouver's relationship with Quadra, his behaviour here might be an anxious projection of his perception of his own "lack of discipline" and "transgression" in his homosexual behaviour, or a need to distract attention from his homosexuality by officially punishing such acts; that is, his desires contradict what he knows to be "proper" imperialist behaviours, and he is anxious about that. I would hesitate to read Vancouver as necessarily guilt-ridden about his homosexuality, but for the fact that Menzies seems to read Vancouver this way when he remarks, perhaps

wryly, to Vancouver that the least the sailor could have done was call out a woman's name; that is, he ought to have given his homosexual activity a heterosexual veiling, to stress or pretend that his use of a man is only due to the absence of women. This appears to be a direct jab at Vancouver's hypocritical righteousness in the situation.

Because of the vagueness of the reasons behind the sailor's punishment, the rape of the Native man contributes to the novel's critique of imperialism in a couple of different ways. Vancouver's motivation for punishing the sailor may arise not from the rape itself as a crime but for the biological sex of the participants in the rape, although Vancouver, and probably some of the crew members, engage in homosexual activity themselves. The difference here is that the sailor was caught, and caught by some Wesleyans who had to bring it to the official attention of their captain. As Wainwright points out, too, there is never any sense on the part of the Europeans that the rape of the Native man, and of the Natives generally, is itself criminal (91).

Vancouver seems anxious about his (homosexual) selfhood at other points in the novel too. Wainwright stresses Vancouver's sense of alienation, as a British man away from Britain:

> Forget the Canadian Encyclopedia, our Captain Vancouver is an exile not only twenty thousand miles from his native land (via Cape Horn), but also many fathoms from any sounding of his own being. This Vancouver seeks a Northwest Passage alright, but through the dark continent of his own emotions and thoughts. (88)

Exploration of the land becomes a metaphor for exploration of Vancouver's own self. In fact, the imperial gaze, as that which surveys, measures, conquers, becomes turned against Vancouver when he wakes one night and sees his own image floating at the foot of his bed. His own penetrating, powerful gaze is turned back on himself, and it terrifies him. The “narcissistic” moment here is uneasy. As Edward Lobb argues, "The figure he has seen is himself, and what appalls him is not the sight of his own ghost, but the idea of being seen, even by himself" (Lobb 117). Lobb also describes Vancouver as too solipsistic, stressing that Vancouver's "self-centredness precludes real involvement with another person" (121), and "lonely and insecure, he creates a 'perfect' self whose rigidity antagonizes everyone around him and increases his isolation" (121).

Despite this isolation, Vancouver's search for selfhood is measured primarily against three men: Cook, Menzies, and Quadra. Cook was "like a father" to Vancouver, the man who taught him "how to behave and when to act" on board a naval vessel, the measure of decorum and control (71). In fact, Vancouver's punishing of the sailor who rapes the corpse may come out of his training under Cook in terms of naval discipline. Vancouver finds himself in a homosexual relationship with another man, betraying the military ideals taught to him by that father, and beginning to lose control over his carefully constructed self.

Menzies is the scientist Vancouver detests. However, "Vancouver had been told by Don Juan Quadra that a man only hates his own defects discovered in another" (98). Both Lobb and Wainwright notice Vancouver's and Menzies'

shared desires for knowledge and control (Lobb 120; Wainwright 93); for Vancouver, these desires are manifested in cartography and military discipline, and for Menzies in his careful scientific study. Vancouver's hatred for Menzies, then, may come out of a discomfort with his own imperial self, with this drive to conquer rather than communicate. On the one hand is Vancouver's love for and openness with Quadra, and on the other is his desire for control and decorum, pleasingly reflected in Cook and hatefully reflected in Menzies.

This identification with Menzies becomes especially uncomfortable when the desire for conquest is turned back on Vancouver when Menzies acts as his doctor. As Carla Visser points out, Vancouver "dislikes Menzies because the latter 'could look at the outside of his soul's vessel and make an estimation of the events transpiring inside'" (103). Vancouver has to deal with both his own gaze and Menzies' penetrating, medical gaze as well. There is a sense of homoeroticism in this act, not just in the bodily penetration, but in the sense of Menzies penetrating Vancouver's very soul (which perhaps includes "secret" homosexual desires). Once again, the drive for knowledge, it is hinted, is aimed at discovering sexual identity, at attempts to distinguish the homosocial from the homosexual.

Menzies' gaze is also important for Vancouver's own sense of selfhood, for he himself very seldom looks at his own body anymore. The only two men who have access to that are Quadra, who gazes at him with love, and Menzies, who analyzes and controls through his scientific gaze. Through the gaze, Vancouver is shattered; he experiences something akin to Lacan's mirror stage;

he can only see his whole self in a mirror, as others see him, and so his own self is fractured, beyond his entire control. No wonder he feels he has been betrayed by his own body.

Of course, Menzies' gaze is quite different from Quadra's, whose relationship with Vancouver is idealized and draws on several love-story motifs. Visser notices that Bowering is interested in drawing the reader's attention to the use of convention in narrative, stressing that convention is convention, and the world outside the text can be much more unpredictable (90-91). While this is true in a number of cases throughout Burning Water, Bowering draws on some conventions of the love story with far less irony than he uses elsewhere.

First, Quadra comes to replace Cook as Vancouver's father figure. At one point in the novel, Vancouver has a kind of dream vision: "In his imagination he saw again the reassembled body of his old teacher, and then that corpse mended fully and rose to life again, but this time with the face of Bodega y Quadra" (189). While Wainwright figures a comparison between the two fathers spiritually – Quadra is a New Testament God of love rather than a Yahweh of discipline (93) – the motif of fatherhood also reflects a love-story motif. I have stressed in other chapters how in the love- story plot the hero, while initially cold and even cruel, eventually proves himself to be an idealized father figure; he will love and protect the heroine without oppressing her. Here, the cold and the idealized father is split into two characters. Quadra is described as the benevolent father: "Vancouver always felt so young when he was over here, so young and so well protected" (136). Vancouver never felt that way with Cook, but

"If Don Juan was a father, he was a girl's father, warm, indulgent, ready to guide but more protective than boastful" (136-7). Vancouver feels with Quadra that he is learning how "to be" (73). Through the idealized father figure, Vancouver comes into happiness, much like a love-story heroine; Vancouver will be protected without being oppressed.

Given the portrayal of his lover as a father figure, it does not seem like a coincidence that Vancouver thinks of death during one of his sexual encounters with Quadra. Comparing Cook and Quadra as teachers, Vancouver is reminded of his collecting of Cook's body from the Hawaiians: "They took back most of the body of his 'father.' When he looked at the naked English leg as it was unwrapped and wrapped again, he thought that it was ugly" (71). Cook's body is fragmented as Vancouver seems to feel his own is becoming in its age and illness. However, this fragmentation also occurs as a result of love: "He felt betrayed by his own body, and so he was even more skittish when the other bent like an indulgent mother to strip his clothes from him and expose him to himself" (72-73). Vancouver's own body is unwrapped as Cook's leg was, but Vancouver's "death," the splintering of his body here as it is slowly unveiled, is portrayed positively. While Quadra is a father, he is also a mother; through him Vancouver narcissistically loves himself. Homosexuality and death, here, and a loss of agency, take transcendent and positive connotations, standing in contrast to the ugly exploitation embodied in the sailor's rape of the dead or dying Native man. As in a romance, sexuality and the search for identity, for a father (and mother), are linked, and Bowering does not treat this romance ironically.

In fact, immediately after stating, "James Cook had showed him how to behave and when to act. This latter master was teaching him to be," the narrator adds, "A month ago he would have termed the very usage sophism" (73). What gets treated ironically here is not the deep emotional bond between the two men, or the new sense of identity Vancouver is discovering, but irony itself. Whether the "usage" refers to his own perception of Quadra teaching him to be, or Quadra's "line of reasoning" about Vancouver having just met "the French fact," Vancouver appears here to be putting aside a skepticism that he would have evinced previously. Irony becomes, rather than that which pokes holes in literary conventions and unitary notions of identities, that which must be put aside so that honest human interaction is possible.

There are also moments of deep longing between the two men that are presented without irony. Parting from Quadra, Vancouver is painfully prevented by decorum from expressing his true feelings:

> As Quadra stepped from the English ship he turned and saluted its captain. Vancouver wanted to leap forward and before the eyes of all these well-dressed men throw his face upon Quadra's breast. But he returned the salute and gave Puget a crisp command to change course. (197)

Again, the novel presents a perhaps more "authentic" version of Vancouver's self, one that is more in line with his spontaneous feelings than his sense of duty. Like Annie's and Ana's selves in Ana Historic, this selfhood of Vancouver's is associated with love and eroticism, and struggles against the demands of a

constraining and unnatural imperialism.

Via a homosexual relationship, Vancouver glimpses a new kind of masculinity, a new way of being in the world, relaxed and less under the pressures of behaving according to imperial rules of constraint and logic. This self, as in romances, is often figured in terms of national landscapes. Lobb argues that because homosexuality, as a "new world," is also an aspect of Vancouver's own self, "there is a chance that Vancouver may overcome his fear of seeing himself as he is" (121). Wainwright posits that, in Vancouver and Quadra's relationship, "An extraordinary border is crossed, not the one that permits sodomy (which is how Menzies categorizes it), but entrance into Vancouver's own dark continent, a Northwest Passage into his heart and soul" (93). Vancouver and Quadra present a relationship between men that is unmediated by women and is not about competition, domination, and conquest. In a sense, Vancouver's relationship with Quadra embodies both a giving up of and an assertion of self, a crossing of personal and bodily boundaries and an affirming of them. As in some of the other novels, a homosexual relationship can point to a "true" self.

The relationship between Quadra and Vancouver is not wholly dissimilar in terms of national allegory from some nineteenth-century Canadian historical novels: Quadra "was no more the Spanish than Vancouver was the British, but also no less" (59). Vancouver and Quadra's erotic life is discussed in national terms, as when the narrator describes Vancouver's feelings the first time Quadra kisses him: "When he felt the other's lips on his own for the first time, he felt

taken as in war, by surprise, so that his brief shame was a kind of patriotism and pride" (72). Eroticism takes on national significance and Vancouver feels his sex life is somehow an affront to his national loyalty. As well, each country's claim to the Pacific coast is coloured with homoerotic meaning: "he knew that he had been farther into Quadra's south than anyone else, and Don Juan was no stranger to the Englishman's northern preserve. They faced one another knowing that neither was going to be able to fake any magic over the other" (59). The discourses of war and imperialism, fighting between men, becomes playfully eroticized by the narrator, just as in early Canadian novels heterosexual relationships are often figured similarly in terms of battle and conquest. Such playfulness, in this case, serves to undermine masculine imperialism, because both parties are male, and their flirting goes well beyond the already indistinct boundaries of the homosocial.

However, Vancouver and Quadra's relationship is also figured differently than the marriages in some other Canadian novels, not only because it involves a homosexual rather than a heterosexual coupling, but also because the power relations are not clear. While Vancouver would supposedly be in the position of power, taking over Nootka Sound from the Spanish, he and Quadra appear to share a tender, relatively balanced relationship. Politically, Vancouver may have an upper hand, but personally he is younger and less experienced than Quadra, whom he sees as a kind of teacher and even master. Quadra, though, has his own fears and vulnerabilities. Remembering politics, he tells Vancouver, "When your Admiralty requests that you report to them about negotiations with the

recent enemy, you will find yourself declaring in favour of King George and against Quadra" (181). Vancouver, however, assures Quadra he will not forget him, and that even officially he will tell of Quadra's honour and friendship, if not the erotic encounters between them.

While their relationship gestures towards a different kind of interaction between men and between nations, one that might be termed cooperative and communicative rather than exploitive and antagonistic, the world will not have it remain that way, and eventually nationalism conflicts rather than coincides with Vancouver's erotic life. Vancouver, at Quadra's request and in memory of their love, names an island "the Island of Quadra and Vancouver." The narrator tells readers, "So it was marked on the British charts" (182), but this island, of course, is only remembered (outside of the text) as Vancouver Island, a British property. Vancouver's gesture of love fails in the "official" record, and becomes a reflection of himself only rather than of a relationship with another. Irony seems to win over romance at last.

This “win” is appropriate enough, given Vancouver's fate. With Quadra's death, Vancouver withdraws into himself, alienating others even more than before, and becomes even more strict and authoritarian. As Lobb puts it, "After Quadra's death, he is 'utterly and perfectly now alone' (249), and therefore spiritually dead" (122). Vancouver's own physical death comes when he is shot by Menzies, who believes him responsible for the destruction of his scientific specimens. Coughing blood, Vancouver pulls himself up against the ship's rail before plunging into the ocean: "A gust of wind punched into the mainsail, and

every man took a little shuffling step to stay erect, save their captain who seemed to be lifted by some strength unwitnessed, over the rail and into the unsolicitous sea" (258). It is a curious ending. The "official" historical record has Vancouver dying at home in Britain, not shot by Menzies. As well, the incident of his death is not followed by any narration about the "author" whose process readers have followed throughout the text. And why does Menzies, the embodiment of scientific logic, succumb to becoming a murderer?

Despite these difficult issues, the ending does seem to fit Vancouver's character. Death appears to be what Vancouver wants: he purposefully provokes Menzies, and prevents Puget from coming to his captain's aid, and the invisible strength that lifts Vancouver over the railing may be an act of will on Vancouver's part. His death comes, too, after a spectacular release of energy. Responding to a crude taunt from Menzies about Quadra, Vancouver exhibits a lack of inhibition that mirrors the boundary-crossing represented by his homosexuality. He smashes Menzies' surviving specimens to pieces, screaming the whole time: "His language was a wonder and a horror, coming out of this man whose decorum for a quarter century at sea had been equalled by no other officer" (257). Vancouver loses control, abandons his imperial codes of behaviour, so carefully instilled in him by Cook, and gives himself over to passion. His aggression and anger here also foreshadow the loss of boundaries in his death. Vancouver, perhaps, gives up his rigid self at last, finding some final release and redemption in madness.

It is particularly significant that Vancouver, a man with homosexual desires

and who is obsessed with selfhood, dies by falling into water, and thereby repeats the fate of Narcissus. His desire for wholeness is marked by a total loss of selfhood. Separated from both of his "fathers," Quadra and Cook, who are versions of himself in that he tries to reflect them, Vancouver "falls" for another version of himself, his own reflection in the ocean, through the help of another version of himself, Menzies. Vancouver's happiness through his homosexual relationship with Quadra has been fleeting; in the end, the imperial world demands a violent homosociality, through Menzies, rather than a loving homosexuality. Those who cross borders too flagrantly must be destroyed.

The Narcissus motif in the novel also takes on a special significance in terms of the relationship between the reader and the text. If, as Wainwright argues, Bowering wants his readers to be part of the creation of Vancouver and his world, not merely, like the auditor of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, detached wedding guests (88-89), then readers are also seeing themselves, what they have created in the act of reading, in the text; the narrative reflects their own selves. Notice the paradox of postmodernism: it would remind us constantly that we are reading a text, while striving to pull us further into that narrative by asking us to help in its creation. Ultimately, though, Bowering does not remind readers of the text as creation. Throughout the novel, readers follow, beside the story of Vancouver, the story of the author who is writing Vancouver. At the end of the novel, however, no image of the author follows Vancouver's death. The narrative simply ends there. There is no frame narrative to tie up loose ends, to comfort us with the fact that what we are reading is "only" fiction;

instead, the novel is open-ended, so that readers fall into the narrative and keep falling, left on our own to make sense of this end. We fall into ourselves, in a sense. We cannot get comfortably passive with regard to the narrative of the author, leave it up to him to rescue us or not rescue Vancouver. When Vancouver dies, "we are reminded of our creating the story all along, our having hailed in Our Name a fiction sacrificial and transformed that does not leave us outside" (Wainwright 94). In this case, postmodernism, it seems to me, does not in the end reject realism so much as it boasts a different kind of realism, one that reminds readers of the extra-textual world.

Importantly, this Narcissus motif at the end of the novel also seems to reflect (pun intended) a national obsession. Canadians are a nation of navel-gazers, but postmodernism, wary as it is of notions of unified identity – personal, sexual, national – would not have Canadians find answers to their endless questioning of Canadian national character. Thus, the novel's ending interrogates official versions of Canadian history, and explodes the national romance of Vancouver and Quadra by killing off both of them. That Vancouver might achieve wholeness only through his own murder, a murder that will not even be clearly defined as such because of its suicidal nature, seems very appropriate to a discussion of nation that does not close down definitional borders. Canada is a country that heralds, officially anyway, diversity, seeing unity in regionalism, in making allowances for different viewpoints, that defines itself against and allied with the forces that threaten to erode any particularity it might have. A novel, then, whose hero only finds redemption, only finds a union with his own self,

through an act that destroys him, seems quite "Canadian."

Dickinson argues that "'queer' as a literary critical category of an almost inevitable definitional elasticity, one whose inventory of sexual meanings has yet to be exhausted, challenges and upsets certain received national orthodoxies of writing in Canada" (5). What homosexuality comes to signify in several of the above novels is a crossing of boundaries, a transgression that is cultural, national, sexual, and personal. In some cases, homosexuality must be abjected, defined as outside of social boundaries, belonging to some sort of Other. Thus, an encounter with homosexuality, a possible crossing of bodily and cultural boundaries, only serves to reify the Self that rejects it. This seems particularly pertinent for males: the notion of being penetrated, rather than being the penetrator, and all the power relationships associated with those positions in a heterosexual patriarchy, become sites of anxiety. Gender and cultural identity rely upon a clear notion of the distinction between homosexual and homosocial, at the same time that this distinction is always unclear; as Sedgwick notices, "Oedipal schematics to the contrary, there is no secure boundary between wanting what somebody else, (e.g., Daddy) has, and wanting Daddy" (Between Men 106). Homosexuality, in these novels, must be constantly evoked so it can be dismissed; like the abject, it is always present and always in need of repression. It threatens the heterosexual nation for a time, but in the end it is defeated.

In other novels, though, the boundary-crossing that homosexuality both

embodies and signifies becomes a means of discovering a new self, or returning to an originary one. Transgression symbolizes liberation from constrictions on behaviour and desires. Annie Torrent and George Vancouver find, in homosexual relationships, new possibilities for selfhood – spiritually and creatively, as well as sexually. These novels evoke the romance's love story, repeating some of its biases, and at the same time attempting to undercut it through representations of unstable national and gender identities. Canadian history, as well, is both employed and challenged as these novels interrogate distinctions between the textual and the extra-textual, and examine aspects of history that have been left out of the official records.

Oddly enough, novels that destabilize national identity sometimes posit an originary personal, often homosexual one. Homosexuality is a signifier of a boundary crossing that *leads to* rather than *disrupts* a stable identity. Dickinson, drawing on a number of theorists, suggests that there may be ways to negotiate national and sexual identities that are neither solely constructed nor solely essential; he stresses the importance, in political groups such as Queer Nation, of the crossing of boundaries (30-32). However, while I see novels such as Ana Historic and Burning Water as gesturing towards the crossing of the boundaries (permeable as they sometimes are in Canada) of nation, less of this happens with regards to personal identities. Marlatt's protagonist, for example, finds an identity in the stereotype of female connectedness with nature. While I respect the view that some notion of collected identity can be crucial for political agency (as with Queer Nation), I continue to be suspicious of originary notions of identity,

especially in the context of historical novels that employ the love-story plot, due to the extent to which such notions have been used to maintain rather than question the status quo.

In any case, in all the novels in this chapter the explorations of selfhood have important national significance. The novels demonstrate, as in those novels concerned with heterosexuality, both a fear of and a desire for difference, as well as both a fear of and a desire for sameness. Robert Moray is attracted to Juste Duvarney's soft manner and inexperience, different from his own personality, while the novel's ending clearly resists any erotic relationship involving two characters of the same sex. While in this dissertation I have examined erotic relationships between both opposite sex and same-sex partners, it seems, finally, that Canada cannot be articulated as having either a homo- or a hetero-sensibility, because attitudes towards difference and similarity shift, same-sex and opposite-sex relationships become equally embroiled, although in a variety of ways, in discussions about what the national identity signifies.

What might be said, however, given this national narcissism, this obsession with national identity, is that the Canadian historical novel, rather than being homosexual or heterosexual, is autosexual. To some extent, as Bruhm notices, this is true of all sexuality; it is always about satisfying or finding the self, in one way or another (6), but attitudes in the Canadian historical novel seem particularly autosexual. I do not want to give in to the "universalizing impulse" and downplay the importance of individual experiences of sexuality, and of representations of homosexuality in the novels, or simply create my own

essentialized category for the nation's literature and identity, but I wish to draw attention to certain recurring patterns in the novels I have discussed. Terry Goldie's notion of indigenization might be useful here, outside of relationships with Native peoples. In Canadian literature, sexuality, maybe with any kind of partner, is a means of indigenization, of connecting to the land and the country; the physical act, attached to so many metaphysical concepts in Western society, takes on yet another: that of connection to the nation's natural landscape, or the country's imagined community. Through Greenstockings, Robert Hood in Rudy Wiebe's Discovery of Strangers finds an opportunity, however fleeting, to connect to the land and an originary sense of self. Through her relationship with Zoe, Annie Torrent finds a self-empowering eco-feminism; through Antoinette De Mirecourt, Colonel Evelyn creates a bridge from English to French culture and returns to his Catholic roots. A kind of initiation into adulthood becomes initiation into nationality and selfhood. However, such "masturbatory fantasy," if one may call it that, threatens to efface or subordinate the Other who is also contributor to nation: the French-Canadian, the Native, even the woman who is not an eco-feminist or has an unstable sexual identity. It is only in the deferral of resolution to this search for selfhood, or in the loss of selfhood altogether (as when Vancouver drops into the ocean), that the nation can resist the violence of a stable and unified identity.

Notes

[1] Dickinson uses the terms "sexual dissidence" and "national ambivalence" as they are employed by Jonathan Dollimore and Homi Bhabha, respectively.

[2] Dickinson cites a similar notion, combining Frye's "garrison mentality" with the work of Diana Fuss (37). Luce Irigaray also notices a close relationshipo between the hetero- and the homosexual, although she configures it differently: "Exchanges and relationships, always among men" are "*both required and forbidden by law*" (193). That is, the patriarchy requires what Irigaray terms "homosexuality" and Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick terms "male homosocial desire," while forbidding genital homosexual relations because the latter "*openly interpret the law according to which society operates*" (Irigaray 193). Female homosexuality, too, supports heterosexuality in that it is "recognized only to the extent that it is prostituted to man's fantasies" (196).

[3] Goldie places emphasis on the critic, rather than the author, as influenced by his/her homosexual experiences, although he leaves some room for gay criticism done by readers who do not self-identify as homosexual (13).

[4] Dickinson reviews the nineteenth-century association of homosexuality with the assumption of the opposite gender in his discussion of Oscar Wilde's North American lecture tour (41)

[5] Arguably, Robert is somewhat feminized in relation to Alixe if he becomes the object of her gaze, but her gaze elicits assistance from a greater being, rather than trying to control or possess or assess it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

While I have limited the number of novels I have assessed in this dissertation, the love story and other motifs of the historical romance are prevalent beyond the bounds of this study. Herb Wyile notes "the appearance, almost yearly over the last three decades, of a wealth of historical fiction that has helped push Canadian literature to international prominence" (4). Many of these works, such as Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient (1992), Jane Urquhart's Away (1993), and Guy Vanderhaeghe's The Last Crossing (2002) employ elements of the love-story plot, as do earlier novels such as Timothy Findley's The Wars (1977) and Robert Kroetsch's Badlands (1976). The tendency towards this aspect of the romance goes back even farther, to Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes (1945), Mary Alloway's Crossed Swords (1912), and Agnes Maule Machar's For King and Country (1874). Not all of these novels employ romantic motifs in the same way, of course, but the recurrence of such motifs in Canadian literature, especially contemporary fiction, is the subject to which I would like to turn in closing.

Wyile suggests that the historical novel is so often composed these days because of the recent development of a "commodity-conscious literary culture" as opposed to "the experimentalism and anti-establishmentarianism of the 60s and 70s" (263). This is why most recent historical novels are "more accessible, less fragmented, and more concerned with conveying a coherent picture of

history" (262). This "commodity-conscious[ness]" may point to one reason for the employment of the love story in such novels: sex sells, of course, but the national romantic allegory also helps provide a version of history that is easy to access, telling national events through the familiar narrative of the love story. I also suggested in my Introduction that one of the other reasons for the genre's popularity might be a fascination among many Canadians with the national ethos, and that the historical novel, especially when it employs the love story as allegory, is particularly suited to exploring this ethos. But if historical romances are as oppressive in their use of gender and racial/cultural stereotypes as I have been suggesting, then that indicates, among readers and writers, a desire for novels that support the status quo. As Frye suggests in his "Conclusion" to the Literary History of Canada, there is a certain pleasure that comes from reading books that encourage the reader to "remain within his habitual social responses" (236).

What belief systems do these social responses reflect, how exactly might texts uphold them, and how do they function in texts that also purport to perform critiques of North American colonial and patriarchal power structures (critiques which may also be in line with a reader's belief systems)? Elsewhere in this study I have referred to Renato Rosaldo's "Imperialist Nostalgia" and Alan Lawson's "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject," and I would like to return to both of these essays now in order to explore why the historical romance was and continues to be popular, especially among non-Native anglophone writers. Like imperialism's nostalgia, the love-story plot in the historical novel "universalizes"

specific historical interactions; it transforms them into the "age-old" conflict between the sexes. The historical romance also employs a nostalgia that erases the role of white anglophone Canadians in present and historical oppression. The genre simplifies and promises to resolve complicated cultural, racial, gendered interactions through the love story.

In his discussion of imperialist nostalgia, Rosaldo emphasizes that part of the power of such nostalgia comes from its universalizing tendency: "Doesn't everyone feel nostalgic about their childhood memories? Aren't these memories genuinely innocent?" He adds later, "Don't all people in all times and in all places feel nostalgia?" (108). Of course, Rosaldo's point is that nostalgia is neither universal nor necessarily innocent, although "The relatively benign character of most nostalgia facilitates imperialist nostalgia's capacity to transform the responsible colonial agent into an innocent bystander" (108). That is, the fact that many people have, at some point, experienced nostalgia, allows imperialism to conceal its guilt through the evocation of an emotion that is "universally" thought to be innocent. Similarly, the love-story plot in the Canadian historical novel often translates colonial and patriarchal brutality of a specific historical moment into the "universal" rhetoric of romance. Don't all people in all times and places experience sexuality and love? Thus, in The Bastonnais the literal and figurative rape of the French-Canadian *habitants* by British and American soldiers is dismissed as fantastic and the "real" representation of the cultural relationship is in two anglophone-francophone marriages. Thus, in Kanata and Bitter Shield women's positions as rape victims are transformed into the

heroine's appreciation of the Canadian hero who does not take advantage of his power as a male in order to be abusive.

The love story in the Canadian historical novel often serves the purpose of diminishing the white anglophone's place in history even as it is obviously so interested in reifying that place. The "universal" nature of the love story transfers to the cultural conflict, so that the battle between French and English, or Native and British, could happen anywhere; the subordination of French and Native becomes as "natural" as the subordination of man to woman. The rule of white anglophone Canada is legitimized through tropes that colour such conflict as universal, and resolves them in the marriage that comes with a happy ending, or evinces nostalgia for what has been lost in the separation of lovers.

At the same time, the "historical" aspect of the historical romance relegates cultural conflict to the past, where "British" imperialism is remote from the contemporary "Canadian." As Rosaldo stresses, nostalgia effaces one's own guilt: "In any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination" (108). I would link Rosaldo's comments on nostalgia with Lawson's comments on settler-subjects appropriating Native authority and distancing themselves from the imperial centre they cannot duplicate. Nations, for Lawson, define themselves against a more powerful Other. He views settler cultures as shifting the focus in national development away from the difference between the settler and the indigene and towards the difference between the settler and the imperium: "The national is what replaces the indigenous and in

doing so conceals its participation in colonization" (30). In being nostalgic, sympathetic and innocent, the Canadian distances himself from the brutaliity of his/her colonizing ancestors. In The Afterlife of George Cartwright, Cartwright's afterlife regret regarding Caubvick is transformed into his redemption from the crimes of his colonial existence. Perhaps a similar transformation occurs for a non-Native reader of the novel; the "historical" in the historical romance allows for a distancing of white Canadians from their British ancestors.

Many Canadian contemporary historical novels perform a critique of colonial power and its severely limiting notions of race, culture, gender, and sexuality. However, such a critique may only, at times, conceal the white Canadian's cultural history as an oppressor, while he continues to reap the benefits of that oppression. While Linda Hutcheon has argued for the importance of irony as a mode of resistance in historical novels,[1] under certain conditions irony can actually do the opposite. Rosaldo describes how, as an anthropologist studying the Ilongots of the Philippines, his nostalgia for their culture, given full rein in his letters home, had to be cast in the ironic mode in his ethnography, admitting to his own role as a colonizer, of sorts. He also felt compelled to acknowledge the dangerous nostalgia of those colonizers who had come before him, even as he was feeling a similar emotion himself. He wrote ironically because "there seemed to be no other available trope" (119). His fellow anthropologist also notes, "Much of me wanted to write an article, a sort of nostalgia for a time when my nostalgia seemed to make more sense" (qtd. in Rosaldo 119). Rosaldo acknowledges that, alongside his ironic mode and that of

his colleague, ran a nostalgia that simply no longer seemed appropriate to express *officially.*

What I would suggest is that in many of the later Canadian historical fictions in this study, the ironic attitudes towards colonial ideals are a sign of the times, a push for this kind of acknowledgement that history cannot be viewed in the same way it may have been fifty years ago. While that may be a good thing, this irony elsewhere in the texts may distract from the fact that it is often put on hold in the love story's plot and characterizations; the love story, I believe, signals an "unofficial" lack of irony in these novels. For example, in Burning Water, Bowering's ironic attitude towards the historical record and literary convention disappear in the idealized love of Vancouver and Quadra; in A Discovery of Strangers, Wiebe's critique of British imperial attitudes towards Natives is tempered by Greenstockings' role as beautiful, spirited Native heroine who leads the hero to a sense of primal, originary selfhood, perhaps indicative of a nostalgia for a state of being that is no longer available to the non-Native. That is, in the love story, some contemporary authors revert to the very modes of narrative and characterization often employed by the colonizers themselves in nineteenth-century Canadian historical novels. The nostalgia here – perhaps more than for a particular people, culture, or way of life – is for the romantic *perspective.* As Rosaldo's colleague suggests, it is a nostalgia for nostalgia, for a time when it was supposedly more permissible to frame cultural and gendered relations in less ironic terms. The danger of this romanticizing is that, as I have been arguing throughout this dissertation, the love story is one of the key ways

that authors explore cultural relationships; to put irony on hold here is to significantly soften any critique of colonialism, as well as of patriarchal power. The critical attitudes towards what the colonizers did and believed is removed when Hood and Greenstockings make love; the critique of constructions of femininity in Ana Historic is put on hold when Annie Torrent and Zoe make love.

The Canadian historical romance sets up a mode of telling national history where complicated cultural conflict is reduced to the "natural" superiority of man over woman, the "universal" tale of love, while the fact that it is set in the past distances the enactment of cultural oppression from contemporary Canadians, who can remove themselves from such a horrific past through the assertion of a settler-imperium distinction, and/or through the mode of innocent nostalgia, which disguises the brutality of colonial history. White anglophone Canadians are not responsible for history, but continue to benefit from it.

As readers and critics, then, we ought to be aware of what the romance and its love story contributes to the historical novel, especially given the current popularity of the latter genre. If the historical novel which employs aspects of romance is, at least in part, popular for its evocation of the kind of nostalgia Rosaldo describes, then we need to start paying critical attention to it. Nostalgia for the past, for that which has been lost, in itself constructs as vanished that which may not have *actually* vanished: Natives, francophones, women, and homosexuals obviously continue to survive, while nostalgia creates as a *fait accompli* white anglophone heterosexual dominance, without acknowledging that nation and culture are never static.

I do not wish to suggest that it is impossible to write of eroticism in a historical context without supporting the status quo, but to do so requires a vigilant awareness of the romance and its tendencies towards categorization and imprisoning contradictions: the sexual Native who is desired and feared, the French-Canadian woman who can only "choose" her own oppressor, the detailed representation of homoerotic desire alongside its eventual repudiation, the colonizers' nostalgia for that which they have tried to destroy. Many novels, which I do not think are intended to support the status quo, whose narratives clearly resist it in other ways, succumb to the tendencies of the romance. In this study, Atwood's Alias Grace, Hébert's Kamouraska and Richardson's The Canadian Brothers most successfully resist the powerful ambivalence of romance, in part through their careful ambiguity regarding nation and gender; rather than defining women in contradictory and imprisoning categories, these novels draw attention to such categories as constructions, and allow their female protagonists some agency in slipping in and out of such categories. Another aspect of this resistance is the fact that these novels do not end happily. The happy, enclosed ending keeps Parker's The Seats of the Mighty, for example, from being more radical than it is. It may be possible to write of erotic love in a historical context without the lovers being alienated from each other, or ultimately reduced to essentialized identities, but I have not seen that in the novels I have considered.

Rosaldo argues for the critical strategy of evoking an ideology to "thereby make it more fully present until it gradually crumbles under the weight of its own

inconsistencies" (121). Rather than grabbing an ideology by its horns, Rosaldo tries to evoke its power to the point that such power becomes visible. Such an approach is somewhat akin to what Bhabha argues in The Location of Culture regarding the fact that the ambivalence in colonial power can actually help destabilize it. In his chapter on "mimic men," for example, he shows how the British colonizers' desire to Anglicize the colonized, without giving them access to the rights and privileges of the English, opens up a hybridity that threatens to break down the distinctions between cultures upon which hierarchies are based.

In readings of Canadian historical fictions and their romance elements, critics might try to evoke such contradictions so that they "collapse under their own weight." For example, in having to assert anglophone male superiority, some authors perhaps suggest just how unstable any dominant power is, how there are always ways of undoing it. If nothing else, the historical romance at least demonstrates that there are always threats to the rulers of Canada: Wacousta points out the corruption in the Old World, which comes back to haunt Colonel De Haldimar's New World autocracy; Zulma Sarpy's dissatisfaction at the end of The Bastonnais might create a sympathy in the reader and an awareness that the power of the English male comes at the cost of the female francophone's oppression; Wall's Blackrobe, racist as it is, points out the power of Native men and women to unsettle European expectations. If the Other posed no threat, if power was completely secure, narratives such as Wall's would not have to be written in order to justify the oppression of the Other.

At the same time, it has been one of the objects of this study to

interrogate just how far novels which appear to want to critique Canadian society can go when they employ aspects of the historical romance, which is rooted, to some extent, in literary convention and the historical record. Many Canadian authors have yet to fully escape (if such escape is possible) certain stereotypes of race and gender. Wiebe's Natives are still connected to a primal, orginary state of being that has long been associated with Native peoples. Marlatt's lesbian lovers never rise fully above the romantic stereotypes that define women through their emotions and their relationships with others. Few, if any, contemporary authors are re-writing the Fall of Quebec in ways that are sympathetic to francophones, or writing Native history before the Europeans arrived, and I am still not sure that a heterosexual, feminist love story is possible. Novelists could present a radically revisioned society, newer ways to examine cultural relations, but they might need to work outside the historical romance, or the historical novel generally, in order to do so. Oddly enough, more radical social criticism might have to be configured in the realm of fantasy or science fiction. Frye argues, "fantasy is the normal technique for fiction writers who do not believe in the permanence or continuity of the society they belong to" (Secular 138). To escape stereotypes of gender and culture, writers might need to step "outside" Canada in their settings. This stepping "outside" would translate social issues into a different context, where they might be re-envisioned more radically.

However, in the meantime, the historical novel of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and especially its employment of romance motifs, is a crucial

topic of study in Canadian literature, so that “we” can become aware of the ideologies that these texts, implicitly or explictly, support. Ernest Renan states that "Unity is always effected by means of brutality" (11). What is called for in the reading and writing of Canadian literature is a destabilizing of the unity – national, erotic, and otherwise – that the historical romance sets up, an awareness of how, and how brutally, such unity is created, as well as with whose complicity, and at whose cost.

Note

[1] See the quotation from "Postmodern Afterthoughts" on p. 21 of this dissertation, as well as p.72-74 of The Canadian Postmodern.

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